STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK 2017/18

UCL STUDY ABROAD TEAM

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Introduction

Welcome to the first stage of your international adventure!

This is the start of what could be one of the most exciting and memorable experiences of your life, and we are confident that with our support you will be able to get the best out of your time abroad.

This handbook is designed to provide you with key information to support you throughout your preparation period and your time abroad. More details on the subjects covered can be found on the Study Abroad website – www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad - we would encourage you to explore this thoroughly. Though some of this information may not seem relevant at the moment, it is important to take note of the advice you are given as it may prove useful later on during your placement.

Please make sure that you read the whole booklet carefully and take the time to personalise it to reflect your own needs.

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Regulations and responsibilities

Although you will be spending time away from UCL, you will remain an enrolled UCL student throughout your placement. You are therefore expected to continue fulfilling the responsibilities set out in the UCL – Student Relationship Statement which can be found in the Guidelines section of the UCL Current Students website: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/guidelines

It is also a requirement for you re-enrol online at the start of the 2017/18 academic year. You will be sent a reminder to do this to your UCL email account during the summer of 2017.

Additionally, you have a number of responsibilities to uphold directly relating to your year abroad. During your preparation and throughout your time away, you are expected to:

- Follow advice and guidance (both verbal and printed) from the Study Abroad Team regarding your preparation for study abroad, taking independent action where necessary
- Follow advice and guidance from your Study Abroad Tutor(s) regarding the most suitable study abroad options for you
- Read and understand all information relating to your time abroad provided by your department and the Study Abroad Team
- Undertake thorough, independent research of your placement abroad in order to ensure that you are adequately prepared
- Complete the UCL Study Abroad Preparation Programme by the stated deadline
- Understand and complete all of the work required during your period abroad (either set by your UCL department or completed at the host institution)
- Meet all academic and administrative requirements set by the Study Abroad Team and your Study Abroad Tutor(s), including paperwork submission
- Show respect for and have regard to the laws, cultural traditions and institutions of the country or countries in which you are staying and behave at all times in a manner which does not bring the good name of UCL into disrepute
- Take responsibility for your own learning, for the development of your knowledge of the culture, history, traditions and social circumstances of the country or countries in which you are staying. In addition language students are expected to take responsibility for developing spoken and written skills in the host language
- Follow the placement agreed with your Study Abroad Tutor(s) prior to your departure, and meet the academic requirements of the placement
- Keep your UCL email account active and respond in good time to any Study Abroad Team, faculty or departmental communications requiring a response
- Notify the Study Abroad Team in the case of any emergency
- Keep your address details up to date on Portico

Failure to comply with any of the above may result in disciplinary action.
Before you go

UCL Preparation Programme

All students undertaking a period abroad are required to complete the Study Abroad Preparation Programme before departure. The programme consists of your Study Abroad pre-departure meetings as well as the accompanying Moodle course. You must complete the online course (including submission of the declaration) by midnight on 28 April 2017 in order to confirm that you have completed the programme.

Completing the Formal Application to your host organisation

All students are required to formally apply to their Host University or employer, and should receive an acceptance letter from your host university or an offer of a work placement or language assistantship. Formal applications for universities outside of Europe are usually completed in Feb-May 2017 and those for Erasmus will be completed around May 2017. Assistance with this can be sought from the Study Abroad Team for non-Erasmus placements, and from your Study Abroad Tutor or Officer for Erasmus, British Council Assistantships and work placements.

In the Know
Host university deadlines vary significantly! Don’t be concerned if you are not completing your formal application at the same time as friends

Passports

Every student going on study abroad must have a valid passport to travel. This should have at least 6 months left before expiry from the date that you return to the UK. If you need to apply for a passport or renew one, make sure you leave sufficient time to do this.

Visas

Visas are required by students studying or working outside of the EU, and by non-EU students. It is your responsibility to check whether this applies to you by consulting the embassy or consulate of the country concerned.

Students currently on a Tier 4 visa should download and read the ‘Study Abroad Guidelines for Tier 4 Visa Holders’ from the Study Abroad website as soon as possible and seek advice if they encounter any problems (guidelines available from the ‘Preparing to Go Abroad’ section of the website). Please note that visas can take a considerable amount of time to obtain.

Students who have either exceptional leave to remain in the UK or who have an application for refugee status under consideration may be required to apply to the Home Office for a travel document. In either case such students are advised to speak to the UCLU Rights and Advice Centre in the UCL Students’

In the Know
Depending on which visa you apply for, you may be asked to provide evidence of your finances through Bank Statements. Ensure that you allow enough time to gather these documents
Before you go

Union (1st floor, Bloomsbury Building)- [http://uclu.org/services/advice-welfare](http://uclu.org/services/advice-welfare) where trained advisers will be able to assess the individual’s particular circumstances and advise accordingly.

Other documentation

In certain countries, whether or not you are an EU national, you will need to apply for a residence permit once in the country. The relevant embassy and/or your host institution should be able to advise you on the requirements - please refer to individual embassy or university websites for details of who to contact.

Tuition Fees

All study abroad students should make sure that all the appropriate arrangements are made to pay their UCL tuition fees before they go abroad. For details of what you will be expected to pay, please visit the finance section of the Study Abroad website- [www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad/finance](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad/finance). If you are taking part in an exchange programme (Erasmus, departmental or UCL) then you will pay no tuition fees to your host institution. You may be expected to pay some orientation, application or activity fees, which you are required to cover.

If your study placement is not part of an exchange programme, you will usually be required to pay course fees to your host institution. These fees are payable by you. Providing the conditions are met, these amounts can sometimes be reimbursed by UCL (up to certain limits). Please visit the Study Abroad website for full details- [www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad/finance](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad/finance)

Living expenses

Erasmus+

All students who participate in the Erasmus+ programme receive an Erasmus+ mobility grant, provided they meet the requirements of the programme. The grant is intended to contribute towards the extra costs arising from studying abroad, and is non-repayable. The Erasmus+ grant is intended to offset only the additional expenses you may incur while you are abroad and is not a replacement for the standard student loans or grants to which you are entitled. If you normally receive a maintenance loan, maintenance grant or UCL bursary, you should continue to apply for these in the normal way.

The Erasmus+ grant is calculated according to a monthly rate, which is set shortly before the start of the academic year. You will be eligible to receive the monthly rate multiplied by the number of months stipulated in your Erasmus+ grant contract. An additional €100 per month is awarded to students who meet the widening participation criteria. Students who believe they should be eligible grant should indicate this to the Study Abroad Team in May. Students undertaking a traineeship do not qualify for the widening participation grant, as they receive a higher rate of grant.

In the Know
Your Erasmus Mobility Grant will not be sufficient alone to live on! Ensure that you have fully considered your funding sources in good time before arriving in your host country.

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Your Erasmus+ grant will be paid (in Pounds Sterling) by bank transfer into your UK bank account (Erasmus+ grants cannot be paid into foreign accounts). In the summer before you go abroad, you will be asked to add your bank details to your Portico account (instructions will be provided) so that we can make the transfer of funds quickly and easily. If you do not hold a UK bank account you will be paid by sterling cheque; unfortunately, cheques cannot be paid in any other currency. Please note that failure to save your bank details correctly will result in a delay in you receiving these funds.

Although the Erasmus+ grant is calculated according to a monthly rate, it is paid as a lump sum in two unequal instalments. The instalment schedule is as follows:

- **First Installment (80% of the total grant)** - Provided that you have submitted your Erasmus+ grant contract, bank details, learning agreement etc., and provided there are no unexpected delays in receiving the funding from the Erasmus+ National Agency, you should receive your grant payment by October. If there are any delays, we will keep you informed of these.

- **Second Allocation (20% of the total grant)** - The remaining 20% of your grant will be paid at the end of your placement, on condition of all the requisite paperwork being completed and provided there are no unexpected delays in receiving the funding from the Erasmus+ National Agency.

The Study Abroad Team will notify you by email ahead of any payments that will be made to you by UCL. It is important that you have access to check the status of your bank account from abroad so that you know when the money has arrived – it is recommended that you set up internet or mobile banking for all your accounts before leaving the UK.

For more information about the Erasmus+ programme, including the Erasmus Grant FAQ, please visit the following website: [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad/forms](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad/forms)

**Funding**

Making sure that you have enough money to cover your living expenses is particularly important when you are going abroad. As a UCL student abroad, you are still eligible to access all the support you would get if you were studying in London, including loans and grants for maintenance from the Student Loans Company. The Study Abroad Team will arrange for these to be paid early if your course overseas begins more than 25 working days earlier than the UCL term. Support from the UCL Student Funding Office (SFO), including the UCL Bursary and Financial Assistance Fund, is also available to eligible students. Please visit the SFO website for more information: [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/money/bursaries/financial-support](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/money/bursaries/financial-support)

**In the Know**

If you have any concerns about your year abroad and would like funding advice, please contact UCL’s Student Funding Welfare Coordinator: 
**Mitesh Vagadia**
(m.vagadia@ucl.ac.uk)
Before you go

**Saving and budgeting**

Like in London, budgeting is the key to ensuring your money lasts until the end of term. The Study Abroad Budgeting Tool, available to download on the website, should help you make realistic financial projections for your time abroad. It is particularly important to make sure you have enough money to cover you over your arrival and set up, which may include paying deposits and rent, buying essentials like bedding and utensils as well as paying for social activities. Please visit the ‘Finance’ page on the Study Abroad website for more information: [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad/finance](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad/finance)

**Accessing your cash**

You should think about how you will access your money – will you open a bank account abroad? Will it cost you money to use your UK bank card overseas? You may also wish to consider purchasing a prepaid currency card. Take some time to do some research before you leave, starting with the Study Abroad website and the questionnaires from last year’s cohort.

**Insurance**

**Travel insurance**

All study abroad students are covered by UCL’s own travel insurance policy, paid for by the University. This policy will be issued to you over the summer and will begin two weeks before your placement begins. For details of what’s covered, please read through the Insurance section on the website. The FAQs should help you understand what you’re signed up to, and if you still have questions you’ll find contact details for the UCL insurance team there too.

Once you have read the FAQs and understood the coverage, you may wish to purchase additional insurance. You will be responsible for arranging this and paying for it.

**Health insurance**

Although your travel insurance will cover you for emergency medical care, you will need to take care of the day to day cover. Students studying and working in the EU can apply for a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) using the form on the Study Abroad website. This entitles you to most of the cover that a national of your host country would receive.

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**In the Know**

If you intend to use your UK bank account, ensure that you inform your bank in good time prior to departure to ensure that your account isn’t suspended for suspicious activity.
Outside of the EU, you will either be covered under a reciprocal healthcare agreement (please check the NHS website, link can be found through the ‘Insurance’ page of the Study Abroad website) or you will be required to take out healthcare insurance, sometimes as part of your visa conditions. For more information, please visit the Study Abroad website or contact the Study Abroad Team.

Health issues

In addition to making sure you have adequate healthcare cover, you should make other practical preparations with regard to your health.

Dentists and opticians

Dental and optical care is generally not covered by reciprocal agreements, and can be extremely expensive. You should therefore make sure to have any necessary check-ups before you go to avoid any costly treatment overseas.

Check-ups and prescriptions

If you have been diagnosed with any long term condition, particularly conditions requiring regular medication, it is a good idea to have a check-up and discuss with your medial practitioner anything which may affect the management of your condition while you are away. If possible, try to obtain a supply of medication for the duration of your study abroad programme by talking with your medical practitioner. In addition, be sure your medical practitioner provides you with a copy of the prescription and/or a statement; you may need to present it when you enter the host country to document your need to carry in medication.

You may also want to have your medical practitioner prescribe substitute or alternate prescriptions in case your exact medication is not available in your host country. It is advisable that you also write down the generic name of your medication, as medical practitioners in other countries may not be familiar with brand names used in the UK.

Begin this conversation as soon as possible and contact the Study Abroad Team for advice if necessary.

In the Know

Certain companies online will try to charge you for an EHIC card. There is no need to pay for a card - you can obtain yours for free from the NHS website.
Before you go

Sexual health
You should always take a responsible approach to your sexual health, whether at home or abroad. Sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy are a concern for all sexually active people, as well as issues surrounding respect, safety, freedom from discrimination and violence when engaging in sexual activity. In preparing to go abroad, please make sure that you make practical arrangements to protect yours and others’ sexual health.

Disability support
Students with a disability (defined under the Equality Act 2010 as a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on the ability to do normal daily activities) can consult with the UCL Student Disability Service (https://www.ucl.ac.uk/disability) to ensure that they feel prepared for their time away. It is important to ensure that you will be adequately supported while away. The Study Abroad Team can also assist you in arranging appropriate support before you arrive at your host institution.

Emotional and psychological support
If you are experiencing any kind of personal or emotional issues in the lead up to your departure, it is extremely important that you make sure you get the support you need before you go away. Making the move abroad can be a stressful time, sometimes making small issues seem much more significant and occasionally leading to further emotional difficulty.

Accommodation
Organising accommodation for your time abroad is often the biggest priority for students in the lead up to departure. Depending on what kind of placement you will be doing, you may have the option of going into halls, finding accommodation through a university or student housing association, or renting a room or flat privately. Not all of our partners guarantee accommodation for exchange students, so you may have to begin your search independently. There are a number of key things to remember when looking for housing overseas:

- Whilst we would very much encourage you to begin researching your housing options as early as possible, you may find it difficult to secure non-university accommodation prior to your placement. Many students arrange to arrive a week or two before the start of term to dedicate time to search whilst in-situ
- It can be difficult to get accommodation in metropolitan areas – don’t assume that you’ll be able to arrive and find somewhere to live the same day. Make arrangements to stay in a hostel/hotel or with a friend while you get yourself sorted
- Never agree to rent a property or transfer money to a landlord without seeing the property first (except for university halls and university managed accommodation) – scammers are ruthless and you could end up homeless and out of pocket
Before you go

- Don’t visit a property by yourself – you could be vulnerable. Always take a friend with you, just in case.
- Make sure you sign a tenancy agreement – these are designed to protect your rights as much as the landlord’s. If you have any concerns about the content of the agreement, make sure that you talk about them with a local advice service. If in doubt – don’t sign and make other arrangements.

The Study Abroad Team has a range of resources aimed at helping you decide what kind of accommodation would suit you, and resources to help you find them.

The website ‘GlobalGraduates’ (www.globalgraduates.com) has a range of links to useful websites tried and tested by study abroad students. They also have a forum which you can use to ask questions and post requests for flatmates. Further information on finding accommodation can be found in the ‘Preparing to go abroad’ section of the Study Abroad website.

Packing

Before you even think about packing, make sure that you check your luggage allowances and familiarise yourself with any items which you may be prohibited from bringing into the country. It can be tempting to throw your life into the suitcase when you go abroad for more than a few weeks, so this will help you to focus on what’s important. Deciding on what kind of luggage to use is also important – will you be making a lot of ground travel once you get to your destination or will it be a quick hop into a taxi to your new apartment? Will you be staying in a hostel while you get yourself settled? These are all important things to take into account.

Once your luggage is decided, make a list of what to take. Some key things to remember are:

- Plug adaptors, cables and chargers
- Photos and items from home
- Important documents and photocopies (for example, this Handbook!)
- Academic manuals and assignment materials
- A range of clothes for different weather/situations

It is important to pack light for your year abroad, however do remember that having familiar items around you can be important when you are feeling a little down.

Networking

Having a network of people around you is important when you go abroad, as you will be leaving friends and family at home who would normally be your support at difficult times. Try to make connections with people who will be at the same host institution, or living in the same town or city as you. If there are no other UCL students going to the same location as you, try using the ThirdYearAbroad.com forums to locate students in similar areas, or use social media to reach out to other new students at your host institution. (If you do decide to do this, exercise caution when meeting people and make sure that you meet in a public place.)
Before you go

If you are studying abroad at a university, try to attend all of the orientation activities arranged for new international students – other study abroad students can make great friends as they will often share your anxieties and concerns, and it will help you share these feelings. Students who are working or teaching may find it more difficult to make connections with people when they arrive. In order to avoid becoming isolated, make sure that you are in contact with other students in your situation so that you can chat about your experiences.

Set up Skype before you go and make contacts with friends and family so that getting in touch is easier. In small towns, think about joining a local community group or activity so that you have talking point with others - meeting locals this way will be a real boost for your language skills.
Before you go: checklist

Three to six months before

- **Apply** to your host organisation/employer
- **Apply for student finance**/arrange your tuition fee payments
- **Budget** for your living expenses

Three months before

- **Complete the UCL Preparation Programme**
- **Complete your paperwork** for UCL (see paperwork deadline schedule on page 24)
- **Check your passport is valid** for your period abroad and at least six months after
- **Apply for your visa** (if relevant)
- **Apply for an EHIC** or research health insurance
- **Research accommodation**/apply for university housing
- **Speak to your GP** about prescriptions for existing medical conditions or contraceptives

One month before

- **Read the UCL Travel Insurance FAQs**
- **Plan your packing** and make lists
- **Research other documentation** you might need
- **Network** with other students and arrange ways of staying in touch
Settling in

Your first few days

Arriving at your destination, finding your new flat and getting your essentials – these will be the first of your jobs once you arrive in your new host country. However, all of these have the potential to be stressful, which is why some forward planning can help you to transition smoothly into your new life abroad.

Please remember to update your term time address on Portico immediately after arrival at your host university and ensure that your term-time address and emergency contact details (including telephone numbers) are up-to-date throughout the period abroad.

Travelling

Travelling to your new home will be your first hurdle. Once your train/plane/boat tickets are booked, think about your onward journey; plan right down to the walk from the bus stop to your hostel front door. This is important, as you will have lots of luggage and might be vulnerable to crime if you get lost or seem unsure of your surroundings.

Your host institution may arrange an Airport-pick up or transfer for you. You will be informed if this a service available to you during the formal application procedure.

Renting a flat

Unless you have arranged university accommodation for your arrival, you are likely to spend your first few days looking for somewhere to live. Make this easier for yourself by researching in advance which areas you might like to live in, what sort of rent prices are reasonable, and what documents you might need to be able to get a lease. If you are struggling to find somewhere, don’t despair – you will get a place – patience and level-headedness are key, and will help you to avoid renting somewhere you aren’t happy with out of desperation. Take some time out of house hunting to do some sightseeing, and speak to a friend or relative about your frustrations before you make any decisions. This will help ensure that you don’t end up signing up to anything you might regret later.

Staying in touch

Your family and friends will be keen to hear from you as soon as you touch down, so make sure that you make the effort to touch base with them. This will be as important for you as it will for them, as it can be reassuring to hear a friendly voice when you are away from home. Try to make it a priority to get yourself set up with a local SIM card or international phone card, or get yourself connected to a Wi-Fi network so you can Skype call home.

In the Know

If you haven’t been able to secure accommodation prior to your arrival, consider booking yourself into a Hostel or AirBnB accommodation and dedicate a few days to search locally as soon as you arrive.
Money

If you have budgeted sensibly, you should have made a decision about how to handle your finances while you are away. If you are setting up a local bank account, try to get this set up as soon as possible so that you avoid any delays later (for example, if you are being remunerated for a work placement, you will need the account set up to receive your first wage payment). If you are not opening an account abroad, perhaps spend some time looking around for banks and ATMs which give you the best rates on taking out cash.

Diversity and Attitudes to Difference

Providing the opportunity to explore the world, learn about a new culture and push your own boundaries - studying abroad can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life. However, it also requires you to think about your own identity in ways that you may never have done before. You may find that aspects of your identity that you have taken for granted here in London are now a defining part of who you are in the new cultural context of your host country.

While abroad, you may find that there is more openly-expressed curiosity about you and your background. Attitudes regarding issues of race, religion, sexual identity and gender vary greatly between regions; your host community may hold more conservative beliefs or attitudes regarding sexuality, gender identity and expression, and there may be less tolerance of non-conformance to those cultural norms. Equally, your host region may be more ethnically and racially homogenous than what you might be used to.

It is important to research carefully and seek advice if this is a concern for you, as coming up against discrimination, prejudice or homophobia can cause emotional distress and have a negative impact on your time abroad.

- **Be self-aware** - understanding yourself and your identity is a big part of understanding any adversity you may face.
- **Take all advice, both positive and negative** - there are a wealth of different experiences to be had in the same places so make sure you look for a balance
- **Keep your own cultural assumptions in mind before jumping to conclusions** - it is possible that actions or questions that upset you may simply reflect people’s curiosity about you
- **Remember that you have choices in how to deal with these issues** - a bad reaction from you may worsen the situation, so it is vital to keep these things in mind

**Be honest with yourself** - if you were subject to prejudice or discrimination in your host country, would you be able to cope with it? Can you think of strategies for dealing with different kinds of attitudes? Where are your limitations?

**Pre-departure**

Look for blogs, newspaper articles or books that talk about the specific issues you are concerned about. The more information you have before arrival, the more prepared you will be for local norms.
Settling in

Whilst Abroad
Everyone has the right to feel safe in their host country. Encountering increased attention, insensitivity, or outright discriminatory language and behaviour in your host community can be frustrating and in more severe cases may leave you concerned about your personal safety.

If you feel that this is affecting your time abroad, we would encourage you to get in contact with us in the first instance. More information on the topic of Equality and Diversity can be found on the Study Abroad website- https://www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad/decision-making/equality-diversity

Adjusting to life abroad

New food, unfamiliar road signs, no decent tea bags – all seemingly little things, but which can often cause big emotions. Culture shock is defined as feelings of disorientation and homesickness when familiar surroundings change, and it can affect anyone spending any length of time in unfamiliar surroundings – you may even have experienced it on holiday!

Feeling overwhelmed or homesick at times is completely natural, whether you’re a Eurostar trip away in Paris or on the other side of the world in Australia. The topic of culture shock will be covered extensively in your pre-departure preparation programme – and there is plenty of information on the website. However, just in case you need a reminder, here are some key things to remember about culture shock and its effects.

Before you go:

- You may feel anxious about being separated from friends and family
- The thought of building a new network of friends can seem daunting. However, remember that you’ve been there and done this already in your first few weeks at UCL!
- You may be worried about the added challenge of your new university or work environment. This is understandable; your year abroad is important academically

The symptoms of culture shock can include:

- Loss of appetite
- Headaches or stomach aches
- Excessive anxiety, being upset or crying
- Lack of interest in hobbies, socialising

The most important thing to know about this is that it is normal – everybody will be experiencing this to some degree and there is more than likely someone in the same boat just around the corner!
So, how do you help yourself to overcome culture shock?

Here are a few tips which should help you make it through the more challenging days:

- Follow the advice in this booklet and prepare yourself for the journey over – the fewer surprises, the more in control you will feel and the more confident you will be for your first few days.

- Don’t worry about making mistakes, and don’t expect to get everything right straight away. You’re bound to get lost, forget things or make mistakes in your new language. It’s all part of exploring your new country and experiencing study abroad. Remember that these mistakes will probably make excellent pub stories next year, so try to find the funny side. Even if it’s something so embarrassing you’ll never share with friends, you may well have learned a valuable lesson for next time.

- Make sure you can connect to people if you need to. Make one of your first priorities on arrival to set up internet connection, or at least search out local free Wi-Fi. Set up Skype and add friends and family before you go; add other year-abroad students on social networking sites so you can easily keep in contact with others in your situation. WhatsApp and Viber will automatically sync with your existing smartphone contacts and are a great way to message for free and share your photos.

- However… try not to be a slave to your smartphone. It’s natural for the fear of missing out to creep in at times, especially if you’re missing out on a birthday or celebration at home. Spending hours on Facebook or Skype each day reduces your opportunities to get out there and make your own memories!

- Keep busy – go to every event organised for new international students and in between get coffee with the people you meet. The more you do, the less time you have to worry about the small stuff.

- However… don’t put too much pressure on yourself to feel great every day. If all you fancy doing one day is staying in your dorm room or flat and catching up on Netflix, treat yourself to some downtime to do this.

- Plan a trip home, or organise people to visit. You’ll be very popular amongst friends and family who see your bedroom floor as an ideal opportunity to crash on a cheap holiday! This may give you something to look forward to in upcoming weeks if you’re feeling a little low.

- Reach out to other UCL students in the same region as you. Drop us an email and we can put you in touch with others in the same town or city as you. You might find that having lunch or a night out with someone with shared familiarity of London and UCL makes you feel less isolated.

- Document how you’re feeling; the good and the not-so-good times. Whether you decide to start a blog, an old-fashioned diary, or just a few messages to family at home, writing down how you’re feeling might help you to organise your thoughts and are a fantastic way to chart your personal development.
Settling in

Towards the end of your stay abroad, you should find that your passion for your new home will come to the fore and help you to enjoy the final weeks of your placement. Make the most of the experiences you are having so that you have stories and wisdom to bring home with you at the end.

Getting support

If you do find yourself experiencing any difficulties abroad, whether emotional, medical, financial or otherwise, do seek help as soon as you can. Your first point of contact will be your host institution or employer. If you are studying at a university, there may be services available such as a health centre or counselling service.

Global Student Assistance Programme

The Global Student Assistance Programme (GSAP) provides practical information, resources and short-term counselling on a variety of topics, as well as sign-posting to other services. Information can be provided over the phone and by email. Short-term telephonic counselling, if appropriate, is also offered at a time convenient to you.

The service is run free of cost and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. At any time of the day or night, weekends, and over holidays, you will be able to speak with one of our professionals. The Global Student Assistance Programme is completely independent and does not represent any organisation, including UCL.

Contact details for the service are below; additionally, details of the service will also be emailed to all study abroad students. When you call, please inform the adviser that you are currently on a UCL study abroad programme.

**CALL FROM THE UK:** 0800 174 319
**CALL FROM OVERSEAS:** +44 (0)1452 623 243
**EMAIL:** info@care-first.co.uk
**WEBSITE:** www.care-first.co.uk

Please visit the website (www.care-first.co.uk) for additional information about how to contact the service. You will need to login with the following details:

Username: uclstudent
Password: bentham

In addition to this, the UCL Student Support website can offer valuable advice and information for those going through difficulties. The website includes advice pages on various student issues such as anxiety and panic, depression and loneliness as well as other common problems amongst students. For more information, visit the website: www.ucl.ac.uk/support-pages/. If you cannot find help in your host country, please remember that UCL is always available to support you. If you do
Settling in

experience difficulties of any kind, no matter how small, please contact the Study Abroad Team for help and advice.

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad/ - Study Abroad general help and advice
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/student-support - General resources for students
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad/finance - Study Abroad finance information

Settling in: Checklist

- Arrange accommodation: read your contract carefully and seek advice where necessary
- Stay in touch: remember to let friends and family know you have arrived
- Update your address: log into Portico and record your new contact details (including phone numbers) as well as emailing details to friends and family
- Attend induction sessions: whether for work or studies, don’t miss your orientation
- Travelling: plan your journeys before you go out until you have a feel for the place
- Finances: open a bank account or shop around for good rates on ATMs
- Look out for yourself: be aware of signs of culture shock and take positive action
While you are abroad

Paperwork

During the course of your time abroad you will be required to complete and return several forms and documents to the Study Abroad team by specified deadlines. We will send reminders to you via email; however, responsibility for completing the forms and returning them on time ultimately rests with you.

All study abroad forms are either available from our website in the ‘Documents and Forms’ section (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad/forms), or will be sent to you via your UCL email address at the appropriate time. The list of deadlines is at the back of this booklet.

Please ensure that you have allowed adequate time, particularly at the end of your placement, to obtain the required signatures on your documents.

Touching base

The Study Abroad Team and your academic department will communicate with you via email throughout the year. Please make sure that you check your UCL email regularly – you must keep it active in order to avoid any delays in communication. Always make sure to respond to emails from us or your department within a few days, or before any given deadline.

We do also like to hear how you’re getting on, so feel free to send us an email or postcard during the year. Why not contribute to our termly newsletter? Details of submission deadlines will be emailed to you during the winter term.

Personal safety

Your safety and security is particularly important while you are away. As part of your pre-departure preparation, you should read and make notes on our ‘Health, Safety and Security for Study Abroad’ guidelines, included in the UCL Study Abroad Preparation Programme Moodle Course. Once you are abroad, there are a few common-sense things you can do to make sure that you are not leaving yourself vulnerable:

- Always secure your accommodation when you enter or leave (even briefly)
- Keep your valuables out of view while you’re out; close curtains or cupboards
- If you take a laptop out with you, make sure that it isn’t immediately obvious what you are carrying
- Try not to travel alone late in the evening – walk with a group, and plan your route home. Stick to lit streets, even if it makes the journey longer
- If you are the victim of a crime while you are on your year abroad, please visit: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad/while-abroad/support-abroad/crime-antisocial

In the Know

We will be in touch during your time abroad with the Study Abroad Newsletter, updating you on local UCL and London news.

You are encouraged to share your story through an article and photos!
While you are abroad

FCO Updates

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office promote British interests overseas, supporting British citizens and businesses around the globe. In particular, they publish regular travel updates advising travellers of the potential risks they may encounter overseas. You should make sure that you are subscribed to email updates for your country of residence, and that you follow the @fco on Twitter. Further details about their services are available on our website in the ‘While you are abroad’ section.

You should also find the address and phone number for your nearest embassy and write them on your UCL Pocket Student Guide (available from the Student Centre).

Making the most of your time

For many students who study abroad, the time they spend away can be some of the most rewarding and exciting of their whole degree. As well as being an incredible opportunity for diverse learning in an academic way, it is also an amazing cultural and personal experience – the opportunity to travel whilst you are abroad is one that many students make full use of.

To ensure that you are able to make the best of your time, here are some tips that we have gathered from our best sources – year abroad students. You should also make sure to check out ThirdYearAbroad.com for some really practical, personal stories of the good times and the bad times (and the bits in the middle too!).

- **Set yourself goals** – there’s nothing worse than coming back from a long period away and seeming to have achieved nothing. Even if they are small goals, like joining a local football team or learning your way around your new city, all of them are valuable. Try to come up with a few different kinds of goals in the following categories:
  
  o Travel/sightseeing – make a list of the places you have always wanted to visit in your host country; then make it happen!
  
  o Linguistic – if you are living in a country where the mother tongue is not English, what level of linguistic confidence do you want to achieve before departure?
  
  o Personal – what would you like to achieve for yourself? This could be anything, from social to culinary to musical to sporting – whatever matters to you.

- **Keep a record** – in years to come, hopefully you will be able to look back on your time away with pride. Memories are helped to stay fresher with mementoes and keepsakes from your time abroad, so make an effort to hold on to meaningful things. Tickets, postcards, maps, photographs – all of these can be collected together and turned into a creative record of your journey. Journals or diaries can also be an incredible tool for recalling old memories, so it may be worth getting a nice notebook if you want to give this a try.
While you are abroad

- **Stay career-focused** – your year abroad, as well as enriching your personal education, will help set you apart from other graduates when you finish your degree. Keep this in mind as you go through your year abroad, keeping the following things in mind:
  - Experiences – what experiences have I had which will strengthen my CV?
  - Connections – who have I met, and could they have an influence on my future?

- **Your degree** – above all, you must always keep in mind that your time abroad will form an integral part of your degree. You have a responsibility to yourself to make the most of this time, and to feed it back into your learning. Make sure to prioritise academic work, whether from UCL or your host university, and to seek help where you need it.
Returning to UCL

Accommodation
Finding accommodation for your return to London is a concern for many year abroad students. It is important to remember that there are over 500 students on study abroad every year, so it is more than likely that you will find others in your situation.

Private sector
If you want to flat share, try to work out who you would like to live with as soon as possible – you may wish to join forces with fellow year abroad students or students on 4 year courses at UCL to search for a place. The earlier you have this sorted, the more time you have to search for accommodation.

You may also wish to look into living with new exchange or international students, housing adverts can be found through flat sharing websites. The University of London Housing Services (ULHS) lists many on their website: http://housing.london.ac.uk/cms/flatsharing-messageboard/. However, don’t panic if you can’t find anything before you return – there’s always time to find something later on.

UCL Housing
Application forms to enter the ballot for UCL accommodation will normally be available from the Student Residences Office during February (2017). The deadline for the receipt of application forms is usually early March, with the allocation ballot taking place shortly after that. Please note that very few places are available for returning students.

Re-enrolling
Please remember to re-enrol on Portico when you return from your year abroad. If you fail to re-enrol before the deadline your registration will be closed, affecting your access to UCL services. Re-enrolment after the deadline will incur a fine. Make sure to check your UCL email over the summer for information about when you can re-enrol.

Finances
Remember that you will need to apply for student finance in the same way as normal in order to avoid delays in obtaining your funding at the start of the academic year. For more information and deadlines, please visit your funding authority website directly.

Re-entry shock
When you return home after your time abroad, you should be prepared for a period of adjustment, a bit like culture shock in reverse. You may experience some of the same symptoms as before, you may miss your adopted country or culture, feel the difference in climate or food very keenly. You may be worried about how you will integrate back into life at UCL.
Returning to UCL

Again, the most important thing to remember about this is that everyone will be in the same situation. The best way to beat the blues once you return home is to meet up with friends who have also been abroad, share stories and compare notes. However, if you are finding it a real struggle, do remember that UCL can offer you support – check the Study Abroad website for details.

Maximise your employability

By studying abroad it is likely that you have developed skills which will be very attractive to potential employers. As part of our welcome home for returning year abroad students, the UCL Study Abroad Team in tandem with the UCL Careers Service will run a careers workshop in October designed specifically to help you present your year abroad achievements to employers.

You can also consult the Careers Service independently for advice on your CV and guidance for job applications. For more information, please visit www.ucl.ac.uk/careers.

Support other UCL Study Abroad students

As students preparing to go abroad, you now know how valuable the personal insights of other students can be when you are making decisions about your year abroad. To help bring this to others, we hope that you will join us in the autumn term at some of our events for outgoing students. You may be asked by your department to participate in briefing meetings for 2nd year students, and you will be invited to assist at our annual Study Abroad Fair, held in November, which will give you a chance to represent your institution abroad to other prospective study abroad students. Your contribution to these events is always appreciated, as there is no one better placed to relate first-hand experiences of the year abroad!

Early to mid-way through the autumn term, when many departments are organising briefing meetings for 2nd year students, you will be invited to participate in such meetings and talk about your own experiences.

In the Know

Why not share your Study Abroad experiences and get involved in a number of key Study Abroad and International Welfare events throughout your final year by applying to become a UCL Global Ambassador?

More information on the Scheme can be found on our website-
https://www.ucl.ac.uk/study abroad/global-ambassadors
### Your emergency contacts

Please use this page to collect emergency contact numbers that you may need abroad. We have included a few to start you off.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Contact Number</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UCL Study Abroad Team</strong></td>
<td>+44 (0) 203 108 7773</td>
<td><a href="mailto:studyabroad@ucl.ac.uk">studyabroad@ucl.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UCL Travel Insurance (Emergency)</strong></td>
<td>+44 (0) 1273 400 850</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UCL Travel Insurance (Other claims)</strong></td>
<td>+44 (0) 20 7204 8952</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study Abroad Tutor</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Tutor</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UCL Student Fees</strong></td>
<td>+44 (0) 20 3108 7284</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fees@ucl.ac.uk">fees@ucl.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UCL Student Funding</strong></td>
<td>+44 (0) 20 7679 0004</td>
<td><a href="mailto:studentfunding@ucl.ac.uk">studentfunding@ucl.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendices

Appendix 1: Paperwork deadlines

All paperwork should be returned as a scanned copy via email to studyabroad@ucl.ac.uk. You should retain the original with the signatures for your records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Erasmus students only:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Agreement(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning/Training Agreement(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning/Training Agreement Part 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Agreement Part 5- Traineeship Certificate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*For more information on Erasmus programme requirements, please visit the Erasmus section of the Study Abroad website.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All students studying abroad for the full academic year at one institution:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of Arrival</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confirmation of Departure and Study Abroad Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Students studying abroad during terms two and three (Jan-Jun) only

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of Arrival</td>
<td>As soon as you arrive at your placement, no later than 17 November 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of Departure and Study Abroad Questionnaire</td>
<td>Just before your departure, no later than 13 July 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Students studying abroad for term one only or the full academic year at two different institutions:

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<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of arrival (institution/term 1)</td>
<td>As soon as you arrive at your placement, no later than 17 November 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of Departure and Study Abroad Questionnaire (institution/term 1)</td>
<td>Just before your departure, no later than 16 February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of Arrival (institution 2)</td>
<td>As soon as you arrive at your placement, no later than 04 May 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of Departure and Study Abroad Questionnaire (institution 2)</td>
<td>Just before your departure, no later than 13 July 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will receive email confirmation from the Study Abroad Team following submission of each of your documents. If you have any questions about any aspect of your Study Abroad paperwork, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us: [studyabroad@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:studyabroad@ucl.ac.uk)
Have a great time abroad!

We look forward to hearing from you

UCL Study Abroad Team

Address: UCL, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT

Telephone: +44 (0)203 108 8937

Website: www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad