

UCL and India



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UCL and India:
A historic relationship

Academic collaboration

Academic Spotlight:
David Osrin, Professor of
Global Health at UCL

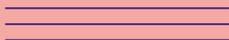
Student spotlight:
Ruthwik Bellam

Alumni spotlight: Pooja Bhale

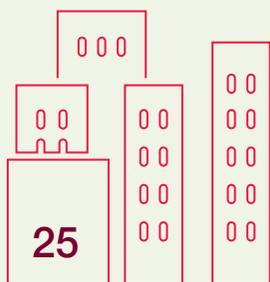
Studying in India



There are
440
Indian students
currently enrolled
at UCL



UCL academics
have co-authored **899**
research publications
with India partners
between 2013 and 2019



UCL has research
collaborations
in **25** cities
in India

The top three faculties
for Indian students:



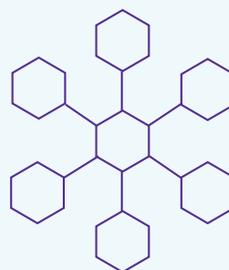
Engineering (24%)
Built Environment (13%)
Social & Historical Sciences (12%)



UCL is made
up of
35%
international staff

UCL has research
collaborations with

50+
institutions in India



UCL is made
up of
48%
international
students

The top three
programmes
for Indian students:
MSc Management
Law LLM
BSc Economics





Top
UCL Portico, London

Right
River Ganges
View Of Ancient Varanasi

UCL and India

Founded in 1826, UCL was built to open up higher education in England to those who had been excluded from it, and to change the way we create and share knowledge.



This spirit of openness still thrives today. Each year, UCL welcomes students and staff from across the world and now boasts a community made up of 48 per cent international students and 35 per cent international staff.

India has long formed an integral part of this global community. Today there are more than 400 Indian students studying at UCL, as well as over 50 collaborations, across all disciplines, between UCL and partners in India.

It's thanks to this diverse community that UCL consistently contributes to some of the world's most pioneering research; tackles some of the world's most pressing challenges, and regularly places among the world's top-ranked universities.

To support and promote partnership activity, UCL has a South Asia network, a Centre for the Study of South Asia and the Indian Ocean World and a dedicated Pro-Vice-Provost, who plays a strategic role as a catalyst for UCL's engagement in the region. The current Pro-Vice-Provost is Professor (Dr) Monica Lakhanpaul, expert in Integrated Community Child Health.

Consistently ranked within the top ten of the QS World University Rankings, UCL is a truly world-leading university, and in areas from health to engineering, the university's collaborations with India are helping to speed up the process of discovery.



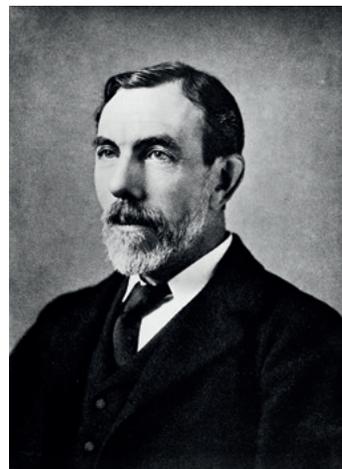
UCL and India: A historic relationship

UCL has a rich history of collaboration with India, one that stretches back as far as the 1800s.

Indian languages were taught at UCL from a very early stage in its history. Dadabhai Naoroji – popularly known as the ‘Grand Old Man of India’ – was a lecturer of Gujarati at UCL between 1856-65. He was the first Indian UK Member of Parliament, elected to London’s Finsbury seat in 1892.

Sir William Ramsay, UCL Professor of Inorganic Chemistry between 1887-1913, won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1904. In 1900, he visited India on a trip sponsored by Jamsetji Tata to consult on the formation of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru. Ramsay conducted extensive research and the resulting report was instrumental to the choice of location for the IISc.

His co-worker, Professor Morris William Travers FRS, and then Sir Alfred Gibbs Bourne, both UCL Alumni, went on to become the institute’s first and second directors.



Top
Poet and musician Rabindranath Tagore studied law at UCL in 1880

Above
Sir William Ramsay, Nobel Laureate in Chemistry in 1904, recommended Bengaluru as the location for the IISc



Augustus De Morgan was born in Madurai, India. At just 22, he became UCL's first Professor of Mathematics, shortly after the university's formation. Today, the headquarters of the London Mathematical Society is called De Morgan House and the student society of UCL's Mathematics Department is called the Augustus De Morgan Society.

Top
Augustus De Morgan was UCL's first Professor of Mathematics

Below
Baroness Shreela Flather studied Law at UCL in 1955. Image: Chris McAndrew.

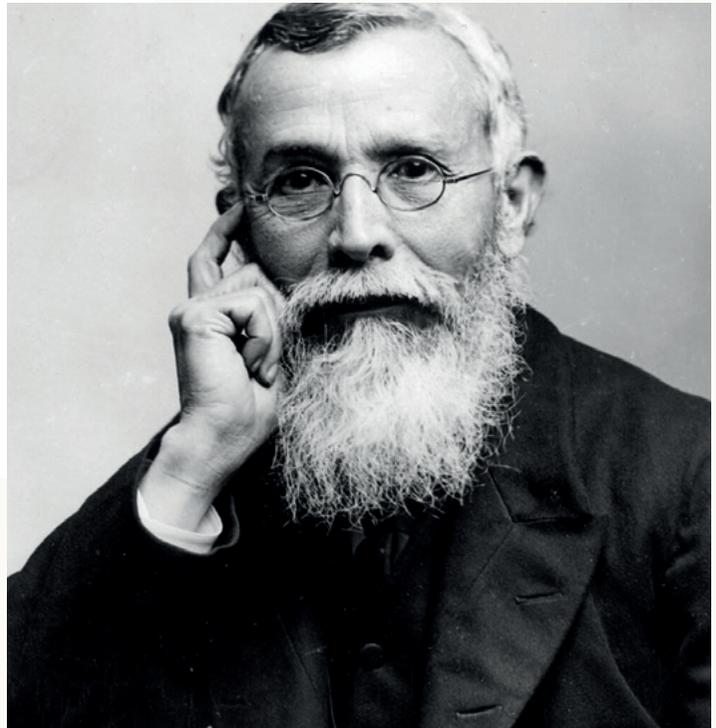
Bottom right
Dadabhai Naoroji was a lecturer of Gujarati at UCL

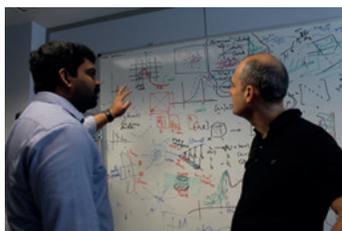
Professor Otto Koenigsberger, UCL's first Professor of Planning, was Director for the Indian Ministry of Housing from 1948-1951 in the Nehru Government. He was instrumental in designing settlements for refugees displaced by partition and migrating from Pakistan. He also designed the town plan for Bhubaneswar in Odisha and - with the vision of J.R.D. Tata - Jamshedpur in Jharkhand.

UCL counts a number of notable Indian figures among its alumni, including the acclaimed Bengali poet and musician Rabindranath Tagore, who studied law at UCL in 1880. Romesh Chunder Dutt was another UCL student and later lecturer of Indian History who completed a seminal piece of work on economic nationalism. He also translated the Ramayana and Mahabharata. He served as President of the Indian National Congress in 1899. Baroness Shreela Flather studied Law at UCL in 1955 and was elevated to the peerage as Baroness Flather, of Windsor and Maidenhead in the Royal County of Berkshire, in June 1990. This made her the first Asian woman to receive this honour in Britain.

S. R. Ranganathan, considered the father of library science, documentation and information science in India, came to UCL in 1925. It was here that he found inspiration for some of his notable contributions to the field, including the first major faceted classification system, the colon classification, which is still widely used in libraries today.

Today, UCL continues to seek collaborators and students from India to join its diverse community.





Top
UCL academics partnered with Save the Children, IIT Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru University on the PANCHSHEEL project

Above
UCL is collaborating with the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru to use big data to try and predict tsunami movements

UCL is a multidisciplinary university that consistently excels in research: it was the top-rated UK university for research strength in the latest Research Excellence Framework and it has accumulated no fewer than 29 Nobel Prize winners since the first prize was awarded in 1901.

At UCL, we believe that bringing together diverse perspectives, through combining different disciplines and experiences, accelerates the process of discovery. Bringing together experts, irrespective of where they are in the world, means that the very best minds can be focused on finding the solutions we all need.

With this in mind, UCL staff collaborate with peers and partners across the world – including in India, where UCL has over 50 collaborations stretching across all disciplines. These collaborations are partnerships of equivalence, with a focus on two-way learning.

Here is just a snapshot of the academic collaboration between UCL and its partners in India...

Academic collaboration

Engineering and the built environment

Professor Caren Levy (Development Planning Unit), is working with the Indian Institute of Human Settlements on an ambitious research programme that brings together a global network of urban specialists to learn how to make planning inclusive.

Dr Catherine Holloway (Computer Science), is collaborating with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi and other Indian NGOs to help people who are using wheelchairs to get around Indian cities. They use phones to map out any obstacles on their way, creating maps for other wheelchair users.

Health and medicine

Numerous UCL academics are working on health projects

with Indian collaborators.

Dr Sara Hillman (EGA Institute for Women's Health) has been working with the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) to reduce the burden of low birth weights related to high altitude.

A community mobilisation project, known as PANCHSHEEL, led by Professor Monica Lakhanpaul (GOS Institute of Child Health), working with Professor Marie Lall (Institute of Education) and Dr Priti Parikh (Civil, Environmental & Geomatic Engineering) and funded by the Medical Research Council, aims to improve infant feeding practices in nine villages in Rajasthan with IIT Delhi, JNU, Save the Children and other Indian NGOs.

In Mumbai, UCL academics have been collaborating with SNEHA (Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action), a non-profit organisation in the Dharavi slums, to co-create solutions with local communities.

Science

Professor Serge Guillas (Statistical Science) is working with the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru to use big data to try and predict tsunami movements and protect Indian coastal towns.

Professor Peter Sammonds (Institute for Risk & Disaster Reduction) has been working in Jammu and Kashmir doing exactly the same thing with big data, to try and look at the prevalence of earthquakes in that region.



Top
Mangilal Ravidas with a souvenir photograph from his pilgrimage to Samvaliyaji, Ujjain District, Madhya Pradesh

Top
UCL is collaborating with IIT Delhi and other Indian NGOs to help wheelchair users get around Indian cities

Above
The Health, Education Engineering and Environment (HEEE) platform saw UCL academics, partners and communities co-design solutions to challenges

Above
Academics at UCL's Institute of Healthcare Engineering are collaborating with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences on affordable healthcare technologies

UCL's Mullard Space Science Laboratory has been constructing its own CubeSats. ISRO, which launched more than 100 CubeSats in 2017, had UCL's CubeSat on board.

Professor Giovanna Tinetti (Physics & Astronomy) has been collaborating with the Indian Institute of Astrophysics in Bengaluru, looking for exoplanets.

Social and historical sciences

Professor Christopher Pinney (Anthropology) was awarded the Padma Shri in 2013 by the then President of India under the category of Literature and Education. His research has ranged over the cosmology of industrialism and modernity,

colonialism and photography, popular Indian visual culture, Indian studio photography, and the more general field of visual anthropology.



Tackling the Grand Challenges

The UCL Grand Challenges use cross-disciplinary collaborations to address six areas related to matters of pressing societal concern: Global Health, Sustainable Cities, Cultural Understanding, Human Wellbeing, Justice & Equality and Transformative Technology.

The Grand Challenge of Cultural Understanding worked on a number of initiatives under the heading 'India Voices' throughout 2017 and 2018. Its aim was to promote UCL's activity with and in India on a range of topics including challenging gender inequality, catastrophe prevention and using architecture to create healthier communities.

The Centre for the Study of South Asia and the Indian Ocean World has now picked up the baton of examining the subcontinent at UCL. It promotes research and teaching related to the geographical region of South Asia and its intersections with the wider world, including the South Asian diaspora.



Academic Spotlight: David Osrin, Professor of Global Health at UCL

Professor (Dr) David Osrin is an expert in Global Health at UCL and a Wellcome Trust Senior Research Fellow in Clinical Science. Based in Mumbai since 2004, he works in an urban health research collaboration with SNEHA (Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action).

Researching within the broad remit of urban health, he is particularly interested in complex social interventions and research ethics, and art and science's utility in raising public awareness of health. We spoke to David to find out more about his life and work in India...

Can you give us a brief overview of your research in India?

My research has come a long way since I first began working in India in 2004. I started out looking at ways to improve the health of newborn babies in the Mumbai region, working with an excellent organisation called SNEHA. More recently though I've been working with organisations like SNEHA to tackle violence against women – an increasingly important issue in India.

I also work closely with the Municipal Corporation of Mumbai, the Family Planning Centre of India, and other health professionals in the area.

What got you interested in the subject in the first place?

When I first began working here, I noticed how committed and passionate everyone was about improving public health in India. It was this passion which inspired

me to pursue my research to the extent that I have.

While public health has been an issue for a long time, it's only in the last decade that violence against women has been a mainstream topic in India. Thanks to a number of landmark legal cases the government has begun to take the issue much more seriously, and I'm so pleased our research techniques are being used to make a difference.

What difference do you hope it will make?

My vision is to contribute to a social transformation that is taking place throughout the world with respect to equality. In the case of India, my hope is that it will continue to lead to a reduction in violence against women. One of the things that stands out for me is that when we bring the local community together, anything is possible!

Can you tell us about the Institute's relationship with India?

The Institute of Global Health is not the only part of UCL working in India of course, and there are other colleagues at the Institute doing great work here too. Together with our partners, we've succeeded in engaging state level government in India to bring about some significant policy changes. As well as the work I've been doing there, Professor Audrey Prost has also achieved some great results with another Indian NGO called Ekjut – on improving the health and nutrition of new born children and adolescents.

What can UCL learn from your time working in India? What can the UK learn?

Aside from collaborating with people with a different background and outlook to my own, I've seen the power when communities come together to tackle societal challenges like public health. Legal intervention, emotional support and shelter are needs that we all share, so what we learn in India can be applied to the UK and vice versa.

What are some of your highlights from living in India?

Having been involved in some hugely important and large-scale research projects, in true collaboration with equal partners, to deliver world-class research.

I'm proud of the fact that during my time here we've seen the transformation of countless individuals. I'm also really proud of the public engagement work we've done, bringing together the disciplines of health, art and science, which led to a hugely successful festival called Dharavi (or Alley Galli) Biennale.

What has it been like working in the Indian slums?

I am very privileged to spend my working days in an informal settlement but not to live there. Not everyone has that privilege. The impact on me has been profound, and the importance I place on certain things is very different now to when I was living in the West.



The challenges associated with finding clean water, a shelter to withstand the elements, and the need for electricity have all given me a greater appreciation of the basic health and wellbeing needs we all share.

What would you like to say to other academics at UCL thinking of collaborating with others in India?

I think they should absolutely collaborate here if they can. In my view, the academic and research capability of teachers in India is on a par with the UK. Also, I've never experienced being hampered by the government structures in place in India. In fact, quite the opposite.

The number of people who are willing to participate in the research has also been incredibly valuable for my research. There's a lot of enthusiasm in India among the public for taking part in research – perhaps more so than the UK.

It goes without saying that the intercultural interaction which informs my research has also enhanced my experience here.



Student *spotlight:* Ruthwik Bellam

Ruthwik Bellam is an MSc student at the UCL Bartlett School of Architecture. He is part of the 'Space Syntax: Architecture and Cities' MSc programme, which aims to further the understanding of the built environment by analysing the relationship between spatial design and social outcomes. Originally from Hyderabad, we spoke to Ruthwik to find out about his experience as a UCL student so far.

What led you to apply for UCL?

I had decided to pursue Space Syntax, and there is no better place to do so than where it originated, at UCL. I did my undergrad in architecture from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur. I travelled and interned in Spain, Singapore and Sri Lanka and after that I got back to my home city of Hyderabad, where I worked as a freelance architect. Throughout all of this I've been in contact with UCL alumni from this specific course at The Bartlett.

The Bartlett also happens to be the number one school of architecture in the latest QS rankings, which validated my choice.

What was it about studying in London that appealed to you?

I had the option to choose between London and NYC for my masters, and it had to be London. I've always been

drawn towards London as a city, through reading and so on. Even the course I'm studying is developed around the city itself.

What are your favourite things about living here?

It has to be the diverse and engaging cultures that the city has to offer. I'm living in Shoreditch which is quite known for its street art, cafes, and it's also where the start-up culture is manifesting right now. It's vibrant. I'm sharing an apartment with a friend. There is also the option of student accommodation throughout the city, and some quite close to the campus too.

Camden is another locality that I really like – I got to know of it through one of my study visits. We visit buildings of different typologies, ranging from research institutes to schools to co-working spaces to hospitals. After which I ensure to explore

the neighbourhoods they're placed in. I've been a frequent visitor to Camden Market ever since my first visit.

And speaking of markets, there are plenty of those around: I like how they're a part of life; you can look forward to a vintage market on a Saturday, or a farmer's market on a Thursday. The parks of London are another highlight – just the thought of having them around is a great feeling. You are constantly aware that you can take a step back from the daily grind and relax no matter where you are in London.

How did you find the process of applying here?

The application was quite straightforward: I just followed the instructions on the website! I also connected with some course alumni on LinkedIn for some brief conversations to provide a perspective on studying here.



Above
UCL's new Student Centre

How do you find the work/life balance of studying at UCL?

It's for you to strike the balance: we have three terms and the first time is quite hectic with lectures and submissions, then modules decrease and a research-orientated approach takes precedence. Term three is entirely in our hands – we're working on our dissertations.

How is your dissertation going?

Quite well actually. You have an assigned supervisor to guide you through the process. It's a rigorous process, constantly developing on swift, detailed and critical feedback from the supervisor. You start with a research question and as you go on you tend to explore more. So far, architecture has been studied in terms of subjective understanding but a scientific approach to spatial environment and design hasn't really existed before, and that's what this course provides you with. It's exhilarating, and that's what keeps you going.

Do you have a plan for what you'd like to do next?

Honestly, I would love to work in London. If not I plan to start a practice deploying space syntax in India. Let's see how it goes.

Was it nerve-wracking to move to a new city?

Not at all actually! The most nerve-wracking experience was when I landed in Spain. Adding to the language barrier was a logistical mishap. So having experienced that, this was very smooth.

How do you prefer to get around the city?

I mix and match but I prefer bus rides over the tube as you get to see more of the city, and you can make a note of what needs further exploration. Even in the space of a short commute, you have quite contrasting characteristics for different areas, which contributes to the vibrancy of the city.

Has it been easy to build up a community in London?

There are a lot of students here so the common interests lead to easy connections. There are many networking events happening as well – the Bartlett International Lectures are open so you have a diverse audience and there are quite often drinks after where you can chat with people.

A lot of my friends in London are in the creative industry so you also hear about events, art galleries and things like that. Random people that you bump into can become good connections – that's an interesting characteristic of this city that I hadn't really experienced before moving here.

Find out more about studying at UCL at ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students

Alumni spotlight

Pooja Bhale studied MSc Conservation at UCL. Since studying in London, Pooja has returned to India to put her conservation knowledge into practice, and now works as the Director of the Protecterra Ecological Foundation in Maharashtra.

What was it like to study at UCL?

Studying an MSc in Conservation at UCL seemed like a big leap for me at the time. Up to that point I had just seen myself as an average student, so it was a humbling experience to be accepted to study there. I found myself mingling with a very different crowd all of a sudden – not better or worse than before, just different. I think the difference is that there is so much history at UCL and I'm very proud to be part of that now.

Tell us about your work today.

I'm the Director of the Protecterra Ecological Foundation, which I started in 2010. Protecterra aims to inspire behavioural change amongst the public through raising awareness, educating and doing outreach work on environmental and ecological issues.

My work involves everything from ensuring we have stationery in place to fundraising, and from coming up with the ideas to delivering them. The ability to be so efficient at everything and being a multi-talker is something I learnt while I was living in the UK. My biggest achievement is that I've put a smile on people's faces through my work and I'm able to help animals and nature thrive in the ways they should thrive.



How else has UCL helped you to achieve your ambitions?

Although I had a fantastic experience living and studying in the UK, I don't think I fully appreciated my time at UCL until after I had left. It dawned on me one day while I was working in the field in India how much the course had taught me and I've taken that into my own teaching as a professor.

One of the greatest things my Master's gave me was an insight into creating a bottom-up approach to conservation. This kind of community-led approach is not very familiar in India as the country tends to focus more on a top-down approach to policy-making.

Although the community-led approach takes longer, it lasts longer too, and it's something my organisation has used to bring about change in India. Although a change to the law may have an immediate effect, I realised that people ultimately like to break the rules! By introducing a community-led approach to conservation it enables people to see the value in what they're doing. They're not just blindly following what they're told to do.

What was the best thing about studying at UCL?

I would say the grandeur and prestige of being there. I still remember having an offer from another university to



study my Master's and I was actually more inclined to study there. It was only when I spoke to my tutor for my degree course that I realised the impact that UCL would have on my long-term prospects.

I find that people I deal with in India look up when I tell them I studied at UCL. Being a UCL alumnus has also opened many doors to meeting other influential people in India who studied there too.

I owe a lot to my time at UCL and I've also made friendships for life. Some of the people I studied with are now my closest friends and I'm still in touch with them 10 years later, even though we may be physically in different countries.

What advice would you give to someone from India looking to study in the UK?

I keep telling people back home to step out of India if they ever get the chance. If someone's family can afford it or a scholarship is available, then do it.

And although the US and Australia may have some great universities, I always recommend choosing the UK over those countries. The historical links between the UK and India means we have very similar governance, judiciary and other bureaucratic structures in place.

What are some of the challenges of studying overseas do you think?

Independent learning is central to the UK higher education system and so self-discipline is really important. Speaking as someone who came through the Indian education system, I can tell you that we are spoon-fed much more than in the UK. Once you get past this though, it's really rewarding.

For me I learnt to be confident in my approach, I got to learn about different cultures, and I got to interact with people all over the world. Whenever someone studies abroad, it's important to remember that there is so much more to our time there than the degree itself.

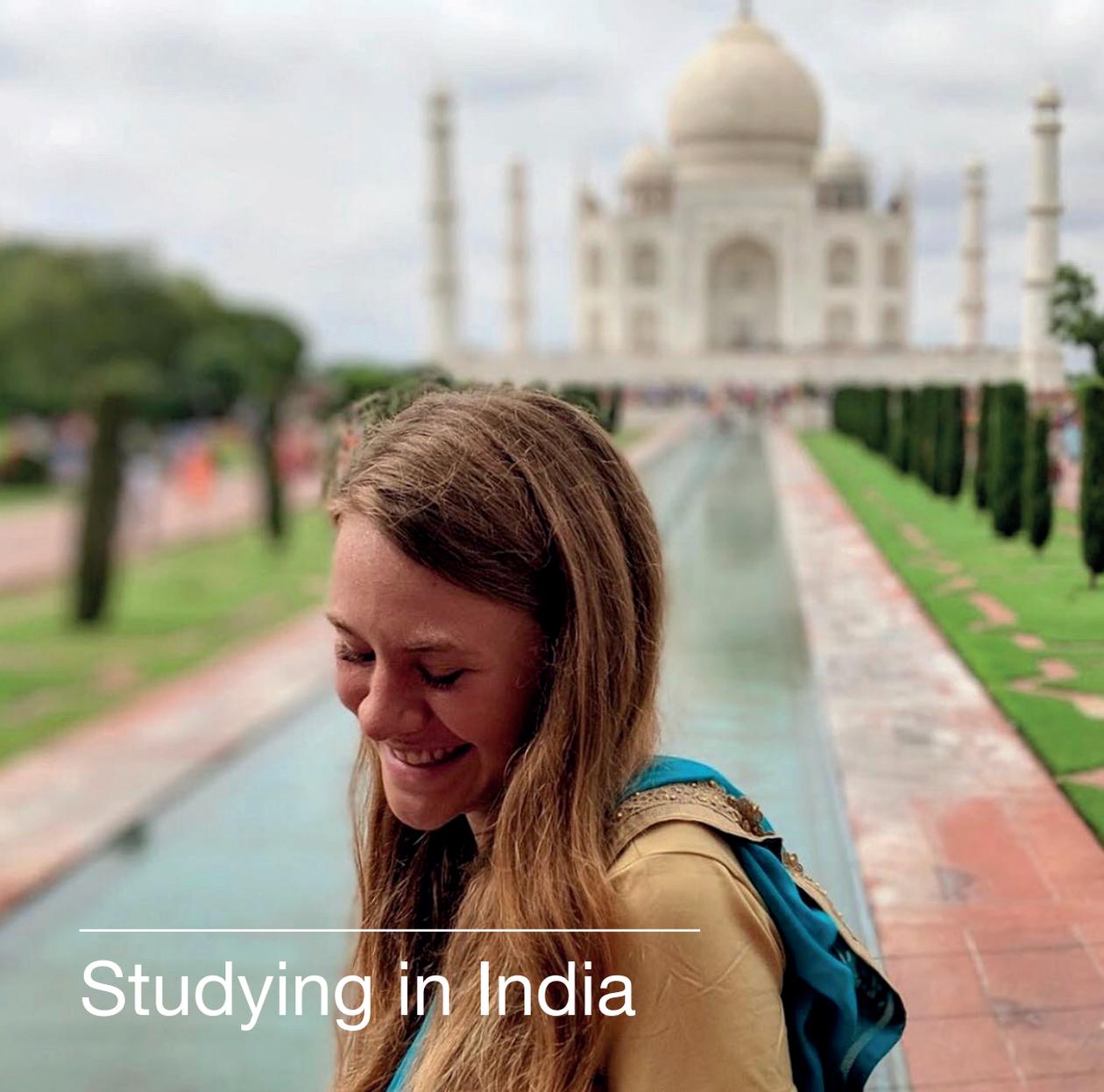
What was it like living and studying in London?

It was fantastic. Living in London has helped to mould me into the person I am today and as a result I am more independent, world-wise, liberal and culturally diverse than when I first arrived there.

I still see London as home even today. I love it there! And that's speaking as someone who is definitely not a city girl either! In fact, I always look back on my time in the UK with a smile on my face and I'm grateful that I get to go back to visit now as an informed tourist who has friends all over the country.

UCL would love to hear from more alumni in India.

Get in touch and find out about volunteering opportunities at ucl.ac.uk/alumni



Studying in India

UCL aims to give its students a global experience, and thanks to the support of UCL Study Abroad and a range of bursaries, students interested in India can go beyond the classroom and visit the country itself.

Over the summer of 2018, UCL student Sara (European and International Social & Political Studies), spent six weeks in India thanks to support from the UCL Global Experience Bursary. She wrote about her time on the International Summer School (ISS) in New Delhi and subsequent volunteering opportunities in Bharatpur and Gurgaon.



While walking through the extremely crowded Chandni Chowk, one of the oldest markets in Old Delhi, I was surprised by how intense everything in India seems to be: the colours, the smells, the noises, the emotions. In that same moment, almost overwhelmed by such intensity, I was already aware that my six weeks in India would have been some of the most incredible of my life. Indeed, being immersed in its complex and fascinating culture, I developed real insights into this amazing country.

The four-week academic programme was engaging and deeply formative. With India as a study model, three different modules (Democracy, Governance & International Relations; Growth, Development & Sustainability and Society, Culture & Heritage) introduced me to a range of issues that are shaping the contemporary world.

This course gave me a new perspective on the subjects I was already familiar with - I am a European Social and Political Studies student specialising in International Relations - while introducing me to completely new topics.

Furthermore, I had the opportunity to visit numerous UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the Red Fort and Qutub Minar in Delhi, the breathtaking Taj Mahal, the legendary birthplace of Krishna, Vrindavan; and Amber Fort in Jaipur.

For the two final weeks, I was part of the Service Learning, where we had the opportunity to work as volunteers. In the first week, I volunteered for WWF in Bharatpur, Rajasthan. Here, I explored Keoladeo National Park, meeting with park officials and rickshaw pullers, learning how to test the park's water, visiting a school to learn about the WWF's programmes for teaching students about conserving water and even embarking on a bird watching cycle tour.

In the second week, I worked in a local school in Gurgaon for Ritinjali - an NGO providing education to children and adults from disadvantaged backgrounds- where I taught English, and helped out in the classroom.

Both weeks were a great opportunity for inner development and personal growth and it demonstrated to me once more how diverse, contradictory and beautiful India is. During these six weeks, I also had the chance to learn from other students coming from all over the world and share with them everyday experiences.

While constituting a huge difference from what I am used to, my experience in India with ISS was profoundly enriching and I am extremely grateful for it. The combination of tradition and development, maintaining its roots but looking to the future, is an inspiring model of demographic and economic growth, from which I definitely learnt a lot.

I would not hesitate to recommend a similar experience to other students and I am very thankful that the Global Experience Bursary helped me to spend almost two months of my summer in such a stimulating and enriching way.

UCL has exchange agreements with over 250 institutions in 40 countries across five continents, including 48 of the world's top 100 universities.

To find out more about studying abroad through UCL, visit ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad

Keep up to date

Find out more about UCL's work in India and across the world:

www.ucl.ac.uk/global

🐦 Twitter: @UCL_Global
📷 Instagram: UCL_Global

Watch our video about UCL and India:
www.bit.ly/UCL_India

Visit UCL's South Asia Regional Network page:
www.ucl.ac.uk/global/regional-focus

IT'S ALL ACADEMIC

– the campaign for UCL

In September 2016, UCL launched It's All Academic – a major new engagement and philanthropy campaign for world-impacting research, far-reaching student support and transformative capital projects.

The campaign has two big ambitions:
A fundraising target of £600m – one of the biggest fundraising targets ever set by a UK or European university
– and an engagement target of 250,000 volunteering hours
– to build our global community of alumni, supporters and advocates.

Find out more at ucl.ac.uk/campaign



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This publication was printed on recycled paper using only vegetable-based inks.
All paper waste from the manufacturing of this publication was recycled and reused

