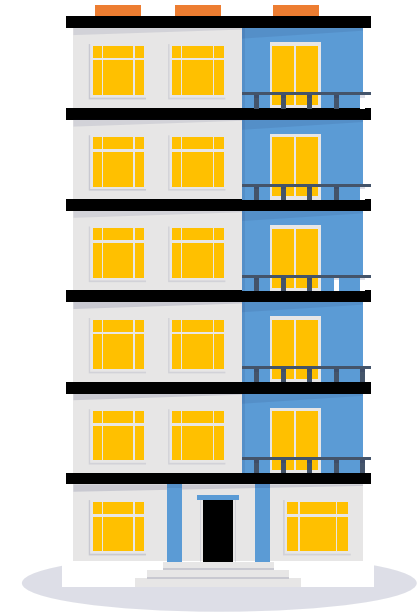


International Student Private Accommodation Webinar

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Today's Agenda

1. UCL Accommodation;
2. What is private accommodation?
3. How to choose private accommodation?
 1. Student specific accommodation
 2. Non-student specific accommodation
4. Different zones and areas in London
5. Contracts and things to check for
6. What to do after you've secured your accommodation



We will answer your pre-submitted questions after each topic and will answer any other questions you have at the end of the presentation.



1. UCL Accommodation

UCL accommodation

Undergraduates are **guaranteed** a place if...

[Click here for more information on the criteria](#)

- You are a full-time, first-year student.
- You have accepted UCL as your firm choice by 10 June 2023.
- You have not previously lived or studied at a Higher Education Institution in Greater London (inside the M25 motorway).
- You apply for single room person accommodation by 10 June 2023.

UCL Accommodation applications have now closed

UCL accommodation

Postgraduates are **prioritised** a place if...

[Click here for more information on the criteria](#)

- You are a first-year, full-time international student.
- You have firmly accepted an offer to study at UCL, conditional or unconditional, by 30 June 2023.
- You have not previously lived or studied at a Higher Education Institution in Greater London (inside the M25 motorway).
- You apply for single room person accommodation by 30 June 2023.

UCL Accommodation applications have now closed

UCL accommodation

- Undergraduates cannot select a specific hall as a part of their application.
 - Allocations will consider their room type preferences, maximum weekly rent allowances, preferred distance from campus, etc.,
- Most offers are made between July and the end of August.
- You should look into private accommodation if you are:
 - not interested in staying in UCL Accommodation;
 - an affiliate/exchange student studying at UCL for less than a full academic year;
 - a postgraduate student (you are prioritised but not guaranteed UCL Accommodation)
 - an undergraduate not satisfied with UCL rooms/halls.

Answering your questions...

1. Can I arrive early or late for UCL Accommodation?
2. Does UCL have any accommodation where non-UCL students (such as a partner or housemate) can live in addition to the UCL student?
3. For UCL student accommodation, can I bring my parent to take care of my child instead of my husband?
4. I've been told to apply for the UCL Accommodation Waiting List. What does this mean?
5. What can I do if I cannot secure UCL accommodation in August and only have less than a month to secure private accommodation?
6. How much is the deposit for UCL Accommodation and when will I have to pay it?
7. Are the University of London (Intercollegiate Halls) part of UCL? Can I apply directly to them?



2. What is private accommodation?

Any accommodation not provided by UCL!

Types of private accommodation: Student Specific

Intercollegiate Halls of Residence and other University Housing

- Owned by universities.
- Include (only) students from multiple universities/subjects/levels of study.
- Choose between catered and self-catered.
- Different contract length.
- Usually rent covers utility bills.
- Less expensive.

Registered Independent Halls of Residence

- Not owned by universities.
- Run privately or as charities.
- Same as the one on the left but more expensive.

Types of private accommodation: Non-student Specific

Flats/Houses

- Privately owned.
- Live by yourself or with a roommate.
- Could also choose to have one or multiple roommates allocated together.
- A lot of freedom with choices but more complicated to apply.

Homestay (Host Family)

Accommodation

- Living part of a host (local) family.
- Can be a very popular option, particularly with students who are new to London and its culture and/or who may be looking to improve their English language skills.

Answering your questions...

1. What are the pros and cons of living in student accommodation (UCL and private student accommodation)?
2. What is recommended? Student accommodation or private?
3. Which kind of accommodation do you recommend, when you have a lower budget (£800 - £900) and it is your first time in UK?
4. Can you share accommodation with students from other universities?
5. Is student accommodation more expensive than renting a small, normal flat?
6. How do you find rooms for couples e.g., partner?
7. How can I find short-term rental housings (3 months) in London?



3. How to choose private accommodation?

Important terms to remember

Rent in the UK is displayed as per week or per month.

- **PW** = per week
- **PM** = per month
- **PCM** = per calendar month (same as PM)
- **'Let'** and **'rent'** mean the same thing



Important terms to remember

- **Landlord:** A person who owns and rents out land, a building, or accommodation.
- **Letting Agent/Agency:** A person/company who manages rental properties on behalf of owners.
 - They will have access to a lot of properties and can help you find a suitable one.
- **Tenant:** A person who occupies land or property rented from a landlord.



Important terms to remember

- **Guarantor:** Someone who agrees to pay the rent if you cannot. They have to be financially stable and a UK resident.
 - Without a guarantor, students have to pay rent bi-annually or annually up-front (in the worst case).
- **UCL as a guarantor:** Pay £50 to have UCL act as guarantor (UCL Rent Guarantor Scheme, RGS).
 - [Information on the eligibility criteria and how to apply](#)
 - Some landlords won't accept UCL as a guarantor.





3. How to choose private accommodation?

1. Student specific accommodation

Application resources: Student specific accommodation (Halls)

Intercollegiate Halls	Independent Halls	All Types
<p>University of London Housing</p>	<p>International Students House</p> <p>IQ</p> <p>Scape Halls</p> <p>Chapter Halls</p> <p>London Nest</p> <p>Unite Students</p> <p>Chinese site: Uhomes</p>	<p>University of London Housing Services</p> <p>Includes homestay options: Britannia Student Services</p>

Student specific accommodation (Halls)

- Start researching right away and applying as soon as possible.
 - Cheapest are gone quickly and prices may increase.
- Can be viewed online or in-person.
 - View it in-person if you can.
- Booked online.

Application process: Student specific accommodation (Halls)

- 1) Some will ask for proof of student status before you can pay deposit.
 - Download the statement of student status from portico once you've completed pre-enrolment. Some will accept an offer letter from UCL. Some will accept your confirmation of UK Visa.

- 2) Pay a deposit.
 - Via international transfer or online payment.

- 3) Deposit will be held.
 - Some are refunded upon end of contract but can be deducted if things are broken. Other deposits contribute towards your accommodation cost.

- 4) Deposits will be refunded if conditions of the university offer aren't met.
 - Some will offer free-cancellation regardless of the reason but check carefully before booking!



3. How to choose private accommodation?

2. Non-student specific accommodation

Application resources:

Non-student specific accommodation

All types	Specific Agencies	Other
Rightmove University of London Housing Services Zoopla Gumtree Britannia Student Services	Foxtons Victorstone Savills Knight Frank Marsh and Parsons Chase Evans Full list of letting agencies by area	Shared houses: SpareRoom Direct connection to landlords: OpenRent

Non-student specific accommodation

- Properties usually open up 1 to 2 months before the move-in date.
 - Looking too early might not be too helpful.
 - Check the move-in date listed.
 - Apply as soon as possible if you are sure about the property.
- Can be viewed online or in-person.
 - View it in-person if you can because sometimes the pictures online aren't up-to-date.
 - Remember to check the facilities carefully for problems.
- Booked online or offline.

Application process: Non-student specific accommodation

1) Message the landlord/agent.

- Via the website/app, phone or email. Can also ask to add their WhatsApp/WeChat.

2) Will be asked *many* questions.

- About your occupation, gender, age, no. of people renting, pets, visa status, guarantor, etc.

3) Could be rejected upfront based on the answers to these questions.

- But don't lie about it!

4) Make an offer through a form.

- Includes basic information, length of contract, payment schedule, rental price, etc.

5) Offers compete with each other.

- The landlord will choose the one that benefits them the most.
- If you are sure you want to live in a specific accommodation, you can consider raising the rent, renting for longer, or paying upfront (indicated in the offer form).

Application process: Non-student specific accommodation

6) Pay holding deposit.

- First week's rent to take the property off the market.
- This will be deducted from later payments.

7) Fill tenant form.

- The referencing process.
- Fill out what properties you've lived in for the past 2 years.
- Provide proof of address for the last 3 months.

8) Proof of ID/Right-to-rent check.

- Provide a scan of a passport, visa, or [share code](#).

9) ID check.

- Upload photo of yourself.

10) Proof of study.

- Statement of student status on Portico or request from UCL.

11) Sign the contract and pay move-in monies.

- Includes first instalment of rent, security deposit (usually 5 weeks of rent), and may include utility bills.

Students with disabilities

- Newer buildings are more accessible.
 - But London has a lot of older buildings that aren't as accessible.
- Resources:
 - [Ability Housing Association](#)
 - [Equality Advisory and Support Service \(EASS\)](#)
 - [Habinteg Housing Association](#)

Answering your questions...

1. What are the Right to Rent checks? How can I get them done before I arrive in the UK?
2. Can a landlord or estate agent do my Right to Rent checks for me?
3. How can I prove my Right to Rent if I'm only here for 90 days
4. Is it better to search for houses on sites like Zoopla or pay an agent?
5. What are the cheapest but reliable websites for accommodation search? Can you recommend something?
6. How do we find other incoming students as potential flatmates?
7. What happens if we don't have a UK guarantor? Will that negatively impact my ability to sign a lease?
8. The Rent Guarantor Scheme lists the tenancy "must be an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) or a licence agreement for purpose built private student accommodation." What is an Assured Shorthold Tenancy?



4. Different zones and areas in London

Different zones and areas

- RENT PRICE

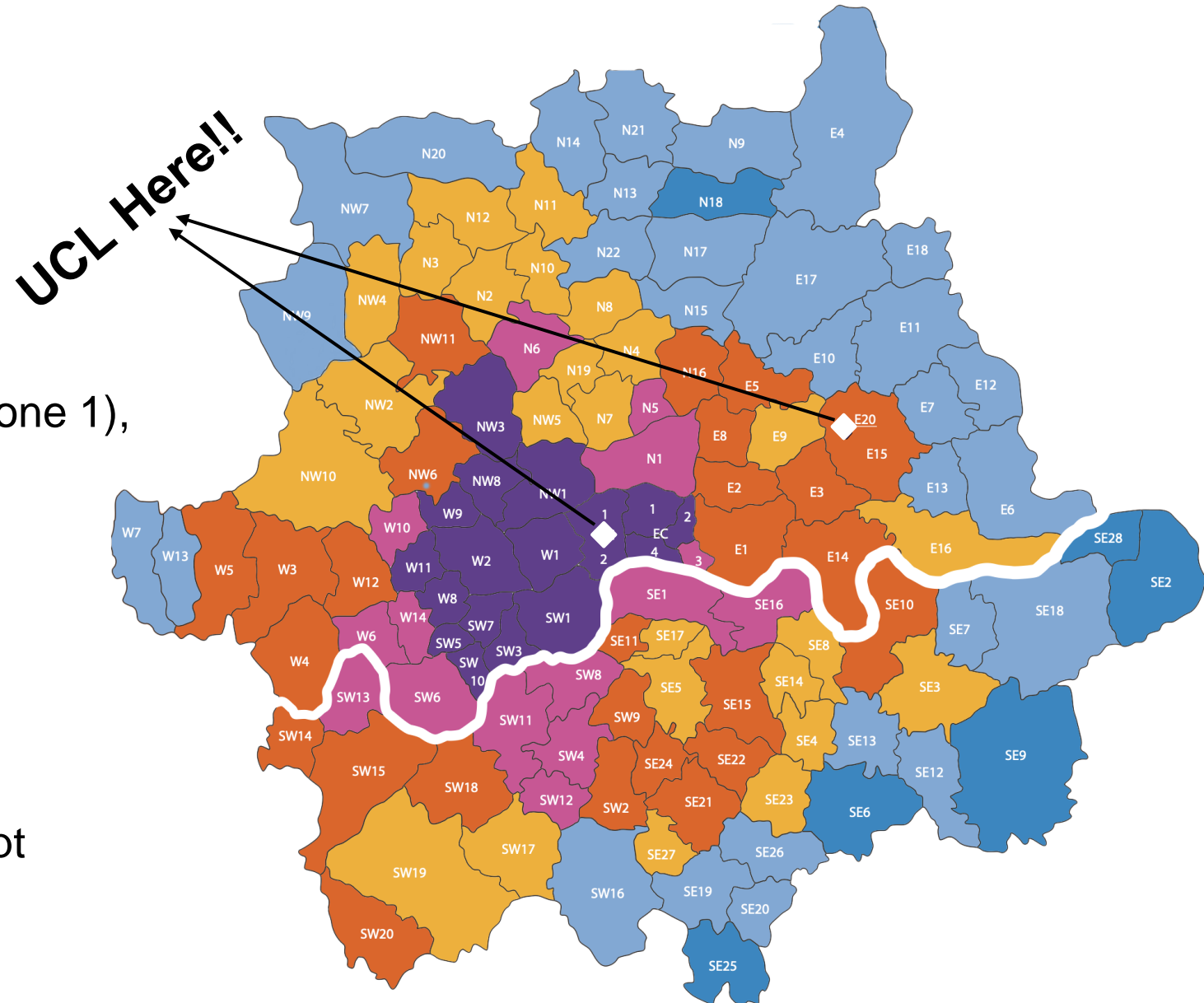
- As you go closer to central London (Zone 1), rent will be much more expensive.

- UTILITY BILLS

- [Average costs](#)

- COUNCIL TAX BAND

- Band A is the cheapest, can be exempt (more on this later).



Different zones and areas

- **TRAVEL TIME**

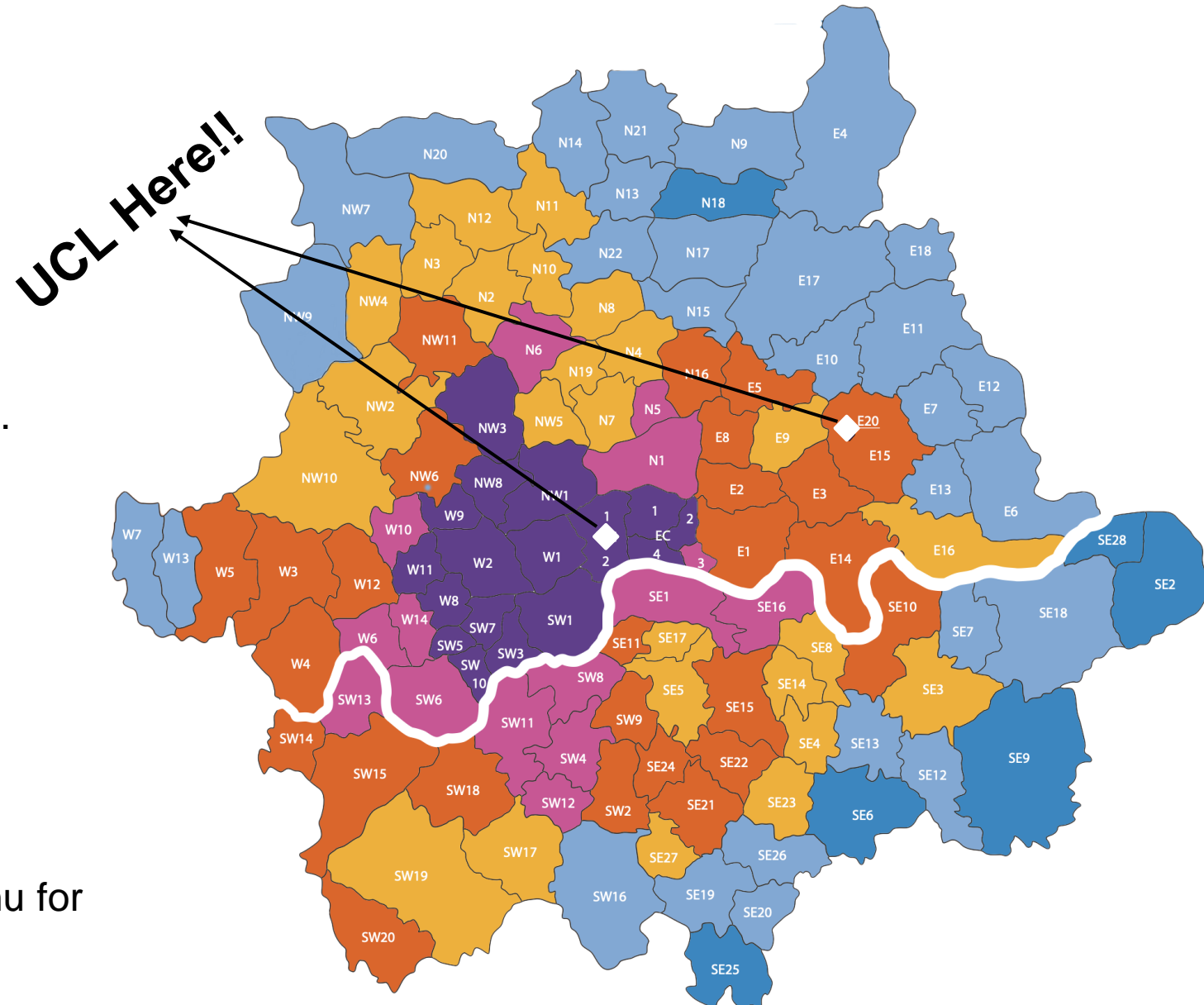
- Find out with City Mapper or Google Maps.
- Also search for nearby supermarkets or restaurants!

- **SAFETY**

- [Search for nearby crime rate.](#)

- **ONLINE INFORMATION**

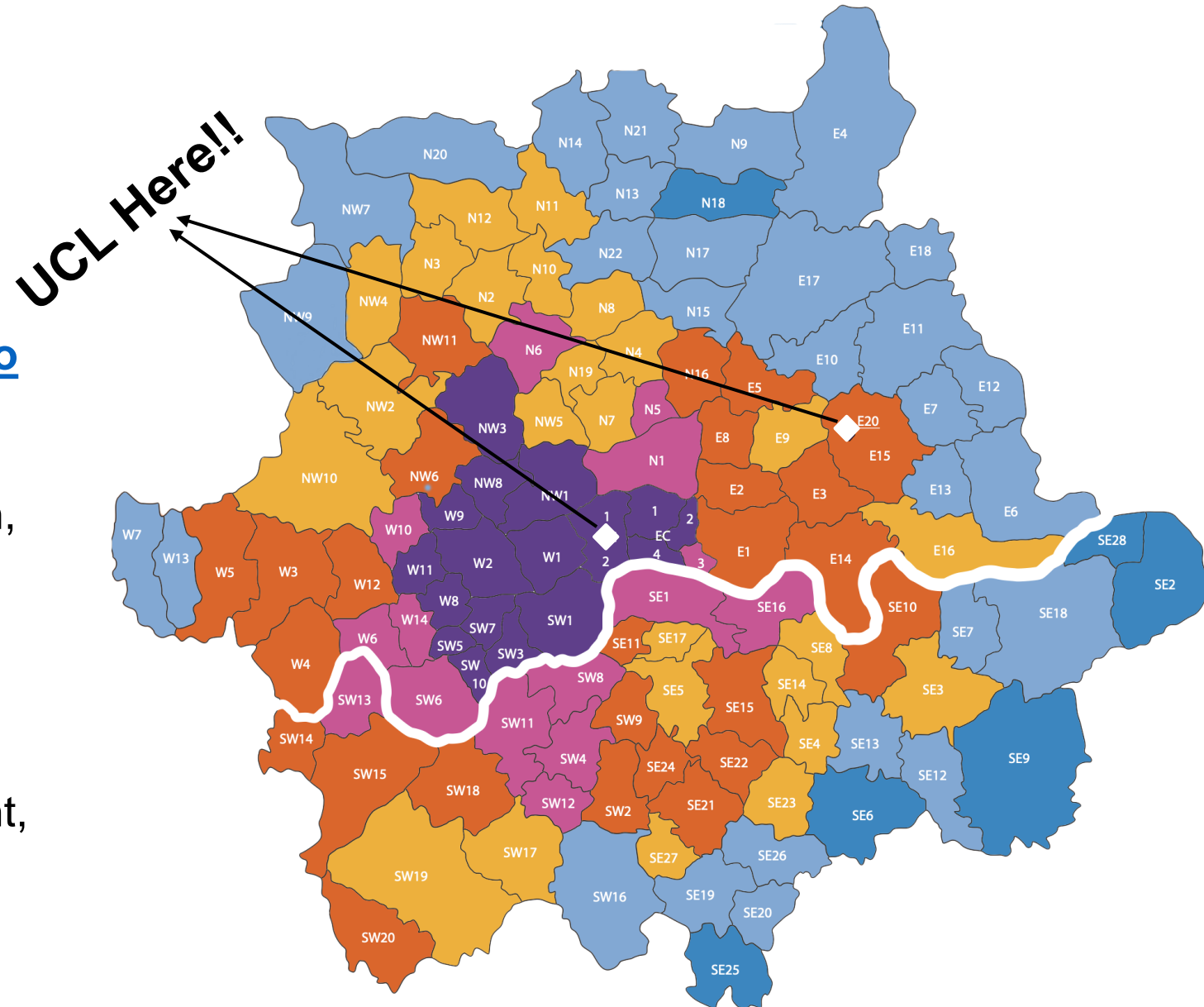
- Search on Google, Reddit, or XiaoHongShu for student advice and reviews.



Different zones and areas

- [UCL's top 20 locations for students to live in:](#)

- Four locations in each area of London, North, East, South and West.
- Includes average cost of renting a room, cost of a travel pass, nearby supermarkets, activities and entertainment, parks, and nearest tube stations.



Answering your questions...

1. Where are places with cheap accommodation?
2. How do we calculate our budget per person, per week for our duration of stay? [Watch two international students talking about their monthly budget.](#)
3. Is £1,000 enough to get a comfortable room near campus?
4. How can I find accommodation closer to UCL Main Campus?
5. Can I find an affordable student-friendly 1 bed apartment?
6. Which area is the safest?



5. Contracts and things to check for

Forming and checking contracts

- **Read the contract** very carefully *before* you sign it!
 - Ensure that you are able to carry out everything in the contract because it is legally-binding.
 - If you are unsatisfied with your contract, negotiate new terms with the agent/landlord.
 - Check your contract for break clauses and a government-authorized deposit scheme.
 - Have someone you trust read the contract to doublecheck (even better if that person has a legal background).
 - [Read the UoL Housing Services contract checking guide.](#)

Things to look out for

Might be a **scam** if...

- The rent sounds too good to be true (much lower than other properties in that area).
- Asked to pay a holding deposit without viewing the property or making an offer.
- Asked to send money using Western Union or Moneygram to your own friend or relative “to prove that you have sufficient funds.”
- Charged fees for right-to-rent checks, viewing a property or anything other than deposits and move-in money.

Things to look out for

Tips on how to avoid this...

- Search online for reviews of the property, website, or agency.
- [Check the tenancy contract.](#)
- Check contact information and be aware of adverts with no telephone numbers or where the email address is a non-organisational one (i.e., Hotmail, Gmail, etc).
- Check the organisation's website and see if it's the same as the one listed in the advert.
- [More tips on how to avoid scammers.](#)

Things to look out for

Extra Fees...

- Sometimes letting agents/agencies can charge you a fee.
- Any extra fees have to be transparent and made clear at the start of the appointment.
- Do not agree to pay any hidden fees.
- Always ask for a receipt of all payments you have made for the property.

Answering your questions...

1. What is the length of a typical rent agreement/lease?
2. Is London accommodation based on yearly contracts?
3. Is it necessary to sign a 12 month lease or is it still possible to look for short term leases in such a competitive rental market in London?
4. What are the UK guidelines surrounding breaking a lease, for example if a lease is 12 months but you dislike the apartment and want to leave it sooner?
5. What happens if I pay a deposit and I change my mind before I move in?



6. What to do after you've secured your accommodation?

Utility Bills

- Only for non-student specific accommodation.
 - Rent in student accommodation usually covers these.
 - If your tenancy contract does not say “bills included,” you will have to pay these.
- Electricity, gas, water, WIFI, and TV licence.
 - Some of these might be covered in the rent or paid by the landlord and you will have transfer it to them.
 - Your property manager will inform you of these payments.
 - They will also be written out in your tenancy contract.
- Set up an account online.
 - Preferably before move-in date.

Utility Bills

- [Electricity and Gas \(Energy\) bills accounts.](#)
- [Water bills account.](#)
- [Broadband \(WIFI\) account.](#)
- [More information on utility bills.](#)
 - Includes money-saving tips, comparing tariffs.
 - Covers areas other than utility bills such as travel, mobile phones, and credit cards.

Council tax

- All private accommodation requires this.
 - Student accommodations will usually not require this (they will have automatically applied for exemption).
- Set up an account with the area's Council Tax department.
 - You will receive a letter in the post box on how to do this and how to pay.
 - If not, search online or ask your property manager!
- Apply for full exemption.
 - If your household only includes full-time students with at least one year of study.
 - If your household also includes non-full-time students, you may still qualify for a discount.
 - [Check your eligibility here.](#)

Moving in

1) Collect keys and check in.

- Bring your ID.
- Sign a few more documents.

2) Things originally in the accommodation.

- Don't throw it away or damage it! Your security deposit will be deducted.
- Take a video of the accommodation.

3) Contact property manager if any facility is not working.

- E.g., Heater, sink, fridge, etc.

4) Take pictures of the electricity and/or gas metres.

- So that you don't have to pay any extra costs from the previous tenant.
- You will also need this when setting up your account.

5) When you move out...

- If the amount deducted from the security deposit is absurd, you can debate it with the landlord, don't say yes too easily.

6) Read page 10 of the ["How to rent guide."](#)

Living with roommates

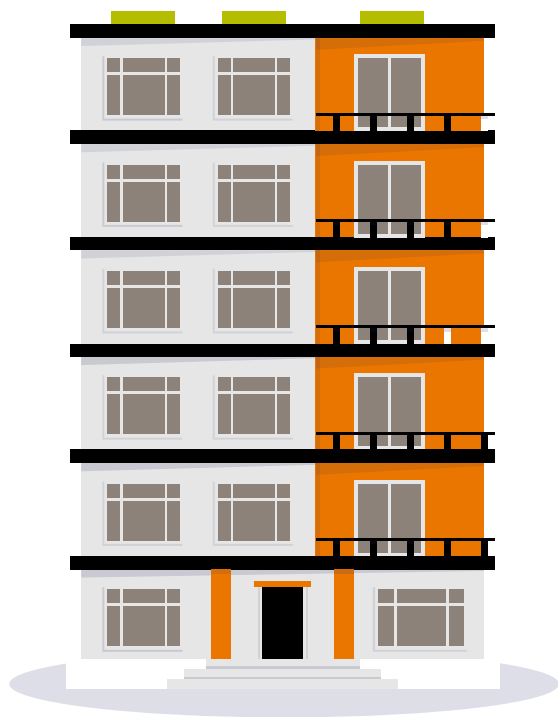
- Meet with your roommates before booking an accommodation.
 - In-person or online with platforms such as MatesPlace.
- Set clear boundaries with your roommates from the start.
 - Plan out a cleaning schedule and establish a standard for cleaning.
 - Ask each other questions like “who is allowed to touch/use each other’s stuff?”, “how often will we have the heater on?”, “who’s allowed to come over and when?”...
- Make sure everyone pays utility bills.
 - Could put everyone’s names on the contract.
 - Or have each person be responsible for paying one type of utility bill, then later transferring each other.
- Communication is key!
 - Be nice and respectful, but don’t suffer in silence.

Answering your questions...

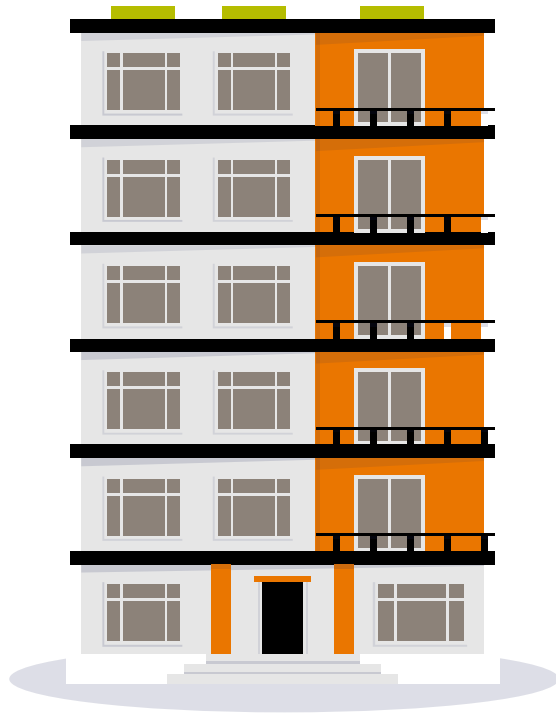
1. Can I get some kind of document from UCL that exempts me from paying council tax? I'm doing a 15 month postgraduate course.

General resources

- [University of London - Private Housing Guide](#)
- [UCL – Alternative Accommodation for Students](#)
- [UK Government - How to rent: the checklist for renting in England](#)



Any new questions?



Thanks!

If you have any more questions after this webinar,

[contact us through askUCL](#)

If you have time, please complete the [2 minute feedback form](#)