New Students’ Guide

Getting started on your UCL journey
Welcome

Congratulations on joining us at UCL! You are joining a diverse and curious student community where you will have the freedom and courage to challenge ideas, to think differently and to take on some of the biggest issues of our time with the potential to make real world impact. Welcome to your student community – we hope you are excited!

Starting out at university can be a time of big change. Alongside the New Students website, the Countdown to UCL emails, the Welcome to UCL app and others, this guide is here to help you figure out what you need to do before and after you arrive. It will also introduce you to some of the opportunities and activities on offer.

This guide is aimed at any student new to UCL, from first-year undergraduate freshers all the way to experienced researchers. You’ll see some sections aimed specifically at international students – read these for more info if you’re from outside the UK.

We hope you find this guide useful, and we look forward to meeting you!

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Download the Welcome to UCL app – search ‘Welcome to UCL’ in the App Store or Google Play

Visit the New Students website: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/new-students

This guide is accurate at time of publishing (August 2019), but please be aware that information is subject to change.
SECTION 1
ARRIVING AT UCL

How to find out more
Pre-enrolment and enrolment
Settling in
New Students website

This guide is just the beginning! Make sure to check out the ‘New Students’ pages of our UCL Students website for lots more information on everything you need to do to prepare for your arrival and what to expect when you get here.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/new-students

Checklists

It can sometimes be tricky to stay on top of everything you need to do when you start at university. We’ve tried to make things easier by putting together a number of checklists on our New Students site, so you can cross things off as you go.

These are arranged into three different categories: before you arrive, your first few days, and your first few weeks. Each checklist is then broken down into essential activities, recommended activities, and some optional extras. There are even checklists for any students arriving late.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/new-students/checklists

Countdown to UCL blog

As well as the checklists, announcements and information on the enrolment process, our ‘New Students’ website hosts the Countdown to UCL, a comprehensive blog to help you get an idea of what it’s like to be a UCL student.

The Countdown is arranged into 12 different themes, from ‘London life’ to ‘Settling in’. If you’re starting in September, then you’ll receive an email recap for each of these themes in the run-up to the beginning of term, but the articles are available all year round.

Countdown articles are mostly written by students – undergraduates, postgraduates and researchers – so be sure to read through them for a first-hand account of life on campus.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/new-students/countdown-ucl

Welcome to UCL app

To help you organise your first few weeks, which can be packed full with induction events and social activities, we’ve created the Welcome to UCL app.

This allows you to build your own schedule of welcome events, set reminders, navigate your way around campus, connect with others, find out more about services and opportunities, and keep track of everything going on with notifications.

There are two separate guides within the app, for those starting in September and those starting in January.

Available on iOS and Android – search ‘Welcome to UCL’ on the App Store or Google Play.

Pre-enrolment and enrolment

The two steps to becoming an official UCL student.

Pre-enrolment

This is an online process in which you accept the conditions of your offer, verify the information we hold about you and pay your fees.

International students also have the opportunity to sign up to the International Student Orientation Programme during pre-enrolment (see page 29).

You’ll receive an email inviting you to complete pre-enrolment usually a few weeks before the start date of your programme. Please note you’ll only receive this once you’ve accepted and met all the conditions of your offer.

You’ll firstly create a password for your UCL account. You’ll then be asked to log in to Portico (the UCL student information service) using that password and your UCL user ID. Both of these will stay with you throughout your time at UCL.

Once you’ve logged in, follow the on-screen instructions to complete pre-enrolment. If you have any questions, contact details are provided on each page.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/new-students/pre-enrolment

Enrolment

Once you’ve completed pre-enrolment, you’ll receive a confirmation email that contains details about your face-to-face enrolment appointment. All new students need to complete this when they arrive.

Please follow the instructions given and attend at the time and location you’ve been allocated.

You’ll need to bring acceptable ID with you (usually your passport). If you’re an international student with a visa, you’ll also need to bring confirmation of your right to study in the UK – this is usually your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP).

See the New Students website for full information on what to bring with you to your enrolment appointment.

At enrolment, we’ll check your ID, you’ll confirm you accept the terms and conditions of study, you’ll have a chance to pay your fees if you haven’t done so already, and finally you’ll receive a Statement of Student Status (a letter confirming you’re now a UCL student) as well as your student ID card, which you’ll need to keep with you whenever you’re on campus.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/new-students/enrolment-new-students
Settling in

Starting out at university can be tough, whether you’re brand new to studying or an experienced student, but there’s lots of help available.

Feeling homesick?

London is a large city and can sometimes feel a bit chaotic, but remember that with a little time and effort you’re sure to feel settled in and part of the capital’s vibrant and diverse community.

If you find yourself feeling homesick, try your best to get involved. There are lots of ways to do this, from joining a club or society in the Students’ Union to getting out and exploring your neighbourhood with friends – UCL is surrounded by green spaces that are perfect for relaxing.

It’s important to speak to others about your feelings – you’ll probably find that lots of those around you are feeling the same way! It takes time to build up a network of friends and colleagues, so be patient and keep going!

If you find after a few weeks that the feelings haven’t eased, come speak to a Student Support and Wellbeing Adviser (see page 28). They can help you manage your feelings and find solutions.

International students

Culture shock

If this is your first time living in the UK, you may find yourself experiencing culture shock. Adapting to a new environment can be a challenging learning process. This is completely normal and can happen even if you’ve carried out extensive preparation before your arrival or if you have travelled a lot previously.

Make sure you keep in touch with friends and family back home, surround yourself with familiar objects and explore the opportunities living in a new country offers you. The International Student Support team in Student Support and Wellbeing can help you acclimatise and settle in, so get in touch with them via askUCL (see page 31) and they’ll do their best to help.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/international-students
Accommodation

One of the first things you’ll need to do as a new student is secure accommodation.

UCL-managed and intercollegiate accommodation

There’s a variety of accommodation available to UCL students, including halls of residence and student houses. Some is managed by UCL itself, some by the University of London (of which UCL forms a part) or partner providers. UCL guarantees accommodation for full-time, first-year undergraduate students who are studying at UCL for the first time, as well as international first-year postgraduates who are single and meet the eligibility criteria.

The deadline for applying is in May for undergraduate students and in June for postgraduate students.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/accommodation

Wardens and Student Residence Advisers (SRAs)

Every UCL hall of residence has an in-house team of Student Residence Advisers (SRAs), who are current postgraduate students, supported by a Warden, who is a UCL staff member.

The team are there to help you get the most out of life in halls and ensure your safety. They’re available when your hall office is closed and can be contacted through the duty mobile number (see the website).

You can speak to your SRA about any mental health or wellbeing concerns (for you or a fellow student), maintenance issues, or anything affecting your ability to live and study peacefully in your hall.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/life/accommodation/wardens

Help finding private accommodation

If you’re not able to get accommodation in a hall of residence, don’t worry – there’s plenty of support available to help you find somewhere suitable in the private sector.

University of London Housing Services offers a variety of services to help, from housing databases to contract checking.

Be wary of housing scams – these aren’t common, but affect a few students each year. If something seems too good to be true, it usually is! Make sure never to pay any money for a property you haven’t yet seen, and if in doubt contact the Housing Services team.

Web: housing.london.ac.uk

Council tax

Full-time students don’t have to pay council tax (a tax that goes to your local council for services such as transport and police) if they’re living in a property only with other students. If you’re living with non-students, you may be eligible for a discount.

Please note that council tax exemption runs from the start date to the end date of your programme – you may still need to pay council tax for any periods before or after this, for example if you arrive early.

In most cases, you’ll need to apply for an exemption online and will need to provide evidence that you’re a student (the Statement of Student Status letter).

If you’re living in a UCL hall of residence, you’re automatically exempt, so don’t need to take any action.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/life/accommodation/student-council-tax

TV licensing

It’s a legal requirement to have a valid TV licence if you watch or record TV programmes live on TVs, computers, mobile phones or any other devices, or if you watch shows on catch-up using BBC iPlayer.

Web: www.tvlicensing.co.uk
Fees, funding and finance
There are a variety of options to fund your studies and a range of support available if you find yourself struggling.

Funding
Many students with Home or EU status are eligible for loans from Student Finance to help them fund their studies. More information about the funding available from Student Finance can be found on the UK government website.
Web: www.gov.uk/student-finance

Funding for study should ideally be secured before your course starts. For more information on how to fund your course and the financial support available from UCL, visit the UCL website.
Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding

Paying fees as a self-funded student
There are a number of ways to pay your fees if you are self-funded. The easiest option is to use the UCL online payment system, which requires your UCL student ID. You can alternatively pay by cheque or banker’s draft.

Note that there are deadlines for paying your fees (in instalments) depending on when you start your programme in the academic year.
Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/fees/pay-your-fees

Student discounts
London can be an expensive city, but there are a number of ways to save. There are a wide range of student discounts available, often by simply showing your UCL student ID card at retailers, restaurants or elsewhere – it never hurts to ask if a discount is available!

Some students may want to purchase a TOTUM card from the National Union of Students (NUS). This is available for a small fee in 1-year, 2-year and 3-year versions, and grants additional discounts. The card comes with a 1-year free ISIC (International Student Identity Card) for further money off overseas.

Features
Compared to standard current accounts, student bank accounts may offer additional features such as interest-free overdrafts, cash incentives or freebies like railcards.

All accounts will give you a debit card as standard and you’ll be able to manage your money online, over the phone and usually through an app.

Choosing a bank
Many student bank accounts will seem similar, but it pays to do a little research online to find the option best for you.

In addition to the features mentioned above, you might want to consider which banks have branches near where you live. Most major banks have branches near the UCL campus, usually on Tottenham Court Road.

Digital banks
In recent years, more and more students have been moving to digital banks. These allow you to manage your money through an app, online and over the phone, but they’re digital only and don’t have branches. They usually offer one type of account for everyone, and won’t have a ‘student-specific’ option.

Digital banks can sometimes offer perks unavailable through high street banks, such as locking and unlocking your card if you lose it, or free transactions abroad. It can also sometimes be faster to open an account with a digital bank.

Opening an account
You’ll need to provide documentation to confirm that you’re a student. It may be enough to provide your Statement of Student Status (the letter from enrolment) but you should check with the bank to make sure – some banks need documents in a particular format.

You’ll also need to provide ID, typically your passport.

Depending on the bank you choose, it may take several weeks before your account is open and you’re able to use your card.

International students – Further things to consider
It generally pays to open a UK account if you’re an international student. If you don’t, you’ll likely find you build up high charges in foreign transaction fees, and it may be more difficult to do things like take out a phone contract or join a gym.

If you’re studying in the UK for less than 6 months, you might not be able to open an account with certain banks. Instead, it may be easier to use a pre-paid cash card throughout your time at UCL.
Healthcare

It’s vitally important to make sure you can access healthcare during your studies.

When opening an account, you’ll usually need to show your visa (BRP card if you have one) as well as your passport. To avoid any delays, make sure your home address and your term-time (UK) address are both up to date on Portico, so that they appear correctly on your Statement of Student Status and any other letters.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/international-students/international-support/money-and-finances

About the NHS

Even if you’re from the UK, the NHS can sometimes be confusing! Our national health service is free to use and receives funding from taxation, and most NHS services are free at the point of delivery. You should always go to your doctor – your GP (General Practitioner) – first for any physical or mental health concerns. They can refer you to specialist care (usually in a hospital clinic) if needed. One of the first things all new students should do is register with a local GP surgery.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/register-doctor

Ridgmount Practice

UCL’s partner GP surgery, Ridgmount Practice is located just a few streets from our main campus. Many students living in north and central London will fall within its catchment area and will be able to register. Registration involves a simple online form followed by an in-person appointment at the surgery. If you’re eligible to register, we strongly recommend that you do so as soon as possible after your arrival on campus.

In addition to GPs, Ridgmount has a team of nurses on site, who can provide services like travel vaccinations. You can make an appointment to see a doctor or nurse easily over the phone or online.

Web: www.ridgmountpractice.nhs.uk

Other GPs

If you live elsewhere in London or outside the city and can’t register with Ridgmount Practice, you can find your closest GP surgery on the NHS website. You should contact a practice close to where you live to find out how to register there.

All UK students from outside the greater London area are advised to register with a GP in London, as this is where you’ll be spending most of the year. If you go home during the holidays, you can still be seen by your local GP as a temporary patient if needed.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/accessing-healthcare-uk

International students – Eligibility

Eligibility to access healthcare and register with a GP will depend on a number of factors, such as the length of your programme of study and whether or not you are studying on a visa. If you require a Tier 4 visa to study in the UK, you will have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS), allowing you to use NHS services in full.

Whilst the UK remains part of the EU, the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) allows EU students to access healthcare for free. However, EU students are encouraged to apply for pre-settled status once they start at UCL, as this will protect this right once the UK has left the EU.

Web: www.nhs.uk/service-search

International students – Funding your arrival

Because you may not have your card immediately, it’s important to bring sufficient funds to cover your first month in the UK. However, bringing this as cash is risky – choose other options such as pre-paid cash cards or traveller’s cheques.

You may also want to explore some of the digital banking options, which sometimes allow you to open your account prior to your arrival in the UK (see page 11).

Remember that you can pay your UCL fees online, so you shouldn’t need to bring this amount with you.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/register-doctor

Vaccinations

Students are more at risk of certain illnesses than the general population, so it is important to have the appropriate vaccinations and remain vigilant for symptoms.

All students under 25 should be immunised against meningitis (the ACWY vaccination). It is advisable to get the vaccination several weeks before arriving at UCL.

The MMR vaccination protects against measles, mumps and rubella. There have been more cases of these diseases in recent years, so new students are strongly advised to make sure they’ve had this vaccination.

If you are studying in the UK for less than 6 months, you will not be able to register with a doctor but will still be able to visit one as a temporary patient if required. You may, however, need to pay for these services. You are therefore encouraged to have private medical insurance.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/accessing-healthcare-uk

Web: www.ridgmountpractice.nhs.uk

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Dental care
There are two types of dental care in the UK – NHS and private. Many dental surgeries will offer both, but you may find there is a long waiting list to register as an NHS patient.
You’ll almost always have to pay for both types, but private dental treatment can be significantly more expensive. Certain groups, such as those under 19 and pregnant women, can get free dental treatment.
Charges for dental treatment can be complicated, so always ask how much you’ll need to pay.

Eye care
Most people will need to pay for eye tests and any contact lenses or glasses. Again, there are some exemptions, such as those diagnosed with diabetes or glaucoma.
Opticians will sometimes offer vouchers for discounted or even free eye tests, so always shop around.

Prescriptions
The NHS charges for prescriptions – the amount increases every so often, but is currently around £9. Again, there are some exceptions, including those with certain long-term medical conditions, but in most cases students will need to pay.

Sexual health care
There are numerous sexual health centres in London, including the Mortimer Market Centre close to UCL’s campus. Call to make an appointment – some clinics will also offer walk-in services.
Sexual health services are free, including any testing, treatment, medication and all contraception (you can also usually get free contraception from your GP).

Pharmacies
Pharmacists are experts in medicine and can often help with minor concerns such as coughs, colds and sore throats.
If you think something might not be serious enough for a GP appointment, visit a pharmacist for advice on self-care.

Contact the NHS
Calling 111 (the NHS non-emergency number) can help you if you have a medical problem and need advice on what to do. You’ll speak with a highly trained adviser about your symptoms and they’ll provide medical advice and direct you to the most appropriate care.
In a medical emergency, you should call 999 and provide the operator with details of your situation.

International students - Visas and immigration
UCL is home to a diverse community of students, many of whom are from overseas and studying on a visa.

Support and advice
Applying for a visa (typically a Tier 4 student visa or a Short-term study visa) can be complicated. Full guidance can be found on the UK government’s website and we also provide guidance on the UCL website.
If you have questions about applying for a visa, you can get help for the Student Immigration Advice team through the website below.

For those students already living in the UK who want to extend their visa to study at UCL, the Student Immigration Advice team run a Tier 4 student visa document checking service to help facilitate this process.
Web: www.gov.uk/visas-immigration
Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/immigration-and-visas/tier-4-responsibilities
Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/police-registration

Tier 4 student visa responsibilities
Those studying in the UK on a visa need to ensure they adhere to the responsibilities specified by the Home Office. This can include things like not working in excess of a certain number of hours per week and ensuring regular attendance at lectures and seminars.
Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs)

In most cases, when your Tier 4 student visa application is approved overseas, you’ll receive a 30-day travel visa sticker in your passport to allow you entry into the UK. Once you’ve arrived, you’ll need to collect your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) card, which is your full visa.

Many students collect their BRP from UCL after selecting this option in their application. If you’ve chosen to do this, you’ll be contacted by the Student Immigration Compliance team with full instructions once we’ve received the card.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, you’ll need to collect your BRP before you can enrol.

Take care not to lose your BRP, especially if you’re travelling, as this can make it more difficult to re-enter the UK. If your BRP is lost or stolen, follow the instructions on the website below.

Web: [www.ucl.ac.uk/students/immigration-and-visas/tier-4-visas/biometric-residence-permits](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/immigration-and-visas/tier-4-visas/biometric-residence-permits)

EU/EEA/Swiss students and Brexit

We are aware that there is a lot of uncertainty around Brexit for all students but in particular students from the EU, EEA and Switzerland. In order to ensure that your immigration status and access to healthcare are protected when the UK leaves the EU, you’re strongly encouraged to apply for pre-settled or settled status through the EU Settlement Scheme as soon as possible.

The Student Immigration Advice team has a lot of information about the application process, answers to frequently asked questions and links to other resources on their pages.

Web: [www.ucl.ac.uk/students/immigration-and-visas/eu-settlement-scheme](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/immigration-and-visas/eu-settlement-scheme)

Transport and travel

London is a large city but is very well connected and has many different transport options.

Transport for London (TfL)

TfL manages much of London’s transport infrastructure, including the Underground (also known as the Tube), the Overground, our bus network, trams and river boats. For pricing, TfL divides London into zones, from zone 1 in the centre out to zone 9.

Web: [tfl.gov.uk](http://tfl.gov.uk)

Paying for transport

Many people pay for transport using the Oyster card, which can be topped up with credit for pay-as-you-go journeys or loaded with a Travelcard, which gives you an unlimited number of journeys within particular zones for a particular time period, e.g. one week, one month. You can top up your Oyster credit or buy a Travelcard in stations and online.

It pays to do some research into different fare options and think about how much you are likely to use public transport. For example, if you live close to campus and will mostly walk, it probably won’t make financial sense to buy a Travelcard.

You can use a Contactless debit or credit card in exactly the same way as Oyster pay-as-you-go, for exactly the same price.

If you’re using pay-as-you-go on Oyster or Contactless, there is a daily and a weekly cap, meaning you won’t pay more than a certain amount per day or per week, no matter how much you travel.

There are different fares for many services depending on the time of day, with ‘off-peak’ and ‘peak’ pricing – the peak times are Monday to Friday (not public holidays), 6.30am to 9.30am and 4pm to 7pm.

Buses are charged at a fixed rate of £1.50 for any journey. The ‘Hopper fare’ allows you to transfer to other buses an unlimited number of times within one hour without being charged more.

Cycling

London has a network of hire bikes (Santander Cycles) as well as new app-based hire bike services, which can be a handy way to get around. UCL also has free bike maintenance and bike sales throughout the year and Camden Council offers free cycle safety training.

If you plan to cycle, there are a network of designated cycle routes across the city, but take extra care and ensure you are cycling safely – be sure to always wear a helmet and high-visibility clothing.

Web: [www.ucl.ac.uk/greenucl/what-we-do/travel](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/greenucl/what-we-do/travel)
Taxis and minicabs
You’ll see London’s famous black cabs throughout the city, which can be convenient but often costly – you just need to hail the cab on the street. You can also book a taxi (a minicab) in advance by calling one of London’s many services – never get into an unlicensed taxi.

London also has a number of app-based ridesharing services, which can be a cheaper alternative to get around town.

Travelling around the UK
It’s easy to go between London and other towns and cities in the UK by train and coach. If you’re likely to take trains on a regular basis, the 16-25 Railcard and the 26-30 Railcard can be a good investment – for a small one-off payment, these can give you 1/3 off rail fares. You can even link these cards to your Oyster for extra discounts on pay-as-you-go fares on the Underground or Docklands Light Railway (DLR).

Travelling in Europe
London is one of the best connected cities in the world, and it’s easy and often cheap to travel to Europe by plane, train (Eurostar) or ferry from nearby ports.

International students – Schengen visas
If you’re not from the EU, the EEA or Switzerland and would like to travel in Europe, you may need to apply for a Schengen visa. You’ll need to collect a letter from the Student Enquiries Centre for your application.
Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/immigration-and-visas/other-visas/schengen-visa

MyAccount
Many systems at UCL require your password, and you’ll need to update this periodically. With MyAccount, this is made easy – just register your phone number and you’ll be able to reset your password anywhere, anytime. You’ll need to do this as part of pre-enrolment (see page 5).
Web: myaccount.ucl.ac.uk

Wi-Fi on campus
All students can access a Wi-Fi network at UCL: eduroam. This is also available in halls of residence and buildings at numerous other universities. To connect, you’ll need to enter your UCL user ID (@ucl.ac.uk) and password.

Printing
There are printers located in all library sites and elsewhere at UCL, most of which will also allow you to copy and scan. You can access the printers using your student ID card. Once you’ve used up your free credit allowance, you can easily top up your credit online.
Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/services/print-copy-scan-services

Digital learning
ISD provides support for a number of learning tools and services including Moodle, UCL’s online learning space. Find out more about the digital skills you might need and the tools and services you might encounter by exploring our short course on Moodle, ‘Digital Learning at UCL’.

There are also many digital skills courses on offer, teaching you how to use a wide range of software.
Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/training

UCL Go! app
Get useful information on the move. View campus maps and your timetable, or find available study places or free PCs in one of the computer workrooms. Download via your app store.
Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/ucl-go

IT support
Support is available at IT Service Desks located in the Main Library, Science Library, Institute of Education Libraries and the Student Centre. You can see them for any issues with Wi-Fi, email, printing, software and UCL’s IT systems. Support is also available online, by email and over the phone.
Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/help
Safety and security

London is a safe city, but there are a few easy things we can all do to help reduce our chances of becoming a victim of crime.

ID cards

All students should carry their ID cards with them at all times. You’ll need this to enter most buildings and to use lots of UCL services.

If you lose your ID card, visit the Security Systems team in the Andrew Huxley Building on campus for a replacement.

Lost property

All lost property found on campus (except in the Cruciform Building or the Bloomsbury Theatre and Fitness Centre) is taken to the Security office in Foster Court. Email the team to report an item as lost.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/estates/our-services/security-ucl/lost-property

Safety tips

- Take care of your belongings, especially in study spaces – do not leave valuables like laptops unattended.
- Beware of tailgating (people following directly behind you to gain access to buildings), especially in halls of residence.
- Be vigilant when using your phone in public spaces – phones are among the most commonly stolen items.
- Do not travel at night in empty carriages on the London Underground or trains. If you’re on a night out, always try to plan how you’re going to get home.

- Register your belongings on Immobilise (www.immobilise.com) – if police retrieve lost or stolen items, they can then be returned to you.
- Beware online scams and never give out your bank details or send someone money if you’re unsure. If something seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Contacting the Security team

UCL has 24/7 security cover. If you see anything that causes you concern, speak to any member of Security staff.

The Crime Prevention and Personal Safety Officer is a member of the Security team focused on helping students avoid crime and supporting any students affected by it. Call the non-emergency number below to arrange an informal meeting.

- Emergencies on campus (from a UCL phone): 222
- Emergencies on campus (from a mobile phone): +44 (0)20 7679 2222
- UCL Security non-emergency number: +44 (0)20 7679 2108
Starting your programme
Starting out on your academic journey at UCL needn’t be complicated.

Portico
UCL’s online student information system, Portico allows you to see your student record and is used for a number of administrative tasks.

You should try to update your details on Portico on a regular basis, especially contact information for both yourself and your next of kin.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/portico

Academic Manual and handbooks
All study, teaching and research at UCL is governed by a variety of regulations, policies and procedures, which are covered in the Academic Manual.

It’s certainly not expected that you read this in any detail, as it’s a very long document, but you may find it a helpful reference if you have a query or complaint about your programme.

Many departments provide their students with a handbook, which summarises important information about your programme and life in your department. Unlike the Academic Manual, students are encouraged to read any handbooks in full.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/

Module selection
Students on many (but not all) taught programmes will be able to choose from a number of different optional modules – this is done through Portico.

In some cases, students will need to select particular modules to satisfy the requirements of their programme – there may be other things to consider too, like credit value and any pre-requisites.

There will be a deadline for module selection and it’s really important that you choose your modules on time – this is essential to ensure you’re entered for the right exams.

If you’re unsure about any of this, or would like to discuss the best modules for you, speak to staff in your department such as your Personal Tutor.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/student-status/module-registration

Transition Mentors
Every first-year is given a Transition Mentor, an older student from your degree programme. They can advise on academic topics, support services and administrative questions; and help you socialise in your department.

It’s really important that you attend the ‘Meet your mentor’ session in your first week. You’ll also receive an enrolment email for the Transition Moodle course for your department: here you can find the mentoring groups, message your mentors and access first year resources.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/academic-support/personal-tutors

Academic support
Whatever your programme, there’s a wide array of support available.

Personal Tutors
All taught students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, will be assigned a Personal Tutor. This is a member of academic staff from your department, who should be your first port of call for any academic issues affecting your studies.

Personal Tutors can support you with things like module selection, work-life balance, academic progression, professional development and even pastoral or wellbeing issues.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/academic-support/personal-tutors

Supervisors
If you’re a research student, your supervisory team will fulfil much the same function as Personal Tutors – they should be the first people you speak to for any issues, academic or otherwise, affecting your ability to complete your work.

Doctoral School
Research students have access to a range of additional support (from skills development to funding guidance and the Research Student Log) through our Doctoral School.

Web: www.grad.ucl.ac.uk

International students – English language support
If English isn’t your first language, there are a lot of resources and support services at UCL to help you improve your written and spoken English.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/international-students/international-support/academic-life-uk
Library Services

UCL has 18 libraries and learning spaces across London, all fully equipped to support your studies.

Using libraries

All students can access all of our libraries and learning spaces – you simply need your student ID card to enter. The largest are the Main Library, the Science Library and the Student Centre.

You can view real-time study space availability on the Library Services website, as well as the UCL Go! app. Many libraries also have group study rooms, which you can also book online. Some also have spaces reserved for postgraduate students.

Library opening times vary from site to site, but the largest are typically open 24 hours a day on weekdays.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/library

Accessing materials

Students can find books, journals, and much more using Explore, the library catalogue, as well as links to hundreds of thousands of online resources. You can borrow items using your student ID card and can renew items online. In many cases, materials on your reading lists will also be available in a digital format online.

Past exam papers are also available online through the Library Services website.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/library/explore

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/library/teaching-learning-services-tls/readinglistsucl

Library help

Staff are available to assist throughout our library sites – there are dedicated Reference Desks in the Main Library and Science Library. Support is also available over the phone or through email.

Library skills training and guidance is available through LibrarySkills@UCL.

A team of specialist librarians are able to provide guidance for in-depth research help for their particular subject area.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/library/libraryskills-ucl

Email: library@ucl.ac.uk

Phone: +44 (0)20 7679 7792 (x37792)

Exams and assessment

There’s a variety of different assessment methods at UCL, so make sure you understand what’s expected of you on each module.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-Class Honours</th>
<th>Upper Second-Class Honours</th>
<th>Lower Second-Class Honours</th>
<th>Third-Class Honours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70% and above</td>
<td>60% - 69%</td>
<td>50% - 59%</td>
<td>40% - 49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading

The UK degree grading system is quite different from that in many other countries.

Your overall degree classification is the average of your grades for assignments and exams, although these may be weighted differently.

Try to prepare as far in advance as possible, and remember there’s a wide array of support available (see section 4).

Examinations

The main exam period takes place in May and June.

Most students will sit their exams at ExCeL London by Custom House, which is easily accessed on public transport. Any students with exam adjustments like extra time or the use of specialist equipment will have their exams on the main Bloomsbury campus.

Your personal exam timetable for the main exam period will be published several weeks in advance. Make sure you check this when it’s released and get in touch with the Examinations team as soon as possible if there are any errors.

To make sure you’re entered for the correct exams, it’s very important that you register for any elective modules on time.

UCL has a secondary exam period, Late Summer Assessments, which occurs at the end of August.

Results are typically released through Portico several weeks after exams take place.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/exams
Finishing your programme

It may seem like a long way off, but with some students on programmes lasting just a year, the end of your studies will come around sooner than you think!

Thesis submission

Research students submitting a thesis will need to do so in the Student Enquiries Centre (on Floor 1 of the Student Centre). Theses must be submitted in a particular format, so make sure you understand the guidance before submitting.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/research-assessments

Transcripts and certificates

Once your results from any final-year exams or assessments and your final award (1st, 2:1, 2:2 or 3rd) have been conferred by UCL, you will automatically be sent 5 copies of your transcript, which lists your results. You will also be sent your final degree certificate.

These documents are posted to your home address, as it appears on Portico, so it’s important to make sure this is kept up to date.

Graduation

Your graduation ceremony is a recognition of your achievement and a chance for you to celebrate with family and friends. You’ll receive an invitation to your graduation ceremony towards the end of your programme, and you’ll need to register to attend.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/graduation

What next?

Even after graduation you’ll have access to lots of support from UCL to help you in your next steps. In particular, you’ll continue to be able to use any services from UCL Careers to support you as you enter or go back into the world of work (see page 36).

Don’t forget that UCL has a worldwide network of alumni, which you’ll automatically become a part of, offering a wide range of benefits.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/alumni

SECTION 4
SUPPORT SERVICES

Student Support and Wellbeing
International Student Support
Faith support
Student Enquiries Centre
askUCL
Student Funding Adviser
Students’ Union Advice Service
Student Mediator
Report + Support
Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

All students can easily access support for any issues related to disability, mental health or wellbeing that may affect their ability to study. We offer pre-booked appointments and a drop-in service every day that UCL is open, no appointment needed.

Appointments and drop-ins take place on Floor 1 of the Student Centre, and allow you to speak confidentially and without judgement to one of our Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisers. Together, we’ll help you find solutions, and we can refer you to other services as appropriate, whether those are in UCL or external.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/ssw-drop-ins

Evening and weekend support

Even when UCL is closed, students can access free therapeutic support from accredited counsellors online through real-time messaging and over the phone.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/evening-and-weekend-support

Find out more

Much more information about the various services offered by Student Support and Wellbeing (and other teams at UCL and in the local area) can be found on our website and in the ‘Here to Support You’ guide to UCL Student Support and Wellbeing services.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/ssw
Contact: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/ask

Student Psychological and Counselling Services (SPCS)

Our on-site therapeutic support team, SPCS is made up of qualified counsellors and psychiatrists with a range of specialisms.

Students need to register online and will then have an initial consultation. Following this and based on your needs, you’ll typically have access to 6 free therapy sessions, or we can refer you to other local services as needed.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/student-psychological-and-counselling-services

International students

- International Student Support

Part of UCL Student Support and Wellbeing, the International Student Support (ISS) team can help students adjust to life in the UK.

Support around arrival

In order to settle in and make the most of their time in the UK, international students need to complete additional tasks when they first arrive, such as opening a bank account or registering for healthcare.

To help with this, the ISS team run the International Student Orientation Programme (ISOP) the week before the start of the academic year.

Registration for ISOP takes place as part of pre-enrolment.

ISOP includes a comprehensive set of welcome talks to help you figure out all the essential steps in your transition to a new country. It’s also an opportunity to ask questions to our Global Ambassadors. There will be a range of social events and activities organised by Students’ Union UCL and other departments to help you settle in and meet others.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/international-students/isop

Ongoing support

Beyond your arrival, the ISS team can provide guidance on any issues around acclimatising to life in the UK. They’re a great first port of call if you’re unsure, and can refer you to other teams as needed.

Other helpful resources for international students include UKCISA (the UK Council for International Student Affairs) and the British Council.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/international
Contact: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/ask

Support for affiliate students

Although some affiliate students are at UCL for a short period of time, we encourage you to take advantage of the many opportunities available to you to make the most of your time with us.

‘Meet your department’ sessions take place during ISOP for affiliate students to meet your dedicated Affiliate Tutor, who will be able to help you with all academic enquiries. These sessions are also an opportunity to get to know other affiliate students, learn more about your department and get your Learning Agreement forms signed if needed.

Students who have an arrival form or Erasmus placement form that needs signing can do so in the Student Enquiries Centre once they have completed enrolment (see page 30).
Faith support
Part of UCL Student Support and Wellbeing, our Chaplain and Interfaith Adviser provides support to students of all faiths, and none.

Pastoral support
UCL’s Chaplain and Interfaith Adviser can provide pastoral support and guidance to any student at UCL who is facing issues around faith. You can speak to the Interfaith Adviser no matter which faith group you’re from, or even if you identify with no faith at all.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/specialist-information-and-support/religion-and-faith

Faith societies
All major faiths are represented by a Students’ Union UCL society. You can find out more about these and join by attending the Welcome Fair (for new students starting in September) or by contacting them directly at any point.

Web: studentsunionucl.org/clubs-societies/directory

Finding a place to pray or worship
For any students looking for a place to pray or worship on campus, there is a Prayer Room and a Meditation Room available on Floor B2 of the Student Centre, along with additional prayer rooms in buildings across campus.

The Interfaith Adviser can support any students looking for a place to pray or worship off campus.

Student Enquiries Centre
Part of UCL Student Support and Wellbeing, the Student Enquiries Centre (SEC) team exists to support students with enquiries and UCL processes.

How they can help
Staff in the Student Enquiries Centre can assist with the following topics and more:
- Confirmation of student status
- Schengen visa letters
- Updating student details
- Changes to your studies
- Confirmation of award
- Fees and funding enquiries
- International student support
- Third-party verification of studies and qualifications

Visiting the Student Enquiries Centre
Located on Floor 1 of the Student Centre, the Student Enquiries Centre is a face-to-face service where students can ask questions about a wide variety of topics. Their extended opening hours allow students with other commitments to visit at a time suitable for them.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/life-ucl/student-enquiries-centre
Contact: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/ask

askUCL
Our student enquiry management system, askUCL, streamlines the way we handle your enquiries.

FAQs
If you can’t find the answer you’re looking for elsewhere on the UCL website, askUCL’s helpful knowledge bank (FAQs) allows you to quickly search based on categories and key words. To access the FAQs or submit an enquiry, you simply need your UCL login details.

Enquiries
It’s easy to submit an enquiry online through askUCL – this will be sent directly to the correct team.

You’ll then be able to track your enquiry with the unique enquiry number, allowing you to see which team is currently dealing with your issue and what action has been taken. Each time your enquiry is updated, you’ll receive a notification and when your enquiry is resolved you’ll get an email showing the resolution.

If you feel your issue hasn’t been fully resolved or if the situation changes, you can re-open your enquiry and update it.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/askucl

Student Funding Adviser
For any students facing financial difficulties, UCL offers support and advice.

How they can help
The Student Funding Adviser can help you find solutions and figure out ways to manage your money more effectively. Alongside expertise in budgeting, they can help with complex questions about Student Finance funding as well as interruption of studies, withdrawing or repeating due to funding issues.

Emergency funding
In an emergency, limited cash loans of up to £250 are available if you experience a delay in your normal funding being paid.

The UCL Financial Assistance Fund is an additional source of support that you may have access to if you’re in financial difficulties. Particular groups of students who may be in greater need are prioritised, including students with children, those with disabilities or those who are care-experienced.

For research students who for unforeseen circumstances find that their funding has been interrupted or completely withdrawn, UCL offers a Doctoral School Fellowship. This is awarded on the basis of financial need.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/funding/financial-support
Students’ Union Advice Service

An independent and impartial advice service for all UCL students.

How they can help
The Advice Service is a great place to go for any issues related to academic matters or disputes, housing, employment and any other legal or university matters. It’s fully independent from UCL, so you can be assured that your interests will always come first.

Visiting the Advice Service
Located on the first floor of 25 Gordon Street, the Advice Service has regular weekday opening hours, including drop-in times.

The Advice Service is open to all UCL students, including offer-holders, recent graduates and those on interruption of studies.

Web: studentsunionucl.org/help-and-advice/advice-service
Email: su.advice@ucl.ac.uk

Student Mediator

A dedicated member of staff to advise students on making complaints and support students with the resolution of informal complaints.

How they can help
The Student Mediator can help investigate and resolve informal complaints and disputes you may have involving UCL staff members, students or services. They can also advise and provide support to students who are considering a complaint concerning cases of bullying and harassment.

This is an impartial service – the Student Mediator will not direct decision-making, but will enable both parties to express their views and facilitate a mutually agreed solution.

Please be aware that mediation is not possible in all circumstances, for example compromises cannot be made in complaints concerning the award of marks or other academic issues. Nevertheless, the Student Mediator may be able to investigate such complaints and will be able to give advice on the formal complaint procedure.

Contacting the Student Mediator
Student mediation always starts with a one-to-one appointment, in which you’ll jointly decide the best course of action together with the Student Mediator.

If you’re involved in a complaint or dispute and would like to make an appointment, please first read the FAQs online before emailing the Student Mediator with a brief overview of the issue and your availability.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/student-mediator
Email: studentmediator@ucl.ac.uk

Report + Support

All students affected by bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct can report it and access appropriate support.

Full Stop

UCL is saying Full Stop to bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct. It has no place in our community.

The Full Stop campaign focuses on preventing unacceptable behaviour within the UCL community. We all have a role to play in making the UCL campus a safe and respectful environment. A variety of guidance materials, key messages and information on how to be an active bystander can be found on the Report + Support website.

Reporting bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct

If you’ve been the target of unacceptable behaviour, there are two ways to report:
1 – Anonymously, enabling us to build a picture of issues where people do not feel able to reveal personal information but would like UCL to be aware, helping us monitor trends and inform our proactive and preventative work.
2 – Contacting an adviser, in which case you’ll be put in contact with an adviser to discuss your concerns and receive initial support. For students affected by sexual misconduct or violence, UCL works with Rape Crisis and SurvivorsUK to provide independent support on campus.

We strongly encourage all students affected by bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct to report in one of the two ways above.

Web: report-support.ucl.ac.uk/
About the Students’ Union

Students’ Union UCL provides a range of services that helps you to make the most of university – and discover more about yourself. They offer over 250 clubs and societies, and run a selection of bars, cafes and shops on campus. They can help you get involved in campaigning, volunteering, and even changing the way the university works.

Every student at UCL is automatically a member of the Union, making them part of one of the largest and most diverse student communities in the world.

Web: studentsunionucl.org

Clubs and societies

Joining a club or society is one of the best possible ways to get more out of your time at UCL. Driven by drama, sport, art or politics? The Students’ Union has all sorts of ways to discover something that will become a part of who you are.

To join a club or society, sign up at the Welcome Fair in September or contact them directly at any point in the year.

Web: studentsunionucl.org/clubs-societies/directory

Helping you stay active

Project Active offers a wide range of beginner-friendly activities to get you moving and enjoying an active lifestyle: from five-a-side football to yoga and everything in between!

Bloomsbury Fitness is our fully equipped on-site gym, with student membership at fantastic value rates.

For those at the top of their game, the High Performance Programme and the Elite Athlete Programme in the Students’ Union support teams competing at the British Universities and Colleges Sports Leagues (BUCS) and individual athletes with additional sessions and workshops.

Representing you

All students can make a change. The Students’ Union works to make things better, on campus and beyond. UCL is yours, so it should be what you want it to be. The Students’ Union is led by students, meaning you’re in charge.

There are lots of ways you can help make sure students’ voices are heard, from running for elections, to commenting on student consultations or acting as an Academic Rep.

Our four student networks (the Black and Minority Ethnic Students’ Network, the Disabled Students’ Network, the LGBT+ Students’ Network and the Women’s Network) represent an opportunity for students to challenge and campaign against discrimination, oppression and inequality faced by themselves or others.
Volunteering
The Volunteering Service connects UCL with London’s voluntary and community sector. They have a directory of over 500 opportunities and lots of one-off volunteering events that you can just sign up and turn up to. They can even support you to set up and run your own community volunteering project.
Volunteering is a great way to develop new skills, support your studies, meet new people and get to know London. A great place to start your volunteering journey is at the Volunteering Fairs, which take place throughout October.
Web: studentsunionucl.org/volunteering

Places for you
From bars and cafes to shops and study areas, the Students’ Union run a variety of spaces on campus to make you feel at home.
Some of the main spots to check out include the Huntley, Phineas, Mully’s, the Institute Bar, the Print Room Cafe, Gordon’s Cafe and the Wolfson Study.

UCL Careers
Whatever you want to do in the future – whether your career path is clear or not – UCL Careers is here to help.

How UCL Careers can help
From mock interviews to one-to-one CV and application advice, there’s a lot that UCL Careers can do to help you secure a job that’s right for you.
UCL Careers can also help you find opportunities through their online job board, UCL Talent Bank (connecting you to small-to-medium enterprise employers), the Summer Internships Scheme, the Global Internships Programme and more.
Another great way to find part-time, seasonal or temporary work is through the JobShop in Student’s Union UCL. If you’re looking for part-time work, be sure to think about the impact it will have on your studies and your day-to-day life – try not to overdo it!
Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/careers/find-opportunities
Web: studentsunionucl.org/jobshop

Careers events
The team at UCL Careers run regular events such as careers fairs and employer presentations across campus, as well as skills development sessions – listen out for upcoming events and view their calendar on their website.
Contacting UCL Careers
Careers support is available to all current UCL students and recent graduates – it’s never too early to start thinking about your future!
For general enquiries, you can visit the team in their office on the fourth floor of Student Central on Malet Street.
Phone: +44 (0)20 3549 5900
Email: careers@ucl.ac.uk

Mentoring
As a new UCL student, you can join our Alumni Online Community. Connect with volunteer alumni mentors from 190 countries worldwide. Whether you are seeking professional advice to perfect your CV or want to explore a particular career path, have a chat with experienced UCL alumni.

Alumni Online Community
Connect with our worldwide network of more than 250,000 former students.

International students – Working during your studies
If you’re studying at UCL on a Tier 4 student visa, be aware that there are restrictions on the number of hours you’ll be able to work. Make sure you don’t exceed the number of permitted work hours, or you could face serious consequences.
Anyone who works in the UK needs to have a National Insurance number. You’ll need to apply for one before or soon after starting a job if you don’t already have one – call +44 (0)800 141 2075 to do so.
If you’re unsure about any visa responsibilities, including restrictions on work, contact the Student Immigration Compliance team (see page 15).

A lifelong community
Although it may currently seem like a long way away, when you graduate you’ll automatically become part of UCL’s extensive alumni network for life, offering you a wide range of opportunities, from networking events to journal access.
UCL Innovation & Enterprise

Whether you want to boost your employability, create your own business or solve global problems, UCL Innovation & Enterprise can help you make a difference and stand out from the crowd.

Develop entrepreneurial skills and thinking

All UCL students have access to a range of workshops and events overseen by experienced professionals to help you enhance your entrepreneurial skills, including specific events tailored to PhD students.

Start your own business

If you’re ready to start your own business or social enterprise, the Entrepreneurship team within UCL Innovation & Enterprise can help. They offer expert business advice, mentoring and networking opportunities.

The Hatchery is a dedicated dynamic startup space within BaseKX, located in King’s Cross. It plays host to a community of UCL’s most promising entrepreneurs, providing free, tailored support to fast-track startups to success. You’ll be able to bounce ideas off each other and network with like-minded people.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/enterprise/students
Phone: +44 (0)20 3108 7554 (x57554)
Email: entrepreneurship@ucl.ac.uk

Go abroad

A placement or a project overseas as part of your studies can be an unforgettable and valuable experience.

Study Abroad

Many undergraduate students will have access to UCL’s Study Abroad programme, allowing you to spend a period of time studying at one of our numerous partner institutions overseas. This includes Erasmus+ exchanges and internships in Europe.

In some cases, there may be funding available to support you on your study placement overseas.

If you’re interested in studying abroad but aren’t sure of your options, attend the autumn Study Abroad Fair or come to see the team during their drop-in sessions in the Student Enquiries Centre (see page 30) to find out more about what’s available and how to apply.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/go-abroad

Short-term opportunities

To help more of our students have a global study, research or volunteering experience, UCL now has connections with organisations around the world for short-term opportunities. Visit the website to find out more about the funding opportunities available.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/go-abroad/short-term-global-opportunities

Learn a language

Brush up on your skills or learn a new language in the UCL Centre for Languages and International Education (CLIE).

From beginner to advanced level, CLIE offers evening courses in eight different foreign languages, as well as intensive courses in five different languages over the summer. Discounted rates are available for UCL students.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/languages-international-education

Sustainable UCL

Do you want to play a part in stopping the climate emergency? Here at UCL you have the opportunity to shape the future.

UCL is a leader in sustainability, from designing hydrogen cars to marine-safe plastics, our research is solving our global sustainability challenges. Not only this, but our new Sustainability Strategy has committed UCL to zero carbon by 2030 and plastic-free by 2024!

Sustainable UCL will give you the tools to become sustainability leaders during your time at UCL, whatever you go on to do next. Volunteer as a sustainability ambassador, tackle UCL’s sustainability challenges through research or have your voice heard at our Student Sustainability Council. Top sustainability tips and events such as free bike maintenance and clothes swaps are also available.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/greenucl
Global Citizenship Programme

The UCL Global Citizenship Programme brings together students from across UCL to explore the biggest global challenges.

This programme is an exciting and unique opportunity to investigate real global issues and how they could be addressed through research and your actions as a citizen. Every year, students come together to work on projects and activities which seek to address the UCL Grand Challenges or focus on developing the skills you need when taking your next steps in a global community.

From campaign films and social enterprise pitches, to WHO simulations and exhibitions, talented UCL students have explored an array of creative ways to become a global citizen. There’s no admissions test, interview or exam, and participation is free for UCL students. Simply pick a theme that interests you then join us for a series of events throughout the year.

Registration launches in October and the programme runs from November onwards. Spaces are limited. Keep an eye out on the website for more information.

Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/global-citizenship-programme