International Student Orientation Webinars
Postgraduate students

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"Welcome! We will be starting at 10:03am."

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Today's Agenda

• Pre-submitted questions will be answered, divided by their topic. We will not answer questions specific to your course/department.

• New questions can be submitted via the Q&A function. They will be answered throughout the webinar and at the end of this presentation.

1. Key dates
2. Visas and Immigration
3. Accommodation
4. Travelling to the UK
5. Healthcare
6. Teaching and exams/assessment at UCL
7. Safety at UCL and in London
8. Life at UCL and in London
9. Travelling around London and the UK
10. Money/funding
11. After my time at UCL

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New questions

• Submit via the Q&A function (the chat is turned off).

• Can be done anonymously, if that's preferred.

• If you see a submitted question that you're also interested in, feel free to "like" it to let us know.

• A pinned discussion titled "Useful Links" will contain any links mentioned during the webinar that are not on the slides.

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Key dates

- 22 August 2023 – Pre-enrolment emails start being sent out for PG students
- 11 September 2023 – BRP collection starts
- 11 September 2023 – Module selection starts
- 16 and 17 September 2023 – Early arrival in UCL accommodation
- 18 September 2023 – ID card collection starts
- 18 September 2023 – Welcome activities for international students start
- 23 and 24 September 2023 – Main arrival in UCL accommodation
- 25 September 2023 – Term 1 starts
- 25 to 29 September 2023 – Welcome week
- 30 September to 01 October 2023 – Students’ Union Welcome fair

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Visas and immigration

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When will I get my CAS?

If you needed one for your visa type, UCL will contact you about this. They usually starts sending out CASs in July. If you haven’t received it yet, we advise contacting the UCL Immigration Compliance team.

You will be able to see the details of your CAS on your UCL Portico account.

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How do I collect my BRP?

On your visa decision letter, it will tell you to collect your BRP from either a named Post Office branch or UCL if you chose this option when you applied.

If you selected UCL, UCL will contact you when your BRP arrives with instructions on how to pick it up (you’ll need to book an appointment).

Main BRP collection from UCL will start from 11 September 2023.

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Do I need to register with the police?

Nobody needs to register with the police anymore.

The Police Registration Scheme was abolished from 04 August 2022.
Can visa dependents work?

Yes.

Your dependents have no work restrictions – they can work full-time (only applicable to adults).

With the Student Visa, postgraduate students can only work 20 hours per week all year.
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I’m staying in UCL Accommodation. When will I hear an answer from them about my room?

If it’s your first year as an international postgraduate student, you’ve accepted your offer to study for a full-time Masters’ programme, a Postgraduate Diploma or a MPhil/PhD at UCL, and you submitted your accommodation application by 30 June 2023, you are prioritised an offer to stay in UCL Halls of Accommodation.

You should hear from UCL Accommodation between July and the end of August 2023.

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I’m not staying in UCL Halls of Accommodation. How easy is it to rent private accommodation?

Watch a recording of our International Student Private Accommodation Webinar run in July 2023.

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Private renting vs university halls of accommodation.

Based on your needs and requirements.

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What is a UK-based guarantor?

In the UK, we use a guarantor system for renting privately.

Maybe you can’t prove that you earn enough money to afford the rent or perhaps you are an international person living in the UK and the landlord needs a guarantee that they will receive the rent.

UCL can be your guarantor and say to the landlord “we trust that this student will pay their rent” – But some Landlords don’t accept UCL as your guarantor.

Without a guarantor, you have to pay rent bi-annually or annually.

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What is Council Tax and do I need to pay it?

You pay this tax to the department (council) that manages and maintains the area you live in.

If you are in UCL Halls of Accommodation or any other type of official student accommodation, the council tax exemption is automatic and you don’t need to pay any of it.

If you are renting privately, you will need to apply for exemption. Remember that every person in the house needs to be a full time student, otherwise council tax will need to be paid on the property. However, you can still apply for a discount.

See more information.
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Can I send packages from my home country to the accommodation?

Yes.

UCL accommodation and other student accommodation will have a reception that stores all your parcels when they arrive.

If you are in UCL Accommodation, make sure that the parcels will arrive after you have moved in.

For other student accommodation, you will have to contact their reception for specifics.

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Traveling to the UK

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Do I need to have been vaccinated against COVID to enter the UK?

No.

Students from certain countries will need to provide proof of not having tuberculosis, but that’s it.

We also advise that you are vaccinated against a few other viruses.

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Should I be vaccinated against other illnesses such as meningitis and MMR?

Yes.

All university students should be immunised against the different meningitis strains.

UCL strongly encourages students to get the MMR vaccine, if they haven’t yet.

Best to be done before you arrive in the UK, although you won’t be denied entry if not.
What do I need to bring from home?

Bring things that are essential and/or hard to buy in the UK. Don’t overthink it and pack too much – remember to check your baggage allowance.

Watch our video of two international students giving their advice.
Does UCL provide an airport pick-up service?

No.

Coach, train, taxi/ride share.

Don’t worry, London many public transport links, you can most definitely get to your accommodation!

See more information.
Can I arrive later than the start date of my programme?

Maybe.

But it’s very important that you speak with your UCL academic department as soon as possible about this.

If you are traveling here on a Student Visa, you will also need to arrive within a specific time period otherwise your Student Visa will become invalid. It’s usually a period between 30-90 days.

The enrolment deadline for new students is 13 October 2023.

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Healthcare

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How can I access healthcare in the UK?

If you are here for 6 months of longer, you will have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge as part of your Student Visa application. This gives you the same access to universal healthcare as a British citizen.

You need to register with a GP as that allows you to access all types of medical care.
How can I register with a GP?

Find a GP surgery close to where you live.

Fill in a registration form for that GP surgery.

If it’s your first time register with a GP, they will provide you with a NHS number.

If you do not have a permanent address you can still register using a temporary address or the address of the GP surgery. This will last for up to 3 months, where you would have to reapply.

See more information.

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Do I need to purchase private health insurance as well as pay the Immigration Health Surcharge?

No.

After you’ve paid the Immigration Health Surcharge, you have access to free, universal healthcare provided by the National Health Service (NHS).

Private health insurance would allow you to get specialist treatment faster but would be a lot more expensive!

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Is dental (teeth) care and opticians (glasses) included in my Immigration Health Surcharge?

Not fully.

Dental care is subsidised by the NHS which means that it’s a lot cheaper than choosing private dental care. However, you will have to wait longer for treatment and most dentist are not accepting NHS patients right now.

Opticians are not subsidised at all. Which means you will have to pay full price if you want glasses or contact lenses. Opticians are not ‘eye doctors’. If you have a medical problem with your eye such as an infection, you would visit your GP for this and it would be free.

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How do I get medication?

Some medicines for minor illnesses can be bought over the counter without a prescription, so you can treat yourself without needing to see a GP. E.g., Simple painkillers and cough remedies.

Other types of medicine, such as eyedrops or emergency contraception, are available without a prescription but need a pharmacist's supervision.

Prescription-only medicines, such as antibiotics, must be prescribed by a qualified health professional (GP, hospital doctor, dentist or nurse)

We recommend buying medicine in physical stores/pharmacies, like Boots.

See more information.

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Teaching and exams/assessment at UCL

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What is the process of pre-enrolment?

Emails will start being sent out on **Tuesday 22 August 2023** for postgraduate taught students. You may not receive your pre-enrolment email on this day.

Pre-enrolment is completed fully online. It’s pretty simple and the biggest issue is uploading a suitable photo...

You should complete your pre-enrolment as soon as you receive the email. UCL will then check your information, documents, photo, visa documents and then enrol you online.

When on campus, the only things you need to collect are your UCL ID Card and BRP.

[See more information.](#)

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When can I select my modules?

What is the deadline for changing my modules/course?

New students can select their modules from Monday 11 September 2023.

The deadline for selecting your modules is Friday 13 October 2023.

The deadline for changing your course is the end of October 2023.

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How will I get my UCL ID Card?

If you are staying at UCL Halls of Accommodation, we will be printing out UCL ID cards which will be waiting for you at your Hall of Accommodation.

We will email you when this has happened. If you don't get an email, you will need to book a slot to pick it up.

If you're staying at non-UCL accommodation, you will need to book a slot to pick it up.

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How are lectures and seminars delivered at UCL?

Unless you are studying an online course, lectures and seminars will almost all be delivered in-person.

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Any advice on taking notes, as most resources are online now?

Depends on whether you like physical or online notes.

Laptop – OneNote, Notion, Obsidian…
iPad – Goodnotes, Notability, Noteshef…

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How are exams and assessments delivered at UCL?

Exams and other assessments will depend on your course. But a large % of students have supported the continuation of online exams.

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Can I use ChatGPT or other AI tools during my studies?

UCL’s stance: We believe these tools are potentially transformative as well as disruptive, that they will feature in many academic and professional workplaces, and that rather than seek to prohibit your use of them, we will support you in using them **effectively, ethically** and **transparently**.

[Read the full article on how to do this.](#)

Remember every department may have different rules regarding use of AI in coursework/assessments.

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What is the academic work load?

What’s the study/life balance like at UCL?

Study definitely takes time and effort, but it is manageable with good organisational skills.

If you study consistently throughout the year, you’ll have plenty of time for yourself and your friends/family.

Don’t leave everything until one week before exams start!
Safety at UCL and in London

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What safety measures should you take as an international student in London?

Attend one of the in-person International Student Safety Seminars taking place from 18 September 2023.

Report + Support
SafeZone
999

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What scams should I be aware of?

Tourist scams: Contactless card-readers on the Tube, bag-cutting/opening thieves, fake theatre tickets in Leicester Square, everything revolving your phone, cameras at ATMs, and giving you free stuff/taking photos with or for you.

Digital scams: Internet, email, mobile phone, and email commerce fraud.

See more information.
Life at UCL and in London

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What are some basic etiquettes specific to the UK/most obvious cultural differences?

Standing on the right of escalators
Waving to a bus/pressing the "stop" button
Queuing
Saying sorry a million times
Tea/drinking culture

...
Will my English be good enough to communicate/study my course?

How do I improve?

If you’ve received an unconditional offer, it means that your English would at least be good enough for studying your course. Remember English is only a communication tool. Be polite with others and patient with yourself.

Academic – English Language Support. Everyday communication – Watch online videos in English, be eager to practice and speak it with others.

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We need to do so many things in our first few days.

How can I keep track of all of them?

Checklist for International Postgraduate Taught: First few days.

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What is the Students’ Union?

Students' Union UCL is the representative body for UCL students.

They have more than 360 Clubs and Societies, volunteering opportunities, part-time jobs that fit around your studies, events, great places to eat, drink and chill in, and an Advice Service when you need it.

Basically, here to help UCL students.

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What happens during the Welcome Festival?
How many societies am I allowed to join?

Welcome Fair will take place on Saturday 30 September & Sunday 1 October 2023, where you check out all the clubs and societies UCL has to offer.

Many other events throughout the welcome period as well. Check out their website.

There is no limit on the number of societies you can join, as long as you have the time!

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What is the best way to meet new people?

Your course – lectures, labs, seminars, department events. Clubs and societies. Your accommodation.

The best way would be being friendly, respectful, and fun 😊. Be open to new opportunities to meet new people. Don’t worry if you don’t know anyone in an event, they probably don’t either.

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What have you enjoyed most about life at UCL and in London?
What is something you wish you had known or done differently before starting at UCL?

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Traveling around London and the UK

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What is the best way to travel around London?

Underground (Tube), buses, trains.

Public transportation in London is very convenient. So many tube lines!
Should I get an 18+ Oyster Card?

Are there any other travel discounts I can get as a student?

Depends and yes.

Save 30% on adult-rate Travelcards and Bus & Tram Pass season tickets. Check out their website.

If you buy a railcard and link it to your oyster card, you will get a 1/3 discount on off-peak pay (underground and trains). Check out their website.

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What’s the best way of getting around the UK? Any places you’d recommend?

Trains, coaches, and planes.


And many more!

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Money/funding

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Is there any way of reducing the overseas fees?

You cannot reduce your fees but you can check out the scholarships available.

However, you will have to have applied for these before you applied for UCL.

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Is there any financial support available to international students?

The UCL Funding team do have schemes/funds which international students can apply for.

These are just for living costs and not tuition.

You can book an appointment with a UCL Student Funding Adviser.

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How do I open a bank account in the UK?

The minimum you will need is a form of ID (passport or BRP) and a UCL Bank Letter.

Some banks will also ask for extra documents such as 2 items which prove your address.

Check our page for guidance.

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It is easy to send and receive money from abroad?

Yes.

You can send money to and from your UK bank account once you open it.

If you’re sending British pounds to your UK bank account, most UK bank accounts (with an IBAN) can receive the money.

If it’s different currencies, the easiest and cheapest way is by opening a Wise multi-currency account.

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What are some affordable food options available around UCL?

Wilkins Lower Refectory.

Many many cafés – the Old Refectory (opposite the JBR in the Main Building), the George Farha, and the Print Room Café… Look for cafés in your department building as well.

Surrounding cafés – Lever and Bloom Coffee and South Block Café.

Tesco meal deal – affordable, easy, quick.

See more information.

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What visa restrictions are there for working on a Student Visa?

Postgraduate students are restricted to 20 hours work per week for the entirety of their course including holiday time.

This is because postgraduate courses are considered to not have holidays.

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If I work remotely e.g., I’m living in London but working online for a company in China, do the visa working restrictions still apply?

Yes. The rule applies to where you are physically. You are allowed to live in the UK because of your Student Visa. The 20 hours a week rule is part of your Student Visa agreement.

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Will I have to pay tax to the UK government if I work?

Maybe. It depends on how much you earn...££££££

As an international student, you have to be employed by a company. This means that the company will automatically take your tax from your pay check before you receive it.

The two main types of employment tax are:

• National Insurance;
• Income Tax

If you earn more than £12,570 a year, you will start paying Income Tax. If you earn more than £242 a week, you will start paying National Insurance.

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Can I work for UCL?

What resources are there to find jobs during studies and after graduation?

Yes.

Look on the Student's Union Jobshop, Unitemps, LinkedIn, Indeed, and Glassdoor.

Check out UCL Careers' website.

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What do I need to be aware of when applying for jobs?

CV, Cover Letter (usually office-based work).

Application (usually online), interview(s), National Insurance (NI) number, visa and identity checks.

For full-time jobs, it's more complicated. More interviews, more tasks, etc.

Be careful about job scams! Don't pay for anything they ask and be wary about sharing sensitive information.

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How much do I get paid for a part-time job?

The pay for work in London varies drastically. London living wage is £11.95 per hour. National minimum wage is lower than this.

For work in UCL, on average, it’s £13 to £16 per hour. Welcome Ambassadors: £13.5. Student Welcome and Induction assistant: £15. Student Research Officer: £17

Barista at coffee shop (Pret A Manger): £11 to £13. Server at high-end restaurant (Flat Iron): £16.

Focus on saving up extra money and knowing how to budget accordingly. Watch our video on the budgets of two current international students.

High-paying jobs usually require specific skills/experience, such as a language, research, designing, etc. Try developing skills that not everyone has or strengthening existing ones.

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Can I work and study at the same time?

It’s important to manage your time well and know how many hours you can handle.

Even though you can work up to 20 hours in the term time, you should think about your study workload before accepting a job.

Also think about your timetable.

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After my time at UCL

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I’m thinking of doing a PhD after my taught Masters. How should I prepare?

Research in taught degrees is promoted throughout UCL’s curriculum so you will have no shortage of research experience.

The best thing to do is check out the resources provided by the course/department of your choice.

They can answer specific questions, provide student interviews, you can book online/in-person open days.

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Can I stay in the UK after my degree finishes along with my visa?

Yes.

You will need to apply for the Graduate Route Visa Scheme. £715 application fee and £624 for each year you’ll be in the UK so £1,963 in total for 2 years.

If successful, undergraduate and postgraduate taught degree holders can stay 2 more years and PhD holders can stay 3 more years.

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Can I be sponsored by a company to live and work in the UK?

Yes.

Sponsorship by a company is possible but not common straight after a student has finished their course.

Following a Graduate Route Visa Scheme is more likely.

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