

Pre-Departure Guide for New International Students to University of the Arts London



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University of the Arts London
– a creative constellation

Camberwell College of Arts
Central Saint Martins College
of Art and Design
Chelsea College of Art and Design
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Introduction

Congratulations on being accepted to the University of the Arts London! As you will be studying in a new country and living away from home, you probably have many questions about how your time in the UK will unfold. This Pre-Departure Guide is intended to educate you about London and life as a student in one of the world's most exciting cities.

This guide contains practical advice and detailed information about what to expect when you arrive in London, therefore it is a good idea to keep it as a reference. We encourage you to contact us if you have questions and we also suggest you look at the University website for information and updates: www.arts.ac.uk/international We hope you will find London a rewarding, enjoyable and inspiring place to study.



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Attending University of the Arts London

Term Dates

An academic year with University of the Arts London is divided into 3 terms, the Autumn Term, Spring Term and Summer Term. While dates change each year, the Autumn Term generally runs from September/October to December, the Spring Term runs from January to March and the Summer Term runs from April to June. Term times can vary slightly if you are doing Further Education or Postgraduate studies. Please see our website http://www.arts.ac.uk/international/ido_academic_calendar.htm for detailed term start/end dates.

Before you Leave Home

There are many things to prepare before you depart for the UK. All non UK/EU students coming to the UK to study on a course longer than 6 months are required to get entry clearance as a student. Please visit the following site, www.ukvisas.gov.uk, to find out if you require a visa and how to obtain one. If it is necessary for you to obtain entry clearance, you will have to apply to your nearest British Diplomatic post (Embassy or High Commission) before travelling to the UK. Some nationalities, however, may not require a visa. Please go to our Student Services

site for more details about entry clearance and immigration: www.arts.ac.uk/international/prospective/3902.htm You will need to prepare funds in advance to sustain you for your first few weeks in the UK, by obtaining British currency via cash and/or travellers cheques. Traveller's cheques are safer, in terms of loss or theft, but they can be difficult to cash. If you have a credit card, you can use it abroad and your statement will show you the currency conversion when it arrives at your home address. You are advised to ask your bank if you will incur any additional charges while using your credit card abroad. You may also require a Bankers Draft cheque when opening a bank account or paying a deposit on a rental property. You will need to know who to make the cheque payable to if you are drawing a draft cheque from your home bank. Bankers Drafts are generally cheaper than wiring money from overseas. Please note the cheque will take approximately 3-4 weeks to clear.

You are advised to bring 3 passport-sized photographs with you as these will be required for travel cards and at enrolment.

We also advise you to take out travel/health insurance to cover you for your first 1-2 weeks after arriving in the UK. If you are a full-time student, have permission to be in the UK and are studying longer than 6 months, you are automatically entitled to healthcare services after registering with a doctor. Until you have registered with a doctor, we recommend you have some form of health coverage as medical help and hospital stays can be incredibly expensive if you are not covered (see Health section for more details).

What to Bring

Luggage

We advise you to pack lightly when first coming to the UK. After accounting for overweight luggage costs or postage costs to ship items, it is generally cheaper to buy items here.

b) Money

You will need some cash with you when you first arrive as it can take anywhere from 2 to 5 weeks to set up a bank account. Traveller's cheques can be difficult to cash with local banks so you are advised to bring cash and use your credit card until you have set up an account.

c) Clothing

As London temperatures vary so dramatically, layered clothing is the best way to remain adaptable. Bring a selection of winter and summer clothes, as well as informal and formal attire. Pack lightly—there are numerous affordable and exciting shops in the fashion capital!

d) Personal Belongings

Most items, such as bedding or cooking utensils, can be bought cheaply when you arrive in London (see the Shopping section for more details). We advise you to bring some "keepsakes" from home such as photographs of your family and friends, to help prevent you from feeling homesick.

e) Computers

While all of the University's sites have computing facilities, many students bring a laptop with them for use in their accommodation or off site. Please note that not all of the University's residence buildings have Internet access in the rooms, so check with Housing Services (www.arts.ac.uk/international/housing.htm). If you are unable to get to your college site, or if the facilities are closed, there are many internet cafes in London where fares are generally £1/hour.

What NOT to Bring

There are strict government controls on food and plant items that enter the UK so do not bring any such items with you. It is illegal to import banned products and you may be liable to prosecution. It is also illegal to bring drugs into the country – anyone found smuggling drugs will be severely dealt with. Always watch your belongings and never leave bags unattended.

What to Expect

- a) Cultural Aspects**
- b) Writing Dates**
- c) Electricity in the UK**
- d) Toilet Facilities**

a) Cultural Aspects

Please see the British/London Culture section for more information. General guidelines on customs and mannerisms follow:

- Women are considered equal in status and rights to men in the UK. Women can and do travel alone and there are few formalities about dress.
- People appreciate basic politeness...saying "please" and "thank you" is well regarded and you will find people are generally friendlier if you approach them in a polite manner.

- People in Britain queue (or form a line) when waiting for service in a bank or shop. It is rude to "jump the queue", meaning to place yourself in front of those that have already been waiting.
- Do not spit in the street, do not throw your litter in the streets and cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough.
- You are expected to be punctual for meetings or appointments (or for your classes!) If you are going to be late, it is polite to notify the person/people you are meeting.

b) Writing Dates

To avoid missing an important meeting or event, you will need to know the format for writing dates in the UK. British dates are written in Day/Month/Year format (25/09/2009) but can also be expressed in full-form: 25 September 2009 or September 25, 2009, for example.

c) Electricity in the UK

British electricity supply works on 240 Volts or 50 Hertz. If you bring any electrical items from home (such as a lamp or hair dryer) you will need to make sure you have a converter

and that your items will be safely compatible with the voltage here. As mentioned



earlier, it is often easier to buy what you need upon arrival.

d) Toilet Facilities

UK toilets are flushing, pedestal toilets. Toilet paper is provided and should always be flushed away after use. It is considered good manners to leave a toilet stall tidy and to wash your hands after using a toilet. Do not flush female hygiene products down a toilet. London has public toilets located on some of the busier streets. They are considered safe and sanitary but cost a small fee to use.



Arrival in the UK

We generally recommend you arrive 1-2 weeks before you begin your studies so that you have time to settle in and explore the city. This will help to decrease the stress of being in a new place as you familiarize yourself with your neighbourhood, discover London as a tourist destination and plan your travel routes for college.

Meet and Greet

All new international students (not UK or EU) are encouraged to use the University's Meet and Greet service. After successfully booking a place on Meet and Greet, you will be collected from the airport and taken to your accommodation. This service is free and you do not have to be staying in a hall of residence. Please see Housing Service's website for more details: http://www.arts.ac.uk/housing/17542.htm#The_Meet_and_Greet_Service

Airports

Most international flights arrive either at London Heathrow or London Gatwick airports but London also has Stansted and Luton airports. If you are feeling adventurous and want to try using public transport, you are advised to visit your relevant airport's website for information about getting from the airport into London:

Heathrow:

<http://www.heathrowairport.com/>

Gatwick:

<http://www.gatwickairport.com/>

Stansted:

<http://www.stanstedairport.com/>

Luton: <http://www.london-luton.co.uk/en/airport/>

Taxi services are available from all the airports however this will be the most expensive option and with more affordable options already outlined, this is the least advisable.

Your A-Z Guide to Living in London

Accommodation

Most new students choose to live in a student Hall of Residence as the Halls are easy to book and you do not have to worry about setting up utility bill payments. Living in Halls also allows you to meet other students and make friends. If you would prefer to live privately, there are numerous websites that assist students to find places to live in London. You are encouraged to visit our Housing Services as they can assist you with all manner of accommodation: (www.arts.ac.uk/housing/) Please note that the closer to central London you live, the more expensive accommodation will be. Conversely, the farther away you live from Zone 1, the more money and time you will have to spend travelling into town.

Property tax is also known as "council tax" in the UK and most students are exempt from paying it. It is important that you read about the rules on council tax before signing a lease. Please see this link for more details:

<http://www.arts.ac.uk/international/current/ss-current-counciltax.htm>.

Student Housing fees generally include utility bills, but if you live privately, you may have to

pay for electricity, water, and gas in addition to your rent. If you choose to



have a television, you will also have to pay for a TV License. As you can see, these costs quickly add up so it is important to set yourself a budget. Please also note rental properties are listed by the weekly charge even though you will pay the landlord once per month.

The average price of a rental unit is £80 - £150 per week. You are strongly advised not to rent a property without viewing it. Photographs can be deceiving and it is important to remember that for your own health and mental well

being, it is best to come home to a comfortable place at the end of the day.

Banking

The main banks are Barclays, Lloyds, HSBC, NatWest, Royal Bank of Scotland, Nationwide, Citibank and Alliance & Leicester. Banks are generally open Monday to Friday, 9:30am and 4:30pm.

Books

You will usually be given a book/course supply list with your course offer pack or in class, during your first week of university. These are called "Kit Lists" in the UK. Most items will be available from the University shops, which are located on each campus. Your teachers will direct you where to find affordable supplies and materials should they not be available for purchase at the college.

Child Care

If you are bringing your children with you to London while you study, you may find the following links helpful. The University of the Arts London has a day nursery based at the London College of Communication campus. There are also alternative forms of childcare and our Childcare Service Coordinator would be happy to provide you with options and advice. We recommend you begin arranging for childcare services as soon as possible as you will often have to

deal with waiting lists. Please visit the childcare section of our website for further details: www.arts.ac.uk/student/childcare.htm. Please note that it is illegal to leave children under the age of 14 alone in the home.

Communications

Postal Services

a) Telephones

a) Post offices are located all over London and Royal Mail is the main distributor. Stamps and postal rates/costs can be found at the Post Office.



Post boxes are bright red and have regular collections throughout the day. The post is delivered Monday through to Saturday.

b)Public telephone booths exist all over London and are quite iconic with regards to their appearance. The old phone booths are bright red like the post boxes. Public phone booths



are coin or card operated and accept 10p, 20p, 50p, £1 and £2 coins. See the Mobile Phone section below for more information about telephones in the UK.

Culture

Living in a new city will give you both a cultural and life experience. You will find London does not represent England as London is far more diverse in terms

of different languages and ethnicities. People are generally friendly and will assist you if you need help with directions. Due to the size of the city, however, you may find the pace of life quite aggressive. Londoners are not in the habit of chatting to strangers but this experience is not to be taken personally...it is simply reflective of too many people living in an area that is not very large geographically. Customer service also varies dramatically in London, which can be challenging to deal with. Each experience will vary but if you are polite and friendly, you will find people will generally respond in the same manner.

Pubs are a large part of British culture, and you



will always see people after work or on weekends habitually visiting their local pub for a pint of beer before heading home. Consuming a lot of alcohol is not a good idea, both for health reasons and for your bank account, but if you drink in moderation, the pub experience with friends can be great. You can also partake in standard British cuisine at the pubs, such as Fish and Chips, Steak and Kidney Pie, Sausage and Mash, Roast Beef and Yorkshire Puddings, Shepherd's Pie or a Ploughman's Lunch. If you fancy something sweeter, try Sticky Toffee Pudding, Banoffee Pie or Treacle Sponge.

Smoking is also a part of British culture, however the laws have now changed and cigarette smoking in bars and restaurants is banned. You cannot smoke in the Underground, in most places of employment or in shops.

Disability

Disability can include many elements such as physical impairments, hidden disability, sensory impairments, dyslexia, health or mental health issues. The University of the Arts London has a positive approach to supporting disabled students so that they can complete their studies successfully and enjoyably. We encourage you to discuss any concerns



you may have, in a confidential manner, with our Disability Team: www.arts.ac.uk/student/disability/.

Entertainment

Even though London is huge, it can be very difficult to meet people. Being a student will make this task



easier as most students will be in the exact same situation as you. Your classes and group projects are a great way to meet new people, as well as living in student housing, where you will be surrounded by other students. It is a good idea

to get involved in clubs and groups to expand your horizons and make connections and the University offers many avenues to get you socializing. London offers a wide array of activities such as shopping, going out for meals, going to the cinema, going to the theatre, art shows, world-famous museums and galleries, or just generally wandering about the city exploring interesting streets.

Food

While some might find typical British food unappealing, the diversity of cultures and their corresponding cuisines provide something for everyone in London. Along with typical Western cuisine, you will find foods from every culture and restaurants and markets catering to dietary needs such as kosher, halal, vegan and vegetarian. Every manner of food is available within a variety of price ranges, however on a student budget, it is best to grocery shop and prepare your own meals. While there are numerous sandwich shops/cafes (and the University canteens) it is much healthier and cheaper to make your own food. Sometimes preparing food that is familiar to you also helps to combat homesickness. Grocery stores, or supermarkets, are

scattered throughout the city. The main chains being Sainsbury's, Tesco, Waitrose, Morrison's, Marks and Spencer, and the Co-op. Many of the central shops are quite small and have a limited selection but the standard-sized grocery stores are easy to find and will have virtually everything you are looking for. Some shops are more



more expensive than others so be a smart shopper. Good produce can be found at the "Off-Licenses" where fruit and vegetables are quite cheap and not as pre-packaged as the chain shops. Some Off-Licences also cater to certain cultures, where the food will be primarily Turkish, Islamic or Pakistani. China Town in Soho is also a great place to go grocery shopping for vegetables and Chinese cooking ingredients. You will notice a large market for pre-packaged/pre-made

goods and meals here in the UK. Sometimes, even vegetables come wrapped in plastic! While such pre-made meals can be tempting because they are quick and easy to prepare, they are not the healthiest or most economic options. Note that sometimes ingredients are not known by the same name as back home, so if the grocery store staff look at you strangely, it is best to try and describe what you are looking for.

Health

When you arrive in London as a student, it is important to be aware of your physical, mental and sexual health.



You are living in a different environment and culture where expectations and laws may be very different from what you are used to. Students who have permission to be in the UK longer than 6 months automatically have access to the National Health Service (www.nhs.uk). It is important to first register with a GP (General Practitioner) in your area

since being registered and a part of the NHS means you receive free healthcare. You may also be able to register with UAL Health which is a partnership between the University and a GP practice:

<http://www.arts.ac.uk/ss-health-reg.htm>. If you have a recurring health problem that requires treatments weekly or monthly, you are advised to bring your doctor's notes and prescriptions from home so that the doctors in London can assess your situation more accurately. Please note that you will likely have to pay for most of these types of treatments. Student housing usually has a GP connected to the hall of residence and you can read more about Health on the University's website: (www.arts.ac.uk/student).

If you would prefer private healthcare or alternative medicinal treatments, such clinics can be very expensive.

For emergencies (to call an ambulance, the police or the fire department), call 999. This service is free. If you have a serious accident, you must go to the nearest Accident and Emergency (A & E) department in one of London's hospitals. Visit your GP or local clinic for any health issues not deemed an emergency.

Dentists and opticians can be found in most areas and

usually only accept private patients so you will have to check if the dentist/optician near you will take NHS patients. You will usually have to pay for NHS dental treatment. If you will be returning home once a year to visit your family, it may be better to have dental and eye tests done at home with your own doctor.



Mental health and well-being is very important, especially when you are new to a city and possibly feeling overwhelmed. The University has qualified counsellors who can talk to you about any emotional or personal problems you may be experiencing. Speak to Student Services for more information.

For specific medicines, you will need to have a prescription filled out by your GP, however for general vitamins and health products, you can visit any pharmacy or drugstore. The main chains are Boots and Superdrug and they are located on most high streets.

Insurance

It is a good idea to insure your belongings, especially if you are bringing expensive electronic equipment with you (such as a laptop, mobile phone or portable music device). If you will be living in student accommodation, your belongings are insured under a block policy (with some restrictions). The insurance premium for the tenancy is included in your rent. If you will be living in private accommodation, you may wish to look into private insurance should any of your property be lost or stolen. The University works with Endsleigh Insurance and you can learn more about student insurance with Endsleigh by visiting this link to their website: www.endsleigh.co.uk/scripts/servlet.cgi?page=served/policies/studentpos/index.html

Language

London is well known for a diversity of culture and ethnicity and with these differences come different languages. You will often find yourself walking the

streets of London and hearing a medley of languages and accents being spoken around you. It is very important to have a grasp of English before coming here to study, as you will find your lessons, assignments and basic daily living very difficult otherwise. It is incredibly frustrating when you face the challenge of making yourself understood on a daily basis. Furthermore, the English language is full of hidden assumptions and meanings so these subtleties can be lost on a person whose first language is not English. Our misinterpretations through lack of understanding or different word usage can cause confusion. It is also important to note that England is full of regional accents and different ways of speaking the same language. Some accents may be very difficult to



understand but if you ask people to speak slowly and clearly, they will gladly oblige.

Laundry

Laundry services are available in student housing. If you are living in private accommodation, most places will have a washing machine or a washer/dryer. If your accommodation does not have laundry facilities, there are laundromats/laundrettes located conveniently all around the city.

Libraries



University of the Arts London has an extensive collection of resources, with 7 libraries spread over the 5 college sites. London is also rich in libraries and resources and there is a link from our library website that will direct you to other available resources:www.arts.ac.uk/library/library.htm.

Mobile Phones

London has a prevalent mobile phone/text message culture, since almost 100% of people living here own a mobile phone. Most people own a mobile for work purposes or as a replacement for a land-line (a phone that is permanently installed in your home). While it is not necessary to own one, mobiles are useful for getting in contact with friends locally or for emergency situations. You can either "Pay as You Go", if you don't think you will use your phone a lot, or you can sign up for a contract, which generally lasts between 12 and 18 months. A contract is cheaper if you are a heavy phone user. There are many good deals on phones and packages and most companies are competing for your custom. The main service providers are Orange, Vodaphone, O2, T-Mobile, 3, Virgin.

Due to no reception below ground, mobiles cannot be used on the Tube.

There are societal "rules" that people should try to follow when using a mobile phone:

- It is generally considered rude to be speaking on a mobile phone when you are with company.
- There is no need to speak loudly into the phone—the people around you are not interested to hear your entire conversation.
- If you go to the theatre, a film, or a lecture, you must turn your phone off.

You are advised to make any long-distance calls from a land-line. You can purchase calling cards however there are many services available that offer deals of 1p or 2p

per minute and are classified as a "Special Service" when you receive your phone bill. Please contact us for further details.



Money Matters

London can be a very expensive city if you do not know where the "locals" shop or how to properly organize your funds. UK currency is in coins of 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, £1 and £2. Notes/bills come in denominations of £5, £10, £20 and £50.



When you arrive, you are strongly advised to set up a bank account so that any incoming funds can be safely held. A local bank account will also be cheaper when it comes to withdrawing money as you will be charged a surcharge for every withdrawal you make from an overseas account. Many banks are wary of opening foreign accounts, especially to students, as the understanding is that you will not be here for a long period of time. The University, however, has links with various banks so we can assist you with the

right paperwork to set up an account. There are many different banks in London, with branches everywhere so banking is fairly convenient. When you get a local debit card (or cashpoint card) you can use it to withdraw money from any bank's ATM machine (cashpoint) and you will not be charged for the service. All debit cards and credit cards have PIN numbers associated with them as a security feature, so be sure to memorize your PIN and be mindful of people around you when withdrawing money from the street machines. It is not a good idea to carry large sums of cash in your wallet, in case of theft or loss. We recommend that you carry some cash, however, since smaller shops may not take cards and many places have a £5 or even £10 minimum charge on card transactions.

Register with the Police

Foreign nationals of some countries are required to register with the police upon arrival to the UK. This will be indicated in your passport and must be done within 7 days. You will need to take your passport, 2 passport-sized photographs and the £34 registration fee. Please see our website for further details:

www.arts.ac.uk/international/current/9152.htm#police%20registration

Religion

Since London is so culturally diverse, so too is the religious nature of its people. We need to be aware of the differences around us and respect these differences as this is what makes London a truly great city.



There are a variety of places of worship throughout the city that cater to every need. The University is also aware of the needs of students and most college sites offer non-denominational prayer rooms for the use of students and staff. Please see the Chaplaincy section

of our website for more information:

www.arts.ac.uk/student/chaplaincy.

Resident Discount Schemes

Depending on where you live in London, you may be eligible for the Resident Discount Scheme or ResCard. This service is provided by some of London's local councils/boroughs and provides discounts in a variety of areas such as sport centres, libraries, specified shops/restaurants, music, and theatre. You can apply by providing proof of your place of residence in London. While you will be entitled to discounts with your student card, the resident discount scheme may be able to provide you with alternative discounts or higher discounted rates. As an example, please see the Borough of Westminster's site:

www.westminster.gov.uk/leisureandculture/rescard/index.cfm

Once you have settled and found a place to live in London, you will need to look on the homepage of your local borough/council to see if they offer similar discount schemes.

Safety

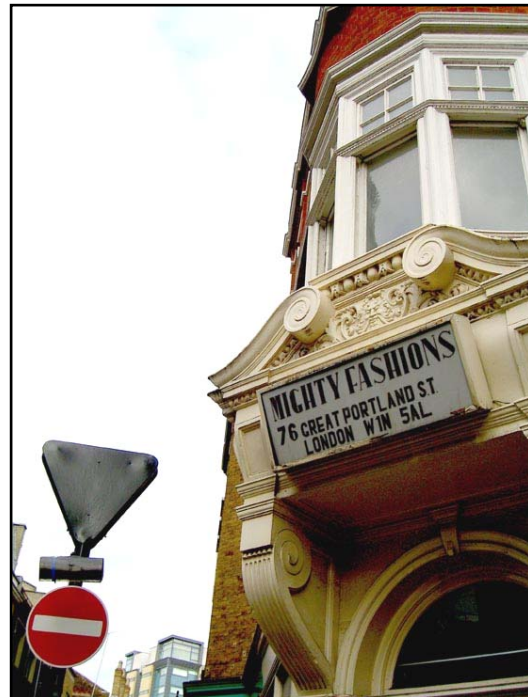
There are no "unsafe" areas in London. You will find beautiful, quaint streets running parallel to more

run-down areas, so the best thing to do is keep your eyes open and be mindful of your surroundings. Try to stay on busy roads at night and, if possible, walk with groups instead of alone. Crime rates are low in London, but pickpockets operate in busy areas (such as the Tube in rush-hour). If you keep your belongings close to you, and are watchful of the crowd, you will have no problems.

Shopping

London is a shopper's paradise and, as a result, is a consumerist city with all manner of interesting things available for purchase. Pack lightly when you first arrive, as you will find numerous things to buy. Markets can be the most affordable and fun shopping destinations for students

(www.londontourist.org/markets.html).



London has thousands of shops catering to all styles and tastes. "High Street" shops are generally chain stores found all over London and carry the latest styles. The main shopping areas of London are Oxford Street/Regent Street, King's Road, High Street Kensington, Covent Garden, and Angel. London also has many department stores which are convenient because they sell everything in one place. Most of the department stores are located on Oxford Street. The main department stores are Debenhams, John Lewis, Selfridges, Harrods, Liberty, House of Fraser and British Home Stores (BHS). Department stores can be more affordable than High Street shops but if you're looking for homewares (such

as towels, bed linens, kitchen utensils etc) go to Ikea or Argos as they offer the most affordable prices.

a) Sales

If you are a bargain-hunter, part of the fun of shopping in London is sale time. Usually before the winter break in mid-December through to the end of January, every shop in London will have a Winter Sale, with items being discounted as high as 75% off. A similar sale time occurs in July when the Summer Sales begin. There are many bargains to be found and the shops become very busy.

b) Student Discounts

Students are normally entitled to discounts (usually around 10% off) with a valid student ID card. Shops do not always indicate if they endorse student discounts so always ask the shop clerk when you are about to make a purchase.

c) Refunds

Always check a store's refund policy before purchasing an item. Many shops will not give a full-cash refund if you decide you no longer want an item you purchased. Always check your receipts, as they will indicate a return policy with regards to conditions

and time frame on a return. Many stores opt for an in-store credit instead of a refund, so it is best to make sure you are completely happy with an item before purchasing it!

Sport Facilities

There are many sporting facilities/recreation/leisure centres in London where you can do any manner of sport or activity. You can pay to "drop-in" to a fitness class or to use the pool or the gymnasium, however these sessions are usually quite costly. If you feel that you will be attending a sporting centre often enough, it is more economical to purchase a month or annual pass. Most buildings run by student housing have sport centres located nearby for convenient access.

Study

Studying in London can be a fantastic opportunity to grow and develop as an individual, however it can also be a very stressful time, as you adapt to a different environment while trying to stay on top of a demanding workload. It is important to remember that there are many different methods of studying and the university system in the UK may be quite different compared to your home educational system.

Student life can be stressful due to pressures and deadlines so it is important to remember that the University provides a support network for its students when life becomes overwhelming. There are counsellors and advisers on site to help you with any problems, both personally and academically. While your tutors are often very busy, you can make appointments to see them to discuss any problems or concerns with your course. Student Services at the University is here to help students and we recommend you seek out help before a problem becomes out of your control.

Transport in London

London is a huge city with a population of close to 8 million. Due to the size of the city, getting around would appear to be quite a challenge. The reality is that public transportation in London is generally very good and easy to use.

a) The Tube

The London Underground, also known as the Tube, is the most popular form of transportation because of its speed (www.tfl.gov.uk).

London is divided into 6 zones, with Zone 1 being in central London while Zone 6 is mostly residential. Most of the University's properties, and where you



will live and study, are located in Zones 1 to 3. As you venture farther away from Zone 1, you will find cheaper accommodation however the cost and time of transportation will be greater.

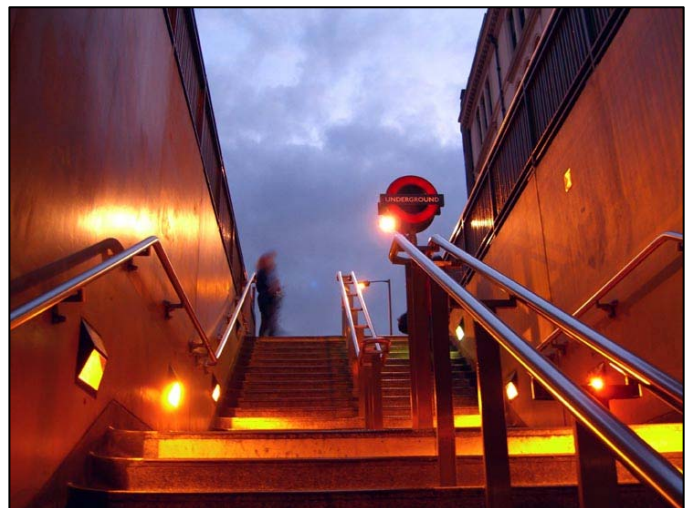
The Underground is made up of 12 train lines that zig-zag and connect below the city streets. At first glance, the Underground is intimidating and confusing-- appearing to be a real maze filled with people bustling back and forth. After a few journeys (and mistakenly boarded trains!) you will find the system very easy to use. You need to know which direction you are travelling in, as the trains are marked as either moving North, South, East or Westbound towards a final destination. It is a good idea to have a tube map with you so that you can visualize direction more clearly. You will often have to change trains

to make a complete journey. Journey times vary but the general "rule of thumb" is to allow at least 40 minutes to get somewhere. While journey time between tube stops increases the further you travel outside of Zones 1 to 3, each stop on the Underground takes approximately 2 minutes, so you can estimate, with some accuracy, how long your trip will take.

While paper tickets and cash fares still exist, Londoners use Oyster cards to travel. Oyster cards are blue plastic cards resembling credit cards that must be touched to a yellow pad when passing through an underground gate or boarding a bus.

The Oyster card will give you the lowest daily fare in the face of ever-increasing transport costs and stop charging after you've reached the value of a day travel-card (which is generally around £6). There are Peak and Off-Peak charges, meaning the Underground is more expensive during the morning and evening commute rather than during the day. You can either opt for "Pay As You Go" or put a weekly/monthly/annual fare onto your card. Please note that students are entitled to a discounted travel card, which you will be able to apply for after you have

enrolled on your course. It is a good idea to register your Oyster Card with Transport for London in case of theft or loss. Even the most experienced Tube-traveller will usually carry a pocket-map of the Underground with them at all times (which are free and available for collection at



any Underground station). It is also a smart idea to invest in a "London A to Z" booklet that can be purchased at any bookstore in the city. The London A to Z is a concise map of London's streets which proves useful for finding your way around new parts of town. Should you get disoriented, there is usually a tube station close by. Also, each bus stop is equipped with maps of the area. The tube generally begins running around 5:30am and shuts by 12:30am so make sure to arrange alternative transport to get yourself home after a night out.

Buses



Buses are a great way to travel around London because they allow you to learn the layout of the city and they are cheaper than the Tube. Unlike the Tube, buses do not observe the zones or peak/off-peak travel times meaning it is a set fare for any journey no matter how long, how short or at what time. While most buses stop running around midnight, there are many 24-hour buses and night buses which are helpful for getting you home late at night. Visit the Transport for London website (www.tfl.gov.uk) for bus maps and plans.

Cars

Cars are a comfortable method to get around, however they are incredibly expensive to maintain. Drivers must pay the Congestion Charge, which is a tariff to drive into central London. Petrol/Gas and daily parking is also quite expensive. Furthermore, you will need a Resident Parking Permit so that you have a place to put your car at night. If you park illegally, you face very heavy fines. These multiple costs incurred make cars a luxury not affordable to most students.

Taxis

Taxis are a quick and comfortable option of travel, however they are much more expensive than a



taking a bus or the Underground. Always ensure to ask the driver for an approximation of the cost before getting in. Black Cabs (www.londonblackcabs.co.uk/) are safe but there are many illegal or un-registered mini-cabs that can be very dangerous, especially for women travelling alone. Make sure the cab you take has a registration number and a legitimate fare-counter located near the driver.

Bicycles

Cycling is an affordable and healthy method of travel however London is not particularly "cycle-friendly". While there are bike lanes, the city still has a long way to go to become truly accommodating for a cyclist. You must wear a helmet as there are many aggressive drivers during rush-hour. We recommend cycling only if you are a confident and experienced cyclist.

Walking

Walking is great exercise and a wonderful way to observe the city up-close. Walking will also reveal that most tube stations are actually closer than they appear, in which case it may be faster to walk than take the Underground in some instances. It takes approximately 1.5 hours to walk across the centre of London.



Travel

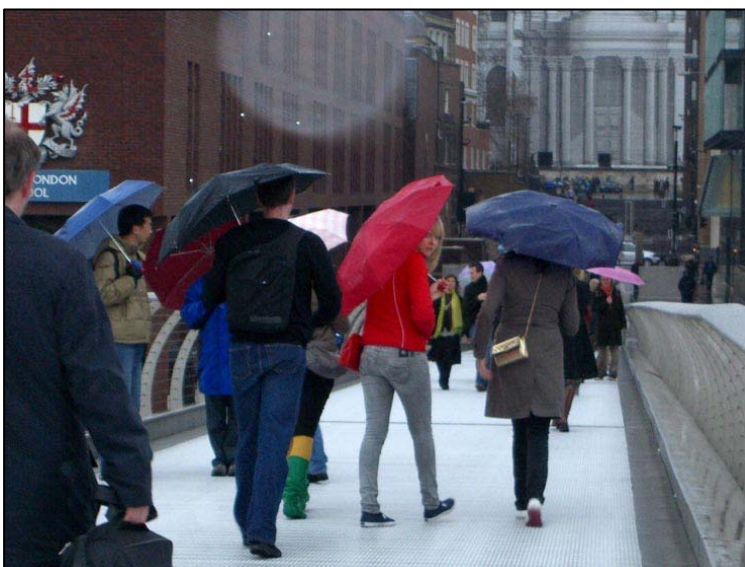
London is effectively a gateway to Europe with many cheap flights, trains and buses leaving the city to travel over the UK or into continental Europe. If you have enough money saved, it is a good idea to take some friends and try and see more of this part of the world during your study holidays or even on weekends. We recommend you look into student-friendly travel agencies Campus Travel (located around London) or STA (www.statravel.com) as they both cater to students with affordable travel prices. You will need your passport every time you leave the country and there are very good deals on flights and trains available. Ryan Air is

popular with students as flights are quite cheap to destinations all over Europe and the EEA (www.ryanair.com).

Overland trains service most parts of the UK but fares can vary depending on where and when you are travelling. There are also bus services, such as the National Express or the Megabus to many cities and towns in the UK that are very cheap. Always look into your vacation plans ahead of time as some countries may require you to have a Visitor's Visa before entry: <http://www.arts.ac.uk/international/current/ss-current-travel.htm> or speak to Student Services before planning a trip outside the UK.

Weather

Contrary to popular belief, it does not rain in London all the time, nor does the city get lost in heavy fog!



The weather is generally quite mild but unpredictable and with these changes it is best to layer your clothes to accommodate for warmer or cooler times throughout the day. Generally, winters in London are quite damp. While the temperature does not drop too far below 0 degrees Celsius, the cold is bitter due to the wind and the damp air. Seasons are not very defined, but generally speaking, Autumn/Winter last from October to March and Spring/Summer start to pick up in April. While the days are often grey, London can see stretches of sunny days and heat waves. It is good to bring clothes for all occasions and to pack a sturdy umbrella for those random rainstorms!

Working

Not every student is entitled to work while in the UK so check your visa in your passport as it will specify if you have a work restriction or not. While you do not initially need a National Insurance Number when you begin work, you will eventually need one for tax purposes. Even though you are a student, you will be liable to pay tax out of your monthly earnings. If you are unsure about National Insurance Numbers,

taxes or work
permissibility, contact
Student Services or visit
the following link:
[www.arts.ac.uk/international
/current/9152.htm](http://www.arts.ac.uk/international/current/9152.htm).

Many of our students take up
a part-time job as they find
the extra income quite
helpful. Please note that
you are not allowed to use
potential earnings from work
in the UK as a method of
proving financial stability
for student visa purposes.
Creative Careers in the
University can assist
students to find work
placements. You can

pick up any of the local
newspaper for job listings,
or visit our website for
information on jobs
([www.arts.ac.uk/student/care
ers](http://www.arts.ac.uk/student/careers)). You can also take
your CV/Resume out with you
and visit places you think
you may like to work. If
you seek employment in an
office setting, there are
many temping agencies that
can assist you. Just
remember that your primary
reason for being here is to
study so do not let your job
take priority over your
academic pursuits.

Pre-Departure Checklist

Please use this checklist to make sure you have got everything in place before you leave for London.

- Letter of acceptance from your place of study.
- Complete and return all forms required by the University.
- Make sure to know exactly where and when you are supposed to arrive at the University.
- A valid passport that will not expire while you are in the UK.
- Student Visa/Appropriate Entry Clearance in your passport.
- Documentary evidence that you have enough money to be considered financially secure while studying in the UK.
- Arranged transfer of money to the UK.
- Airline ticket with travel insurance.
- Arranged health insurance to cover the beginning of your stay in the UK until NHS healthcare becomes valid (see Health section for more details).
- Arranged accommodation prior to arrival in the UK.
- Arranged transport from airport to your accommodation.
- Address and telephone number of the University and your accommodation.
- Label all your luggage with your name and address in the UK.
- Make a list of what you have packed in case you need to make a claim on lost luggage.
- Check your baggage allowance if you think you may exceed the limit as it could become quite expensive if you have to pay for extra weight. If you are unsure of the baggage allowance, call the airline you will be using.
- Bring at least 3 passport-sized photographs of yourself with you.