



THE
KIASU GUIDE
PART 2:
PRE-DEPARTURE

DISCLAIMER

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FOREWORD

Hello everyone!

As promised, the second part of the guide is out. Hopefully the first part of the Kiasu Guide has been of help and you have your accommodation settled. If it isn't, don't sweat too much about it, I haven't settled mine for the second year either so join the club! In all seriousness, if you feel like you are in dire straits for accommodations and require assistance, please feel free to reach out to any of the exco members/seniors and we'd be more than happy to give any advice we can.

This second part of the guide is to help you with the challenges that you might face moving forward. In particular, major things like banking, visa and telco which are important considerations when starting your new university life abroad. The comments in this guide are based on experiences that we have had, having been through the entire process ourselves just last year. Pardon us if any of the information is outdated. Things do change and as far as possible we've done cross-checks to make sure things are as accurate and up to date as possible. Nonetheless, if any discrepancy is found, do alert us and we will rectify it as soon as possible.

In general, the greatest advice, do not panic. This guide will get you thinking on a couple of the important stuff. Some things just require patience - for instance, your CAS number from UCL before you can apply for your visa. Talk to your friends and to us, hear what they are going through or have gone through. Learn from and update one another. You will be (more than) fine! :) Stay connected with us through the freshers' FB group which you can find at the end of this guide.

Head's up, there's the pre-departure talk we're having on the 28th of July, Mapletree Business Centre, 10am-1pm. Orientation camp from 31st Aug-1st Sept. And events we organise when we're all safely landed in UCL/London such as ski trips, musical theatre trips and trips to Ikea(!!!) that you can be all eggcited for!!!

Cheers,

Megan

President

UCL Singapore Society

VISA APPLICATION

I. ONLINE VISA APPLICATION

- 1) Online form is available at <https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/next>
 - a) The earliest you can apply is 3 months before your date of travel to the UK and you can arrive in the UK up to 1 month before your course starts (for courses lasting more than 6 months).
 - b) Apply under the **Tier 4 (General) Student** category. For scholars, you may apply under the **Tier 4 (General)(Sponsored) Student** category. However, if you have been advised otherwise by your scholarship officer, do follow their instructions.
- 2) Filling in the online form
 - a) Submit and print a copy of the online form.
- 3) Payment and Visa Appointment
 - a) Schedule your appointment and make payment. As of 1st July 2018, the application fee for a Tier 4 Student Visa is **SGD 644**. It is also mandatory for all international students applying for a visa to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS). This payment will be made together with the visa application fee. For students, it is approximately **£175** per year.
 - b) You may calculate your IHS fee here: <https://www.immigration-health-surcharge.service.gov.uk/checker/type>.
 - c) After making the payment, you will be sent an email informing you what to do next and what to bring to the VFS Global visa centre.

II. VISA APPOINTMENT

1) Go for the appointment at

a) **VFS Global**

135 Cecil Street #08-01 MYP Plaza Singapore 069536

Tel: +(65) 62241732

2) Prepare and bring the necessary documents for the visa appointment

a) Online visa application form

b) UCL email containing your CAS number

i. *Don't be too concerned if your CAS does not have your surname, English name and Chinese name in the right order. Just make sure that all parts of your name are reflected and only your surname is CAPITALIZED.*

c) VISA appointment letter

d) Current and previous passport(s)

e) 2 passport photos

f) Education transcripts

g) Financial evidence:

Self-funded

i. Copy of bank statement

ii. Personally-signed letter from your bank manager with the bank letterhead, bank account number, your full name (per your passport), date of letter, and available funds clearly stated.

iii. Pursuant to the UK immigration rules, new students studying in the UK for the first time are required to show the full maintenance sum of £11385.

- iv. The minimum sum reflected in your bank statement can be calculated as such:
 - v. *Minimum sum = Tuition fees for AY 2018/2019 + Maintenance*
- vi. The minimum sum must a) be shown to have been maintained in the account for at least 28 consecutive days, b) with the 28th day being no more than 1 month before your visa application date.
- vii. For example:
 - 1. A bank statement for the 28-day period 1/08/14 to 29/08/14 must reflect a balance above or equivalent to the minimum sum throughout this period.
 - 2. The same bank statement is only valid as financial evidence for a visa application submitted between 29/08/14 ('the 28th day') to 29/09/14.
- viii. If you are presenting your passbook as financial evidence, please remember to update it before getting a certified-true-copy for submission. Similarly, a passbook updated as of 1st August will need to be submitted by 31st August.
- ix. If the funds are in your parent's name, you must submit the following:
 - 1. Your birth certificate confirming your relationship with your parents
 - 2. A signed letter from your parent agreeing to fund your studies and confirming your relationship
- x. If the funds are in your legal guardian's name, you must submit the following:
 - 1. Your legal guardianship documents
 - 2. A signed letter from your guardian agreeing to fund your studies and confirming your relationship

Scholarship

- xi. Scholarship letter from your scholarship body. The HR department should instruct you accordingly.

3) During the visa appointment

- a) The security guard will ask you for your appointment letter and you will have to go through security checks. You will then be ushered to the waiting room. (Waiting time tends to be longer during lunch hours)
- b) Once it's your turn, a staff member will look through your forms and help fill in/correct any details. He/she will also ask you whether you want the following optional services:
 - i. Courier service for your passport to be sent to your house for \$20 (otherwise, you can pick it up at the office)
 - ii. SMS service for \$3 to inform you of when you are able to collect your passport and visa
- c) After that, another staff member will collect your biometric data (photograph and fingerprints)

FAQ:

Q: How long will the visa application process take?

A: It depends on the availability of appointments, which you will book after completing the online form. The processing time, following the in-person appointment, is usually between 10-30 working days. You are thus advised to begin the application early after receiving your offer from UCL. If you are pressed for time, a priority visa service is available for \$218, where your visa will be processed within 3-5 working days. Do note that your passport will be sent to Manila where the visa is issued, which means you will not be able to travel out of Singapore during this period.

Q: How and when should I collect my passport?

A: VFS Global will send you an email once your passport has been processed (or SMS if you signed up for the notification service). No appointment is needed, you just need to bring along the receipt and collect it anytime between the collection hours (Monday to Friday 14:00 - 1600).

Q: What if my passport is going to expire soon?

A: You might want to renew it before applying for a visa, as it may be troublesome and expensive to transfer your visa or link your BRP to a new passport. Ideally, your passport would expire after you complete your studies. Note that the passport you are using to apply for the visa must be the same passport as that stated on the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). If not, you MUST update UCL and inform UCAS to request a re-issue of the CAS.

Q: What is a BRP and how do I get it?

A: The Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) is similar to an IC and essentially acts as your visa. It has your biographic and biometric information and will be valid for the full duration of your course. You will need to bring your BRP along when you travel as you need to show it every time you re-enter the UK. The visa, which will be printed on your passport, is only a temporary one and will only be valid for 30 days. Upon collection of your passport, you should also be given a decision letter detailing the collection details of your BRP. When you arrive in the UK, you have to collect your BRP either at UCL or at a post office near you (you may choose this during the online application).

ATAS APPLICATION

I. About ATAS

The Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) was introduced in 2007, designed to ensure that the people who are applying to study sensitive subjects in the UK do not have any links to Weapons of Mass Destruction Programmes. (Yes, this is true! Check up the website if you do not believe us!) If you require an ATAS Certificate, it is important for you to obtain it as it will be part of your requirement in your visa application. Here are some useful tips in helping to make your ATAS Application smooth and seamless.

II. Who needs to apply for an ATAS Certificate?

What you study determines whether you need an ATAS Certificate, do click on the links below to check if your confirmed course is listed:

Courses requiring ATAS Certification in UCL (Provided by UCL):

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/iss/immigration-visa/PDFs/ATAS_Updated_List_22-02-18.pdf

UK Government website to check if you require an ATAS Certificate:

<https://www.academic-technology-approval.service.gov.uk/>

If it is, you would need an ATAS certificate! UCL will also include in the official offer letter whether you require an ATAS Certificate, so do take note of that!

If not, hooray! You don't have to worry about this.

III. Items/details to have by your side when applying for an ATAS Certificate:

- 1) Your conditional/unconditional offer letter from your Higher Education Institution (HEI) – in this case, your offer from UCL.
- 2) Information about your programme of study/research including the relevant JACS code
- 3) Contact details
- 4) Passport details
- 5) Full details of all previous studies

- 6) Full details of all previous/current employment (if applicable)
- 7) Previous ATAS applications (if applicable)
- 8) Programme of study you are applying to follow in the UK (including JACS code and research proposal)
- 9) Full names and contact details of 2 referees (First name and Family name). You must have known both of your referees for at least 3 years. At least one must also be an academic from your country of origin
- 10) How you will be funding your studies (self/family or scholarship)

IV. Applying for an ATAS Certificate

Step 1: Register for an account at

<https://www.academic-technology-approval.service.gov.uk/create-an-account>

Step 2: Fill in the online application form

Step 3: Submit and print your application

Do take note that you fill in the correct information in your online application form, especially the JACS code. If your ATAS does not match UCL's offer, you may be refused a visa.

The online application form is tied to the email address that you have provided, and the only way to "untie" your email address to that form is to complete and submit that form. In the event that you have filled in the form wrongly, you can start again with another email address.

Alternatively, you may complete and submit the form first, then register again with the same email address (this time with the correct information). But you will have to email ATAS with your ATAS ID number provided in your submitted form and inform them to withdraw your incorrect application.

V. How long will one have to wait after submission?

It will take 20 working days (4 weeks, or sometimes more) for your application to be processed. It is strongly encouraged to complete application early, but only after confirming your place in UCL, so that you can apply for your UK visa in good time.

VI. Useful websites:

- 1) <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/iss/immigration-visa/atas>
- 2) <https://www.academic-technology-approval.service.gov.uk/>
- 3) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme>

EXIT PERMITS & REGISTRATION WITH MFA

I. Exit permits

- 1) For those disrupting from National Service, make sure to apply for disruption early, and get an exit permit if needed. For NSmen, you can get an exit permit online at <http://www.ns.sg>. You will need to provide the letter of acceptance from UCL for your application.
- 2) Call the 24-hour NS Call Centre at 1800 367 6767 and check with CMPB/MINDEF if you are unsure.
- 3) If you come back to Singapore on holiday break for more than 28 days, you will need to renew your exit permit. The procedure will be the same as above.

II. Registration with MFA

- 1) Registering with the MFA will allow the Ministry and its embassies/consulates to contact you and render assistance in case of an emergency overseas. This free, online service provided by the MFA is completely optional, and can be obtained at:
<https://eregister.mfa.gov.sg/eregisterportal/common/preLoginEregisterView.action>

FINANCE

I. Cost of living

- 1) On average, if you're catered, £400 per month would be a comfortable budget, allowing you to eat adequately and enjoy a cup of coffee/tea here and then. If you're not catered, £450 would be a better estimate depending on how often you decide to cook and your spending habits. As no meals are provided, it is tempting for non-catered students to dabao, spending on average £5 per meal. As such, it really depends on how you spend your money.
- 2) For accommodation, catered halls in the Bloomsbury area would be around £220 per week (average – gardens hall being the most expensive is at £250 per week), while non-catered would be around £190 per week.

II. Preparations in Singapore

- 1) Before arriving in London, remember to prepare your bank draft/money order/bank statement. It is advisable to bring enough pounds in cash to tide you over the first few weeks while waiting for your bank account to be set up. A conservative estimate would be £500. Do also take note that most vendors in London tend not to trust the £50 note, preferring smaller denominations such as the £20 note. You can thus bring £50 notes and change them at the bank. It is also useful to bring along some Euros if you plan on travelling around Europe; however, this is not necessary as you have Monzo, which I will get to in a moment.
- 2) Tuition Bills The tuition bills for all courses in the year AY2018/2019 can be found here: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/undergraduate/fees-funding/tuition-fees/overseas>
- 3) Please visit <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/money/fees-payment/invoices> for more information on payment methods for sponsored and self-financed students.
- 4) Note: Students are now offered the option of paying for their whole programme of study in advance at the start of their first year of study with the fee level fixed at the rate of their first year of study. Email fees@ucl.ac.uk prior to the start of the programme of study and payment must be made in full before, or at, enrolment.

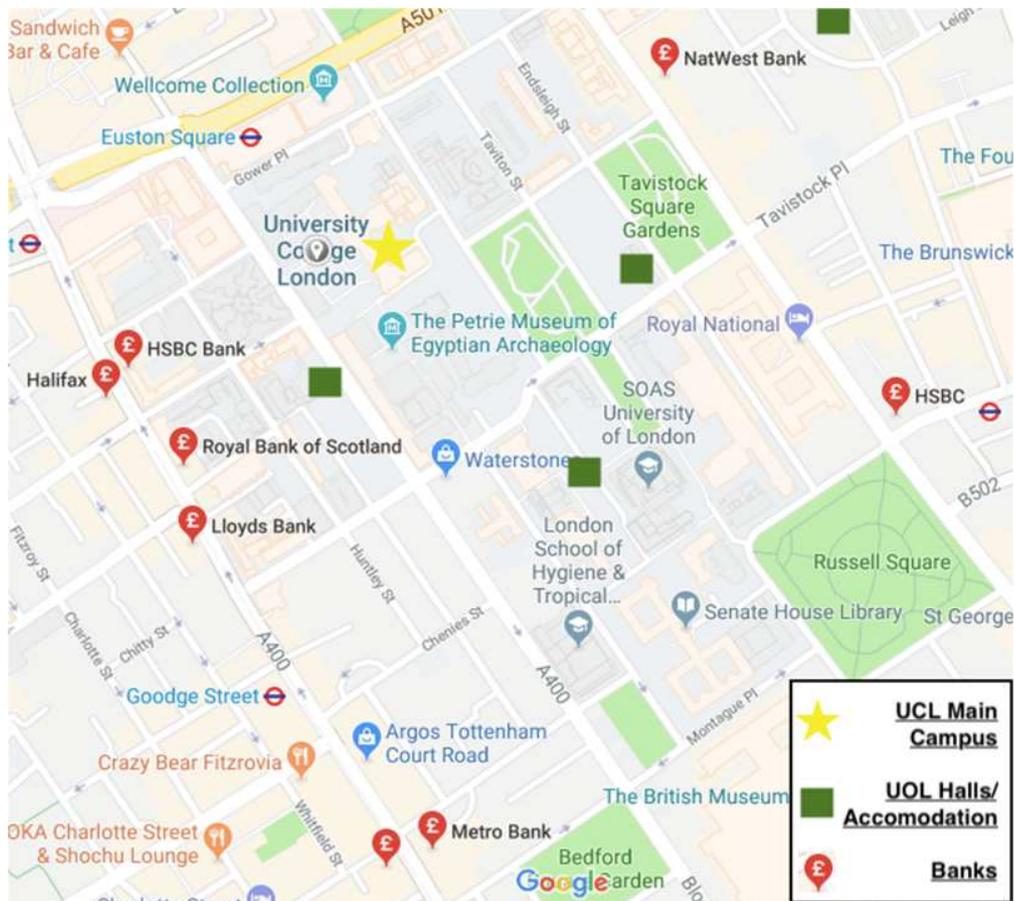
III. Setting up bank accounts

In Singapore

- 1) This section is only relevant if your parents are HSBC Premier account holders. The requirement to be a HSBC Premier account holder is that \$200,000 must be maintained in the account at all times and failure to do so will incur a heavy penalty. The advantages of having a Premier account is that you can set up a Premier account anywhere else in the world for free. Transfer of funds between accounts is also free, and the exchange rates are substantially better than overseas transfer between two bank accounts. More details are available at <https://www.hsbc.com.sg/1/2/personal/deposits/premieraccount>.
- 2) Other options such as HSBC Passport Account (requires a monthly payment of £8/month with a minimum of a six-month contract), and Citibank Pound Account (Citibank UK is unfortunately a separate entity so it is a huge hassle to link it to the one set up in Singapore) are available, but as explained, are not exactly feasible. As such, it is recommended to set up your bank account in London as there are many options available and once the initial registration is completed, the services provided are more or less the same.

In London

Map of nearby banks to UCL



- 1) It is recommended that you sign up with a bank that is nearby so that if you require any assistance (such as a lost card, forgotten pin, or if you require human assistance – not everything can be done online! It's irritating!) you don't have to travel far to receive it.
- 2) Most banks also require a statement of enrolment that can only be issued by UCL once you've properly enrolled onsite. Therefore, the earliest you should arrive would be the start of the international students' orientation programme week (dates of which will be sent to you via email from the university office).
- 3) If not, you can either show up at a bank of your choice and ask to be signed up. Be warned though - during peak periods such as orientation week, banks might ask that you make a reservation first and come at a later date. As such, be sure that this is the first thing that you do upon enrolment! Here are the links to the more popular banks:
 - a) HSBC Bank Account (the most basic account with no monthly charges): <https://www.hsbc.co.uk/current-accounts/products/bank-account/>
 - b) Lloyds Classic Account: <https://www.lloydsbank.com/current-accounts/all-accounts/classic-account.asp>
 - c) Barclays Student Additions Account (International): <https://www.barclays.co.uk/current-accounts/international-student-bank-account/>
 - d) Natwest Student bank account: <https://personal.natwest.com/personal/current-accounts/compare-current-accounts/student-account/international-student-documentation-required.html>
- 4) On the other hand, UCL being the esteemed college that it is, will invite the banks to set up booths in the building opposite the Printroom café during Orientation week till Freshers' Fair and you can open your account there instead. A representative will be at each booth, and I have been told that even if you've opened your bank account, it's a great place to get free pens. More information can be found here: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/iss/when-you-arrive/bank-account>.

IV. Spending

- 1) In addition to your bank account, it is recommended that you open a debit account with providers such as Monzo, Glint, etc. These debit accounts work by a manual transfer of money from your main bank account and by spending using

that debit card, the app that comes with the account tracks your spending and is thus a great way to manage your finances.

- 2) Disclosure: I hold a Monzo account but is sadly not paid for promoting it. One of its biggest advantage is that they do not charge a foreign transaction fee for when you use the card overseas. Instead, they rely on the Mastercard foreign currency conversion rate which is the best rate that you can get. In addition, there will be no charge when withdrawing from an ATM overseas (up till £200 over a 30-day period). This is the best card to get if you're a student who wants to budget and is an avid traveler. However, do note that Monzo is best used as a supplementary account and not as your main bank account in the UK!
- 3) More information about Monzo can be found here: <https://monzo.com/faq/>.

That's all for finance matters! As always, if you have any questions, feel free to contact me on Facebook (Sam) and I'll try my best to help you! If you were simply reading this to answer your parents' question of what's the recommended budget and want to live an extravagant lifestyle, refer to <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/undergraduate/fees-funding/tuition-fees/living-expenses-and-additional-costs> to back up your answer. ("A total of around £387 per week is considered a reasonable average for about a 39-week year")

INSURANCE

I. NHS

- 2) If you're a student studying in a UK university (i.e. UCL) for more than six months, you automatically qualify for free National Healthcare Service (NHS). In UCL, the NHS practice they recommend is Ridgmount Practice which is located near to the UCL campus. It provides general health care, a contraceptive service and a full nursing service. As long as you live in one of the local postcodes which they cover, you'd be eligible to register with Ridgmount Practice. Otherwise, you can register with another NHS general practice near you. Registering is easy. All you have to do is complete an online form and visit them personally after. That's all.

II. Private insurance

- 1) Some of you may want to consider taking up private insurance on top of the NHS. This is to offer additional coverage that NHS may not cater to. For instance, coverage that you get from vacations (trips you take to neighbouring cities during term break). Some are also concerned about the long waiting time that comes with some NHS treatments. Getting private insurance will then mean that you can get quicker access to the treatment you need by turning to private medical care which is often more expensive - covered by your private insurance.
- 2) UCL Singapore Society is working with AIG to provide a 10% student discount regardless the type of Student Assist plan chosen. You would have to read the brochure and policy wordings for AIG's Student Assist Insurance Plan for students studying abroad here: <https://www.aig.com.sg/personal/more-insurance/student-assist>. You can then complete the application form and email a soft copy to cithomas-agency@aia.com.com.sg before 31 August 2018.
- 3) Another popular plan is also NTUC Income's Overseas Study Protection Plan: <https://www.income.com.sg/insurance/insurance-for-students-children/overseas-study-protection-plan>.
- 4) Beyond the price of the insurance plans, do take note of what the insurance plans cover (and do not cover) and pick the plan that suits you best! 😊

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

I. Introduction

- 1) Giffgaff and Three are the two most popular telecommunication carriers among students. Alternative options include Vodafone, O2, 3 and Virgin. Each has its own perks and it's a good idea to do some research first before committing to a contract. Pay-As-You-Go SIMS are also available from most dealers, and you can top up your balance online or at phone outlets. Pay-As-You-Go SIMS are especially useful at the beginning of your stay as you would require a bank account before signing a contract with a carrier. You may consider suspending your Singapore line which carriers will charge a small administrative fee.

II. Giffgaff

- 1) A range of plans termed 'goodybags' are available for purchase. Such goodybags are on a Pay-As-You-Go basis and can be deactivated during the summer months. For a £10 goodybag (which is sufficient for most seniors), you get unlimited EU minutes, unlimited EU texts, 3 GB data (4G) in addition to free calls and messages to other Giffgaff users. After using giffgaff for 3 months, you will be rewarded with an additional 1GB data each month. You can compare the different goodybags that are available at <https://www.giffgaff.com/sim-only-plans>.
- 2) TIP: You can order a free SIM online (at least 3 weeks before as it is delivered from the UK) and activate it a day before you leave the country. You may set up a Giffgaff account at <https://giffgaff.com> and purchase your package! Alternatively, get an existing Giffgaff user to refer you and you will both be rewarded with £5 credits. You can also purchase add-ons to make international calls and messages.

III. Three

- 1) We will be giving out free Pay-As-You-Go SIMs from Three during your pre-departure talk and possibly during orientation camp. For a £15 plan, you get 3000 EU minutes, 3000 EU texts, 5GB data (4G). You can compare the different plans that are available at https://www.three.co.uk/Store/SIM/Pay_As_You_Go.
- 2) You can consider switching to Three's 12-month contracts after you have obtained your bank account. It provides more value as its data can be used in Singapore during the summer months without addition charge. For £16 a month, you get unlimited EU minutes, unlimited EU texts, 12GB data (4G).
- 3) You should activate your free SIM online at <http://www.three.co.uk/> a day before leaving the country. Also, download Wuntu on the app store which is Three's rewards app. It gives out weekly deals and offers such as free Costa coffee and £3 movie tickets.

TRANSPORTATION

I. Flights from Singapore to London

- 1) There are many ways to fly to London from Singapore and the prices vary based on the airline, direct/stopover, single/return, and the airport landed in London. It is best to purchase a single ticket from Singapore to London and then buying return trips from London as it is cheaper due to the airport fees (hidden in your flight ticket) are cheaper in London airports.

	Singapore Airlines	Qantas Airways	British Airways	Norwegian Airlines	Emirates	Qatar Airways	Etihad
Flight Type	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Stopover	Stopover	Stopover
Price	Varying	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Varying	Varying	Moderate
Airport in London	Heathrow	Heathrow	Heathrow	Gatwick	Heathrow/ Gatwick	Heathrow	Heathrow
Baggage	30kg	30kg	2x23kg (for students)	Based on ticket bought	30kg	30kg	30kg

- 2) Above is a quick summary on the popular airlines Singaporeans take to travel between London and Singapore. There are many others that have 1 stopover as it is usually flying to their capital airline hub and then taking a flight to London from there (E.g. Thai Airways, Air India, Swiss Airlines, and KLM etc.). Usually direct flights are more expensive but some of them are not as comfortable as the others. My take on booking a flight is balancing price and comfort.
- 3) Your choice is dependent on your preferences for flights. Some people like direct flights while some prefer stopovers as sitting for 13/14hrs can be tiring. Prices for these flights vary according to the date and period you book your flight. Airlines like Singapore airlines can be very expensive, going up to 2.2k SGD for a return flight to Singapore if you book 1 month before. However, if one is able to grab their fare deals 2-3 months before, it could cost only 800+ SGD for a return flight. Hence, my recommendation is to subscribe to their airline newsletter for promotions.
- 4) Furthermore, make use of your student status to book student fare flights from sites like Student Travel Association (STA), Student Universe. For example, I

used STA to book my Qatar Airways single trip from Singapore to London 1 month before my flight and it cost me 600 SGD with 40kg baggage allowance. Do remember that some sites like STA upgrades you to 40kg for free and allow 1 free change of flight dates.

- 5) The airport you land in London is important as the travel time to Central London will be different. Heathrow is usually recommended as it is the closest International airport to central London and it takes 50minutes to reach Bloomsbury area (UCL) via the Piccadilly Tube Line. Gatwick airport is down south of London and requires you to take a train/bus to Victoria station and then transferring via tube/train/Uber to Bloomsbury area.

II. Flights from London to Europe

- 1) Travelling to places in Europe are very affordable due to the abundance of low-cost carriers like Ryanair, EasyJet Etc. Return flights to European cities will typically cost you less than 200SGD and during promotion deal periods, it could cost you even lesser. For example, a return flight to/from Poland could cost you only 70SGD if you book it during the discounted period. Therefore, do look out for promotional flight ticket on budget airlines and THEN plan your holiday accordingly.
- 2) One of the downsides of taking budget airlines is the travelling to/from airports. Budget airlines are usually operating from Stansted, Luton, Gatwick, City, Southend airport and most requires you to take a train as they are quite far from Central London, usually accessible by train/bus only. When planning for a holiday, do take this into consideration.

III. Transport within London

- 1) Trains
 - a. Travelling to cities around London can be done by taking the trains. The train network in UK are operated by various private companies and can be booked via a centralised application called Trainline. The app works like Skyscanner, except that it shows trains and actually book the ticket for you.
 - b. One of my first recommendation for freshers is to purchase the 3 years 16-25 National Rail card for 70+pounds. This card gives you at least 33% discount on off-peak tickets, which is extremely useful in saving money for trips to places like Brighton, Dover, Canterbury etc. The railcard can be purchased via an app and you can opt for the virtual one so you don't forget to bring your rail card for trips. Additionally, do always check out for

super off-peak train tickets as they are the absolute cheapest tickets you can find.

- c. It is largely free seating in the train and there are ticket operators that come around to check your tickets. Hence, it is possible that they will check if you purchased a 16-25 ticket without a 16-25 rail card. You will have to pay the full fare of the ticket which is ridiculously expensive if you are unable to show your railcard.

2) Tube

- a. The tube network covers only London and extends to some places in outer London and it is payable via oyster cards. Tube trips typically cost between 2.4 to 3.2GBP per trip based on the zones you are travelling to. Basically, my advice is to make an 18+ Oyster card and then linking it to your 16-25 rail card via ticket office to enjoy 33% off peak tube trips. One of the major perks of the Tube is its night tube operations. For weekends, popular tube lines like Northern, Piccadilly, Central lines are operational 24hrs, giving you an extra option after some late-night fun ☺.

3) Buses

- a. Buses in London also use the Oyster cards. The price for a trip is a flat rate of 1.50GBP. There is unlimited bus and tram journeys for free within one hour of first touching in. Some buses are also 24/7, giving you another option for travelling back to halls after some late-night activities ☺.

4) Taxis

- a. If you need to get a place ASAP, you have various taxi options to choose from. Firstly, black cabs can be hailed off the roads and it is extremely expensive, up to 3x the price of Uber trips. The next best, or rather student-friendly taxi is Uber. Uber works the same in London like how it used to be in Singapore, where a typical trip can cost you between 5 to 10 GBP, rather affordable if you split with your friends. There are other alternatives like Kabbee, which is a niche taxi platform that offers better rates than Uber on trips to/from the airports. Additionally, there are many other taxi services offered in London competing amongst themselves (E.g. smartride via citymapper app), which only serves us well... well until only a single company is left☺.

TIP: Download Citymapper app as your transportation app to replace Google Maps. It not only provides ways for you to get to your destination, it also shows routes that are rain-safe, that only use the tube, that are the cheapest. It also has the tube map within the app and helps to count the number of calories you have burnt after walking which is honestly how you will mostly travel within central London!

SOME HACKS AND MORE

- I. Most telecommunication companies allow free purchase of sim card. You can register the sim card without ever using it. This allows you to be eligible for promotions by that telecommunication company. For example, 3 has an application called Wuntu which gives weekly discounts and promotions like 3 GBP movie tickets or free Costa Coffee. For O2, there is free Café Nero coffee every Thursday.
- II. Download applications like Unidays, Student Beans, Today Tix, and Student Pulse for discounts and promotions for shopping, musicals, and concerts. You can also sign up for Mousetrap membership (free!) to get cheap tickets to plays and musicals (they are mostly under 10 GBP!!). Sign up for the mailing list of arts organisations like Southbank Centre, National Theatre, and Barbican Centre to keep yourself updated with events. They will also release promotions in their mailing list which you can make use of for cheaper tickets
- III. Mcdonald's has some really cheap food for supper (when you are rushing work or your drama). Big macs and fries cost 1.99 GBP; the wrap of the day costs 1.99 GBP (3+ GBP for a meal); 20 piece nuggets cost 4.69 GBP; and Mcflurry costs 99 pence but Singapore's one is better. Students get free Mcflurry or cheese burger or mayo burger with the purchase of any meal. Just show your card!
- IV. Download applications like Too Good to Go which sells food that is for clearing at very cheap prices because they do not want to keep it till tomorrow. There are many participating outlets near UCL so you will certainly have the food that you want though sushi is always popular (Yo! Sushi is an outlet which participates in this).
- V. **Get your memberships for grocery shopping!** Waitrose, Nectar Card, Tesco, Ikea, H mart, Boots, Superdrug. All these shops have free memberships to collect points. Additionally, you can get a free cup of coffee or tea every time you buy something from Waitrose if you have a membership card.
- VI. The UK government has recently introduced a sugar tax to reduce the consumption of sugared drinks. If you are someone with a really sweet tooth, instead of buying from the stores, you can get your College Hall friend to buy from their vending machine at 1 GBP for 500ml. But we will recommend kicking that sugar addiction and go for something healthier like... water 😊
- VII. **Do ALL your health checkups and vaccination in Singapore!** For those who wear retainers, we suggest making a 2nd pair in case you lose it in Singapore. One of us lost his retainer in Singapore and had to fork out 260 GBP just for 1 retainer – that's twice the price of what you have to pay in Singapore!

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

Please join our Facebook group for freshers and our official UCLSS Facebook group for updates on events! We hope that this guide has been useful, and we will see you in the +44 soon!

Official UCL Singaporean Freshers 2018/2019 FB Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/611600415847320/>

Official UCL Singaporean Postgraduates 2018/2019 FB Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/264461200788420/>

Official UCLSS FB Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/uclsingaporeociety/>

Official UCLSS Email:

uclsingsoc@gmail.com