



KIASU GUIDE 2021

PART 2

PREDEPARTURE



DISCLAIMER

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FOREWORD

Hey friends!

At this stage, most of you should have submitted your accommodations requests and are waiting out for your CAS number to apply for Visas. This will take a while to come as the UK and UCL can be rather slow in processing these things. In the meantime, hang tight and read this guide!

Part II gets into the nitty gritty - the dos and don'ts of settling into the UK. Treat this Guide as a knowledge bank based upon years of Seniors' experiences and mistakes. Here, you will find information about essential services such as Banking and Telco providers as well as travel tips. While Part II aims to be as comprehensive as possible, there will undoubtedly be unforeseen challenges. Don't be afraid to ask for help – hundreds have gone through the process (and survived!).

I look forward to meeting all of you at our Pre-Departure Talk on the 7th of August, the Orientation Camp from the 14th to 15th August, and the Career Societies Talk on 21st August. Do sign up and attend these events to meet other Freshers and hear directly from your seniors!

Best wishes,

Zhang Yu Fu

President,
UCL Singapore Society

VISA APPLICATION

I. ONLINE VISA APPLICATION

- 1) Online form is available at <https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/apply>
 - 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 2021, the application fee for a Tier 4 Student Visa is **£348 (approx 600SGD)**. 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 **£300-400** per year of study.
 - 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 2021/2022 + 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.
- h) Prior to the appointment, you may select any of the following add-on services:

			
Courier Service	Photograph Service	SMS Service	Document Printing
SGD 15	SGD 12	SGD 3	SGD 0.8

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.
- b) Once it's your turn, a staff member will look through your forms and help fill in/correct any details.
- c) After that, another staff member will collect your biometric data (photograph and fingerprints).

VISA 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 14-30 working days. You are thus advised to begin the application early after receiving your CAS from UCL. If you are pressed for time, a priority visa service might be available for an extra cost, where your visa will be processed within 3-5 working days. Do note that your passport will be sent abroad, 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 should renew your passport 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 should 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 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 vignette, which will be printed on your passport, is only a temporary one and will only be valid for 30 days, starting from 7 days before your scheduled departure date. 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

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.

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. The requirement will also be made known to you under the terms of your offer by UCL.

If it is, you would need an ATAS certificate! Be sure to carry on reading and apply for the certificate. If not, hooray! You don't have to worry about this ☺

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

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/sites/students/files/atas_list_jan_2020_0.pdf

UK Government website to check if you require an ATAS Certificate

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

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

- Your conditional / Unconditional offer letter from your Higher Education Institution (HEI) – In your case, offer from UCL.
- Information about your programme of study/research including the relevant JACS code

You will also need to provide information on:

- Contact details
- Passport details
- Previous studies
- Previous and current employment (if applicable)
- Previous ATAS applications (if applicable)
- All published papers
- Optional modules you anticipate taking in a taught Masters (if applicable)

- Your area of research and a description (for research degrees)
- 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
- How you will be funding your studies (self/family or scholarship)

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.

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. However, due to the increased number of applications between April and September, it can take up to 30 or more working days.

It is strongly encouraged to complete the application early, but only after confirming your place in UCL, so that you can apply for your UK visa in good time. Do take note that unlike the visa application, there is no 'fast track' service available so applying early will be beneficial.

The ATAS certificate application is free and would need to be done before you make your visa application! So make sure to get it done ASAP!

Useful websites to get more information on ATAS:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/immigration-and-visas/academic-technology-approval-scheme-atas>

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

FINANCE

I. Cost of living

- 1) On average, if you're catered, £300-£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, £350-£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.
 - a) Based on experience, groceries per week kinda average at £15 , transport per month about £100 and random spending on personal indulgences about £150 so a month's spending for non catered students could average around £350
- 2) For accommodation, catered halls in the Bloomsbury area would be around £220 per week (average – gardens hall being the most expensive at £280 per week), while non-catered halls 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. As you are exchanging currencies at the money changer, do try to ask for smaller notes! Also, in the UK, most places accept cashless payment methods such as credit card and ApplePay.
- 2) The tuition bills for all courses in the year AY2021/2022 can be found here: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/undergraduate/fees-and-funding/tuition-fees/overseas-students-fees>
- 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.

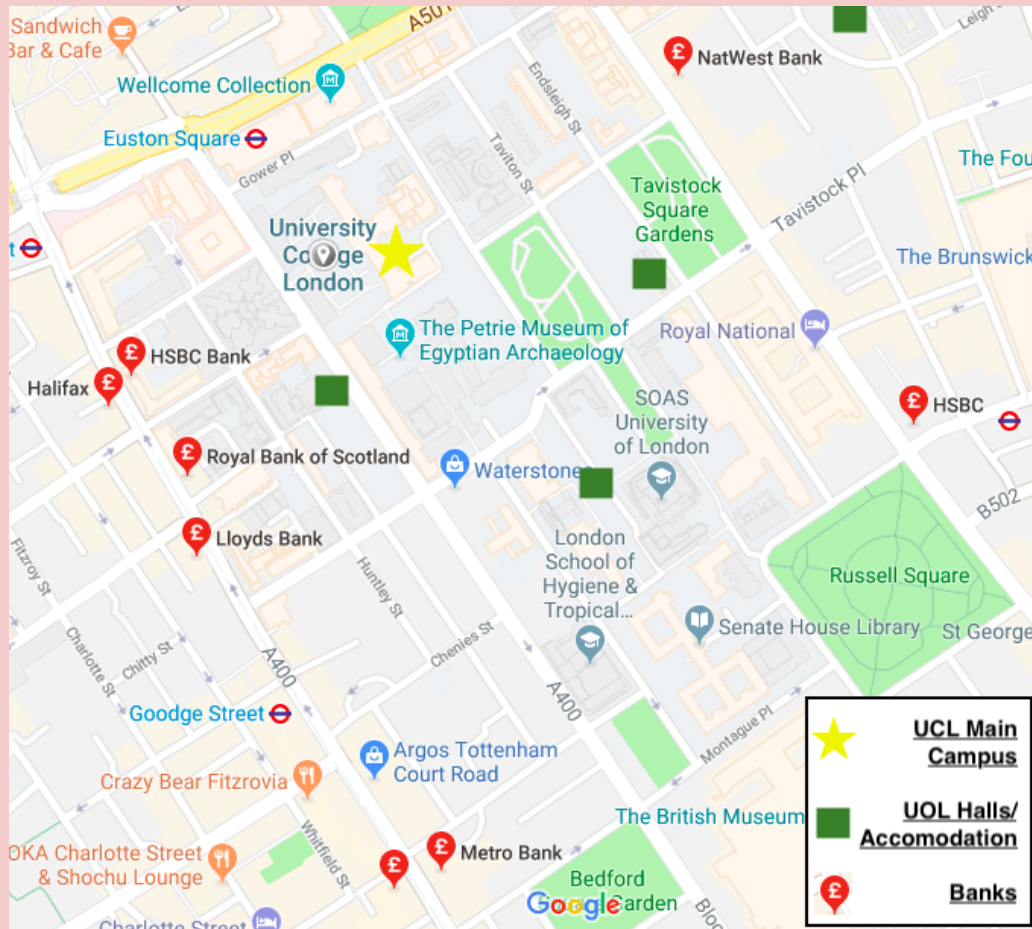
III. Setting up bank accounts

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/premier/>.
- 2) You may set up a HSBC UK account (non-Premier) in Singapore by visiting your local bank. The physical credit card will be mailed from the UK to Singapore by Royal Mail, as such, do expect a considerable amount of time before you receive your card. 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) More information can be found here:
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/iss/when-you-arrive/bank-account>.

5) What to bring to set up your bank account? Different banks may want to see different documents, so check their websites or give them a call to make sure you've got everything you need. Most students need to bring:

- a. Identification, like a passport or ID card (including your BRP);
- b. Proof of a UK address (which you can get from your hall);
- c. Proof you're a student (proof of student status from UCL).

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 am sadly not paid for promoting it. One of its biggest advantages is that they do not charge a foreign transaction fee 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!

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")

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>

INSURANCE

I. NHS

- 1) 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.
- 2) COVID-19 vaccines are provided for free for those aged 18 and above (as of 1 July 2021) once you've paid IHS. You can make an appointment at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

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 the NHS may not cater to. For instance, coverage that you get from vacations (trips you take to neighbouring cities during term break). 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 of the type of Student Assist plan chosen. You would have to read the brochure and policy wordings for AIA's Student Assist Insurance Plan for students studying abroad here: <https://www.aig.com.sg/personal/more-insurance/student-assist>. Join the Pre-departure Talk on 7 August 2021 to understand the details of how you can enjoy the UCL discount with AIG.
- 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

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) Three provides contract plans for different durations (6-month, 12-month, 24-month) at a decreasing price per month respectively. When you return to Singapore, you may also choose to opt to pay an additional £5 each month to

enjoy unlimited EU minutes, unlimited EU texts, 100 minutes of international call and 8GB of data in Singapore. You will be able to receive SMS under such a plan but would be unable to send SMS for free.

- 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.

III. Voxi

- 1) Voxi has a pay-as-you-go option of 6GB for £10 with unlimited social media - 3 and giffgaff can be a bit pricey if you require more data

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	British Airways	Emirates	Qatar Airways	Etihad
Flight Type	Direct	Direct	Stopover	Stopover	Stopover
Price	Varying	Moderate	Varying	Varying	Moderate
Airport in London	Heathrow	Heathrow	Heathrow/ Gatwick	Heathrow	Heathrow
Baggage	30kg	2x23kg (for students)	25kg* (saver ticket)	30kg	30kg

* Prices vary based on the ticket bought

- 2) Above is a quick summary on the popular airlines Singaporeans take to travel between London and Singapore.
- 3) Once you've confirmed that you will be travelling to the UK this fall, try to book your flight as early as you can. Singapore Airlines provides complimentary change in date for flights for certain ticket categories. This would allow you to change the date of your flight even if you book early.
- 4) Furthermore, make use of your student status to book student fare flights from sites like Student Travel Association (STA), Student Universe.
- 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 is 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 less. Therefore, do look out for promotional flight tickets on budget airlines and THEN plan your holiday accordingly. Please check the latest travel restrictions before booking a flight.
- 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 require 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 the UK is 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 recommendations for freshers is to purchase the 3 years 16-25 National Railcard 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 railcard for trips. Additionally, do always check out for super off-peak train tickets as they are the absolute cheapest tickets you can find.
- c. There 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 railcard. 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 link it to your 16-25 railcard 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 are 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 in Singapore, where a typical trip can cost you between 5 to 10 GBP, rather affordable if you split with your friends.

- 5) **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!

BEST PLACES TO VISIT IN LONDON

- I.** Tate Modern: Just in case you haven't heard of this place, the Tate-Modern is the most popular modern art gallery in the world and definitely a must-see! It has an ever-changing collection and is filled with works by renowned artists such as Picasso and Warhol. Admission is free, but there is a charge for some exhibitions.
- II.** Catch a musical at the West End: Your experience of living in London won't be complete without the chance to appreciate London's enviable musical theatre scene! With a constantly evolving lineup, you're sure to always find something that intrigues you. Head to the box office on the morning of the performance if you want cheap but good tickets!
- III.** Regent's Park: If you need a time out from hectic uni life, Regent's Park is a great place to go to unwind. It houses picturesque rose gardens and the unique Japanese Garden Island, both of which will definitely lift your spirits! Alternatively, head over to its enchanting Open Air Theatre or the nearby ZSL London Zoo if you're looking for something more engaging to do.
- IV.** Primrose Hill: If you wish to have a picnic with friends or watch the sunset, Primrose Hill is a great place to relax and meet other people!
- V.** Winter Wonderland: From thrilling fairground rides and ice skating to charming Christmas markets and family shows, this is one of the most festive places to visit in term 1 during winter! Admission is free and there are enough fun things to do to fill a whole day and evening. Not to mention the numerous food stalls selling delicious fair food, from hotdogs and churros to waffles and crepes! This place never disappoints.
- VI.** Chinatown: This is a great place to go to if you're missing comfort food from home! There are so many amazing places to eat, from dim sum restaurants to Japanese and dessert parlours. You could also buy local delights from famous bakeries and of course, try out all the bubble tea shops!
- VII.** Camden Market: Camden Market is probably one of the more eccentric markets in London, with an energetic and alternative vibe. It is host to a diverse community of street food traders, independent stores and creative sellers, including some Singaporean and Malaysian food stalls! If you want to do some vintage shopping or are craving food from home, it's definitely worth a visit.

- VIII.** Canary Wharf: If you want to explore a more historic part of the city, there are a ton of things to do at Canary Wharf! Kick back in the roof garden or Jubilee Park, make your way to a boutique-style cinema screening films from different eras, then head to The Breakfast Club or Jamie's Italian for a memorable meal. There are sometimes even open-air concerts or vintage fairs held here in the summer.

LONDON FOOD GUIDE

WESTERN

- 1) **Padella** (Outstanding hand-made pasta, as cheap as £4! Cannot recommend this enough, probably best pasta for its value in London. Queues are always insane, so either go there to queue at least 30 mins before it opens or try your luck with the online queue)
- 2) Flour and Grape (~£10 for excellent pasta, cool bar downstairs at night; great option if you can't get into Padella)
- 3) Flat Iron (£10 steak, go to Covent Garden branch for free ice cream)
- 4) Homeslice Pizza (£10 each for huge thin crust pizza; Soho branch more crowded but better quality than Fitzrovia branch)
- 5) Patty & Bun (£10 for a solid burger+chips+soft drink; go to Bond Street or Soho branches)
- 6) Duck & Waffle (£20 for duck leg on waffle and amazing views; must book quite in advance due to popularity)
- 7) Barrafinna (~£25 for Spanish tapas)
- 8) Casa Tua (~£10 for amazing pasta)
- 9) Balthazar (~£15 for superb breakfast/brunch foods)
- 10) My Old Dutch (£5.95 for huge pancakes with sweet/savoury toppings, only on Mondays- very worth it!)
- 11) The Breakfast Club (~£15 for great brunchy food)
- 12) Smack Lobster Roll (~£15 for lobster roll, more worth it than Burger & Lobster)

ASIAN

- 1) **Dishoom** (~£15 for really good Indian food; go to the King's Cross branch)
- 2) MeimeiLondon (~£12 for chicken rice and nasi lemak)
- 3) Dapur (~£12 for nasi lemak/rendang)
- 4) Hozzi (£5.50 for kimchi+beef/pork+rice)
- 5) On the Bab (~£12 for really good Korean fried chicken)
- 6) Kanadaya (£13 for super good ramen; get the black sesame with matcha soft serve if they have it)
- 7) Eat Tokyo (£12 for chirashi don)
- 8) Dozo Sushi (£8 for lunch set meals- super worth!)
- 9) Kiln (~£17 for spicy Thai dishes)
- 10) Abeno (~£14 for okonomiyaki)
- 11) Centrepont Food Store (~£10 for authentic Korean; it's located in the basement)
- 12) Crystal China (~£15 for really food mala hotpot)
- 13) Hoppers (£5 for amazing hoppers; good vegetarian options and decent Sri Lankan food)
- 14) Duck & Rice (£16.50 for the classic duck+rice; variety of Asian cuisines)
- 15) Goldmine (A little out of the way but decent Chinese food; ~£8 for noodles/rice dishes, ~£6 for dumplings)

CAFES

- 1) Prufrock Coffee (Leather Lane)
- 2) Catalyst (Grays Inn)
- 3) Milkbar (Soho)
- 4) Flat White (Soho)
- 5) The Attendant (Fitzrovia)
- 6) Store Street Espresso (Russell Square)
- 7) Monmouth Coffee (A few branches)

DESSERT

- 1) Amorino (Ice cream)
- 2) Gelupo (Ice cream)
- 3) Shack-Fuyu (French toast+matcha soft-serve ice cream)
- 4) Tsujiri (Matcha soft serve ice cream)
- 5) Happy Lemon (Bubble tea; taro is especially good)
- 6) Shibuya (Bingsu)
- 7) Tombo (Matcha cakes and ice cream)
- 8) Coco (Bubble tea)

HIGH-END

- 1) Gymkhana (1 michelin-starred Indian food)
- 2) Hakkasan (1 michelin-starred dim sum)
- 3) Dinings (Amazing sushi)
- 4) Sushi Tetsu (Amazing sushi)
- 5) Yashin Sushi (Amazing sushi)
- 6) ROKA (Western-Japanese fusion food)
- 7) Gordon Ramsay in Chelsea (3 michelin-starred French food)
- 8) The Ledbury (2 michelin-starred European food)

SOME HACKS AND MORE

- I. Most telecommunication companies allow free purchase of sim cards. You can register the sim card without ever using it. This allows you to be eligible for promotions by that telecommunication company. For example, for O2, there is free Café Nero coffee every Thursday.
- II. For coffee lovers, check out Pret A Manger's monthly coffee subscription for 20GBP/month. Get up to 5 cups of coffee a day, with a minimum of 30min intervals between redemptions.
- III. 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.
- IV. 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 a free Mcflurry or cheese burger or mayo burger with the purchase of any meal. Just show your card!
- V. 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).
- VI. **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.
- 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 the UK. One of us lost our retainer and had to fork out 260 GBP just for 1 retainer – that's twice the price of what you have to pay in Singapore! Do prepare an extra set of spectacles or bring extra sets of contact lenses for emergency use as you cannot simply buy contact lenses and spectacles off the shelf (like Owndays) in the UK! You have to take an eye test (for a fee) and get a prescription from the optometrist before ordering your contact lenses/spectacles (which will take 2 weeks).

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

Join our socials using these links! We hope that this guide was useful, and we will see you in the +44 soon!

Official UCLSS Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/uclsingsoc>

Official UCL Singaporean Freshers 2021/2022 FB Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/514648626217691>

Official UCLSS FB Group:

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

Official UCLSS Telegram Announcement Channel:

https://t.me/joinchat/r_Yma0kXo7JIMjc1

Official UCLSS Email:

uclsingsoc@googlemail.com