

Information for international students, by international students

Welcome to the UCL Faculty of Brain Sciences

We are delighted you have chosen to study at UCL in the Faculty of Brain Sciences. You will be joining a community of world leaders in the fields of neurology, ophthalmology, audiology, psychology and language sciences, cognitive neuroscience and mental health sciences.

We take an integrative approach to the study of mind and brain by focusing on the determinants of human perception, cognition, emotion and behaviour. UCL Neuroscience has the highest level of ISI citations in Europe, and is ranked second worldwide (behind Harvard), in the field of neuroscience and behaviour.

The Faculty and its component parts create an outstanding and vibrant environment for study and research and we are delighted that you will be joining us!

Dr Julie Evans, Faculty Tutor, Dr Steven Bloch, Faculty Graduate Tutor (Research) and Dr Jenni Rodd, Faculty Graduate Tutor (Taught)

We are proud of our community of international students – around 40% of our students come from 155 countries worldwide. UCL has a friendly and cosmopolitan atmosphere and we work hard to embed a global perspective in all our teaching.



We recognise that there are additional challenges for overseas students, especially those coming to study in the UK for the first time. With this in mind, we worked with a group of international students to create this booklet, which aims to prepare you for your new life at UCL. Here you will find all the information that they wish they had known, on topics such as learning resources, information about lectures and seminars, feeding back on your experiences and extra-curricular activities.

We would also like to invite you to our Postgraduate Induction Event – we look forward to meeting you there!

FACULTY INDUCTION FOR ALL POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

Postgraduate students are invited to an Induction event on Monday 28 September 2015 at the [UCL Institute of Education](#)

PGT Students (MA/MSc/MRes/PGDip/PGCert): 5.00-6.30pm, Jeffrey Hall

PGR Students (PhD/MPhil/Professional Doctorate): 5.15-6.30pm, Drama Studio

Joint Reception (for all): 6.30-7.30pm, Foyer

KEY LEARNING RESOURCES

By Chia-Chi Chow (PhD in Clinical, Educational and Health Psychology, Year 3), Taiwan



EMAIL:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/students/mail/live/faq>

All new students are assigned a UCL user ID and password, and an email account (xxxx@ucl.ac.uk) The userid is used for communication from central UCL.

Students can access their email while away from UCL by using this website <http://outlook.com/live.ucl.ac.uk>. You need to log in as follows:

Windows Live ID: (userid)@live.ucl.ac.uk E.g. xxxx@live.ucl.ac.uk

Password: <enter your UCL password>

MOODLE:

moodle.ucl.ac.uk/

Moodle is the e-learning environment used by UCL. Log in with

your userid and password. Once you have chosen and confirmed your module selection on [PORTICO](#), the UCL Student Information Service, you will automatically be enrolled on the relevant Moodle course. You might download lecture notes and handouts from here and upload your assignment to your lecturers on Moodle. Other information on Moodle includes:

- Module timetable and venue/ change of venue
- Module reading list (plus links to e-journals if available)
- Assessment details
- Contact details for the module convenor (the lecturer in overall charge of the module)
- Contact details for the module administrator

* [A quick guide to Moodle](#) *

THE LIBRARY <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/>

There are 17 libraries affiliated to UCL with different collections of books and opening times. Check the opening hours before you visit



(<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/opening.shtml>)

Reading rooms at UCL Main Library, Cruciform Library, and Science Library are open 24 hours from Tuesdays to Fridays.

To access nearly all of our electronic resources (databases, e-journals or e-books etc.), you can use your UCL userid and password <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/eresources.shtml>.

CENTRE FOR LANGUAGES & INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION (CLIE)

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/clie>

The CLIE offers full and part-time English for Academic Purposes and foundation courses for international students as well as foreign language courses.

The Self-Access Centre provides online exercises and video materials for self-study. All off-air recordings (films, documentaries, lectures) are available to UCL students from home. You will need to login with your UCL userid.

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/clie/learning-resources/sac>

In the summer, the CLIE also offers free two-week intensive foreign language courses for beginners and intermediate levels.

IT TRAINING FOR STUDENTS

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/students/training>

Trainer-led and self-paced courses are provided to all UCL students and staff. **New dates are published on the first week of each term** and may also be released halfway through the first two terms. Places are allocated on a first come first served basis. Online Resources currently available for IT training are Microsoft software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Outlook), Bibliographic Management (Endnote, Reference Manager), Data Analysis (SPSS, Matlab, NVivo, Stata), Web Development (Silva CMS, HTML & CSS, Dreamweaver,), Graphics and Desktop Publishing (Photoshop, Irfanview), and UNIX.



TERM DATES

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/staff/term-dates/>

Taught courses and exams are held during the first three terms in an academic year. The first term is from September to mid-December; the second is from mid-January to late March; and the third term starts from late April till mid-June.

Students on full-time Taught Masters programmes study for a full calendar year (12 months). Therefore, students are expected to study beyond the end of the third term to prepare their dissertation in time for submission later in the summer.

Mphil/PhD Research students are required to be in continuous attendance, apart from periods of leave to be taken in line with UCL staff holiday entitlements. For students who are Tier 4 visa holders, this means that you

will continue to be restricted to term-time levels of permissible hours of work, paid or unpaid. (Visit [Immigration and Visas website](#) for more information.)

TIMETABLES

<https://timetable.ucl.ac.uk/tt/homePage.do>

The right time, the right place

See what is being taught, when, where and by whom across UCL

To access your personal timetable go to www.ucl.ac.uk/timetable and log in with your UCL userid and password. Your personal timetable displays the modules you are registered for in Portico.

Each week in the timetable has a corresponding number. Week number 1 indicates the week that contains the 1st of September, so for the purposes of interpreting the timetable, the induction week might be on week 4 and the full academic timetable might begin in week 5. Once you have accessed a timetable you use the 'change display' tab to filter to a single week, a whole term or the whole year.

EXAMINATIONS AND AWARDS

The Examinations and Academic Programmes Office manages the University's examination processes. They compile and publish the examination timetables, train and appoint invigilators, produce undergraduate and taught postgraduate pass lists and student results and are responsible for the administration of examination papers. They also provide support for examination candidates with alternative arrangements and provide guidance to Faculties regarding Boards of Examiners and the maintenance of assessment records.

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/exams-and-awards>

FOR RESEARCH STUDENTS: TYPICAL TIMETABLE FOR A FULL-TIME PHD STUDENT

If you are a PhD student, your timetable will be different to that which students on taught programmes follow. Here is a guide to help:

(from Code of Practice, UCL Graduate School)

Before 1 month	Field of Study agreed. Assignment of Supervisors. Agreement of strict timetable for supervisory meetings and progress reports. Provision of necessary research equipment and facilities.
Before 3 months	Agreement of thesis work plan, research method and timetable. Agreement of and attendance at Skills Development Programme and arrangements made for any further required study.
6 months	Submission and assessment of progress report.
12 months	Submission and assessment of first year progress report. Agreement of programme for second year of study and transfer of registration from MPhil to PhD (between 9–18 months, but as early as reasonable).
24 months	Submission and assessment of second year progress report. Agreement of thesis structure and strict timetable for thesis writing.
30 months (not less than 4 months before expected date of submission)	Entry for examination. Nomination of Examiners.
36 months (48 months for 4-year programme)	Submission of thesis.
36-48 months	Completing Research Student status (if necessary).



WHAT IS A...?

By Fareeha Khan (BSc Psychology Year 2), Malaysia



LECTURE



A lecture is a formal presentation conducted by your lecturer, where the bulk of teaching occurs throughout the year. Although some lectures are recorded and uploaded online, most lecturers tend to provide the slides used in the lectures instead. It may be tempting to skip the early morning lecture but attendance at most lectures is strongly advised as knowledge of material covered in lectures is expected in the examinations! Besides, you are given the opportunity to be taught by pioneers and experts of the subject of your degree, so why not?

Lectures vary in size between 50-100 students, depending on the number of students who have selected the module being taught. There is some student-lecturer interaction, however not as much as in a seminar.

LAB

Lab classes are generally not in a lecture theatre, but more commonly in a computer lab which would require a more hands on approach to learning. They vary in size depending on the size of the lab itself, but can range from 10 to 40 students. Lab classes tend to occur less frequently than lectures, but the software used can also be found on computers across UCL, therefore there are many opportunities to practise or catch up after class. Lab classes also usually have a handful of students in the years above to offer some guidance and advice, which can be very helpful.

SEMINAR

In a seminar, you have the chance to spend an hour a week in personal conversation with an expert, often an international expert, in the subject of your degree. This is one of the prized features of education at a university like UCL and is extremely beneficial as you are able to have a more personalised experience with a tutor that is less likely in a lecture.



Seminars allow you to investigate topics and issues you have encountered in lectures and your readings, to practise writing clearly about them, and to critically discuss them with other people. Seminars consist of quite a small group of coursemates (8-12 people) and kick starts you getting to know a wider circle of students, as there is more opportunity to interact. Therefore, seminars provide a medium for academic and social benefits!

CONVENTIONS

In terms of addressing professors or tutors, it does to some extent depend on the professors themselves, and they will generally let you know on specifics (if any) on how to address them, when they introduce themselves at the start of the year. The default way to address academic staff is by their title (e.g. Dr or Professor Smith), rather than by their first name. It is very easy to get in contact with tutors and lecturers, the most convenient method being Email, or simply going up to them and starting a conversation when you have the chance.

DEGREE CLASSIFICATIONS

By Julija Baginskaite (MSc Brain and Mind Sciences 2013/14), Lithuania

The British grading system may differ from what you are used to in your home country and can sometimes be difficult for international students to grasp.

Whereas other systems use the alphabet (e.g. A+, A, A-) to demonstrate the achievements of the student, the UK system uses a class grade order. The assessment of tests and of factual knowledge-based questions is straightforward. Typically, your courses will also require you to write essays and your exam questions might also include short essay questions. A well written and argued essay will be awarded a grade of 65+ but in order to achieve a grade of 80+ your essay needs to be "flawless" - critical, original, logically-structured, in-depth and of course grammatically impeccable in a sense that one could publish it.

In order to get advice on writing an essay you should definitely consider booking an appointment at the UCLU's Writing and Language Support (WALS) (<https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=20772>). You should also not hesitate to discuss any related questions with your personal tutor and fellow students who might have already written essays under the UK grading system.

What do different grades mean?

70-100:

UG level is a First (1st); PGT level is a Distinction: the best grade you can get.

60-69:

UG level is a 2:1 (upper second class); PGT level is a Merit.

50-59

UG level is 2:2 (lower second class); PGT level this is a pass.

40-49

UG level this is a Third; PGT level this is a condoned fail.

0-39

This is a fail.



Unlike the system in some other countries, UK universities do not grade students in accordance with their overall position in their year group or class, e.g. placing someone 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the class. However, academic references may refer to whether you were in the top 5 or 10% of your cohort.

FEEDING BACK ON YOUR EXPERIENCES AS A STUDENT

By Georgiana Socianu (MSc Social Cognition 2013/14), Romania



INTRODUCTION

UCL and UCLU provide many opportunities for students to engage with UCL's policy- and decision-making in all areas of teaching, learning and support. You can have a say in the way the University is run, which may be different from your experiences in your home country. There are many opportunities for your voice to be heard.

REPRESENTATION AT DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL

Every department has at least one [Departmental Staff-Student Consultative Committee \(DSSCC\)](#) which meets at least twice in each academic year. DSSCCs provide the opportunity to feedback to lecturers and departmental administrators issues that have impacted on your programmes and modules. These may include good or bad ways in which lectures, tutorials and labs have been delivered which can be addressed by your teaching department, or they may include university-wide issues such as library or computing facilities, or even noise caused by building works. Departments take these comments very seriously, and the minutes of the DSSCC meetings are considered by the UCL Joint Staff-Student Committee.

BE A STAR

[StARs \(Student Academic Representatives\)](#)



are elected to represent students' views to UCL. StARs sit on various committees at a programme (such as DSSCCs), faculty and University level, at which they act as the voice of students, ensuring that UCL takes into account the needs of students in its decision-making processes. The StARs scheme is run by UCLU, and you can be a StAR at both a departmental and faculty level. For general enquiries, please contact stars@ucl.ac.uk.

[Find your Brain Sciences StARs](#)

REPRESENTATION VIA UCLU

The Students' Union, UCLU, is run by students for students. Apart from providing social spaces, support services and extra-curricular activities, UCLU is an important political forum for all students. If you are a student at UCL, you are automatically a member of the Students' Union and have access to all its facilities and support. The Union is run by [Student Officers](#) who are elected each year by the membership. You can speak to one of these officers if you have any issues regarding your programme with which they may be able to aid or support you.



NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY AND STUDENT BAROMETER



As a student, you may feel that you are being asked to fill in surveys and forms all the time; however, these surveys are important to you, to UCL and to all future students at UCL. Much of the information used to create university league tables is derived from the [National Student Survey \(NSS\)](#) or [International Student Barometer and Student Barometer](#). You can fill them in and let the university what you think about your programme, positive or negative.

REPRESENTATION ON UCL FORMAL COMMITTEES

Many of UCL's formal committees have student representation. On most of these committees, the student representatives comprise one or more of UCLU's elected [Student Sabbatical Officers](#), who you may speak to if there are issues that you wish to raise at meetings of these committees.

NON-ACADEMIC LIFE (THE OTHER FUN PART OF YOUR UNI LIFE!)

By Sabrina Mahmood (PhD Language and Cognition, Year 2), Malaysia

There are two parts to your university life; academic and non-academic. Both will complement one another to build an integrated university experience.

Here are some pointers:

- 1) The first thing you should do when you arrive at UCL is to attend the “orientation week” or “**freshers week**”. Here is where you will information about clubs and societies, life as a student, and London in general, as well as some freebies! UCLU runs over 200 societies which are open to graduate and undergraduate students alike covering politics, culture, the arts, religion, performance and campaigns. You will also definitely make some new friends at the fair!
- 2) If you missed or unable to attend fresher’s week, fret not, you can always find information about clubs and societies on **UCLU website**. Details of individual societies and their contact details are available at: www.uclu.org/clubs-societies. You can even join the societies online on the website itself!
- 3) During the course of your study, each of you will be in a **university department** (e.g: Psychology & Language Science, etc.). It is common for the departments to have their own **social media accounts** (e.g: FB, twitter, etc.). Join or ‘like’ them on your social media account so that you can get updates on any social events that are going on in your department.
- 4) Do also check your **university email account**. You will find that you will get an email from **UCLU** and your respective **department** from time to time letting you know of any **events** that are going on for the month.



- 5) UCLU also has its own **gym** the [Bloomsbury Fitness Centre](http://www.uclu.org/bloomsbury-fitness-centre), located in the Bloomsbury campus itself. You can join for a very reasonable price, and the gym also runs free classes that you can attend (yoga, pilates, etc.). In addition UCLU also has its own **Sports Clubs**, which offer many different activities such as football, tennis, etc. A full list of clubs can be found at: www.uclu.org/clubs-societies
- 6) Whether you are a veteran **volunteer** or just would like to try your hand at volunteering, UCLU has its own Volunteering Services Unit. It co-ordinates opportunities to volunteer time and effort to a huge range of activities, either on an ongoing basis or one-off basis. Get involved! You will gain new experiences as well as friends. Further information is available at: www.uclu.org/services/volunteering-at-uclu.
- 7) Sometimes as university student we will feel that there are so many events happening everywhere, and it can be quite challenging to keep track with what is happening. Good news! UCLU has made it easy for you to find out what is happening in a few seconds, all in one place. For a **lightning access to what is going on**, go to <http://uclu.org/whats-on>



Lastly, make sure you get involved to get the most out of your university experience, an experience of a lifetime!

KEY CENTRAL UCL SERVICES

By Jingyi Wang (PhD Psychiatry, Year 2), China



ACCOMMODATION

1. Staying in UCL student accommodation



UCL Student Accommodation's aim is to provide agreeable accommodation in a friendly

environment at affordable prices. It can help you with any questions or issues you may have regarding your UCL-managed residence or student house. All UCL residences are managed by professional teams and also have wardens and vice-wardens on site, who will do their best to help you with any issues that you may have. Please note that UCL residences are prioritised for undergraduate students.

UCL Student Residences Office
117 Gower Street
London WC1E 6AP

residences@ucl.ac.uk

www.ucl.ac.uk/accommodation

+44 (0)20 7679 6322

Open 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday

2. Staying in private accommodation

University of London Housing Services provide a range of services to students who are considering living in private rented housing, including database of accommodation, contract checking, legal advice and so forth. They also manage a number of inter-collegiate halls offering self-catering accommodation.

University of London Housing Services
4th floor, Malet Street
London WC1E 7HY

housing@lon.ac.uk

www.housing.lon.ac.uk

+44 (0)20 7862 8880

Open 10.00am to 5.00pm Mo, We, Th, Fr
(11.00am to 5.00pm on Tuesday)

During September, the office is also open from 10.00am to 2.00pm on Saturday.

UCL STUDENT FUNDING

The Student Funding Team can advise on a range of issues including budgeting your money, banks accounts, hardship fund, access to learning fund, student loan company funding, loans, bursaries and more.

UCL Student Funding office
Room G19, ground floor
South Wing (main campus), Gower Street
London WC1E 6BT

studentfunding@ucl.ac.uk

+44 (0)20 7679 0004

Open Mon-Fri, 9am–5pm for telephone and email; Monday to Friday, 10am–4pm for personal callers.

UCL IDENTITY CARDS

Once you have enrolled and have been issued with a Statement of Student Status, you will be able to get your UCL student identity card. Your photograph will be taken and the card will be produced for you while you wait. Your UCL identity card combines identity, access control and library access on one card. Once registered the card can also be used in the Bloomsbury Fitness Centre. Cards are issued by Security Systems in the Andrew Huxley Building.



Security card issue office
Andrew Huxley Building

securitysystems@ucl.ac.uk

www.ucl.ac.uk/estates/security/systems/identity-cards/

+44 (0)20 7679 3373

Open Monday to Friday from 9am to 4.45pm.

UCL STUDENT CENTRE

Once you have enrolled as a student at UCL you can visit the Student Centre if you need any of the following services and/or documents:

- advice about your student record
- a letter to confirm your student status to help you open a bank account
- a letter to support your Schengen visa application
- council tax exemption letter (full-time students only)
- enrolment for returning students
- graduation ceremony queries
- student support and welfare queries
- statement of student status
- submit your research degree thesis
- study abroad queries

www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/student-centre

UCL Student Centre

Ground Floor, Chadwick Building

Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT

Open 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday

UCL CAREERS SERVICE

You can get advice on anything from a broad view of the job market to help with getting a specific job. You can find assistance with many things, including:

- getting a part-time job, internship or gaining relevant work experience
- preparing effective job applications and writing CVs
- helping you make sense of the UK graduate job market and graduate study options
- interview skills and visa options post-graduation

UCL Careers Service

4th Floor ULU Building, Malet Street

London WC1E 7HY

careers@ucl.ac.uk

www.ucl.ac.uk/careers



+44 (0)20 7866 3600

Open 9.30am-5pm Mo-Th, 11am-5pm Fri

UCL STUDENT PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

UCL Student Psychological Services provides an accessible and effective professional



resource for students who are facing emotional and psychological problems.

They offer a number of

different types of services which include counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy (both individual and groups), psychiatric consultations, personal development workshops, and a self-help library.

UCL Student Psychological Services

Ground Floor, 3 Taviton Street

London WC1H 0BT

g.nandagopal@ucl.ac.uk

www.ucl.ac.uk/student-psychological-services

+44 (0) 20 7679 1487

UCL HEALTH CENTRE

UCL Health Centre, also referred to as Gower Place Practice, is an NHS general practice located on UCL campus which provides general health care, a contraceptive service and a full nursing service. You may register with them using your UCL student identity card if you are living at some of the local postcodes which you can check on their website www.gowerplacepractice.nhs.uk. If you have no appointment but need to see a doctor or nurse you can attend the walk-in-surgery. Doctors are available from 9.30am to 10.30am and 2.30pm to 3.30pm Monday to Friday and nurses from 9.00am to 11.00am and 2.00pm to 4.00pm Monday to Friday.

If you are living outside of UCL Health Centre's catchment area, you can find a GP service near you on the NHS website

www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/LocationSearch/4

Gower Place Practice

3 Gower Place

London WC1E 6BN

Enquiries: 020 7387 6306 (2 lines)

Appointments: 020 7679 2543/7387 6306

UCL STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES

If you have a medical condition, mental health difficulty or specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia that has an impact on your ability to study or any other aspect of university life please contact us for help. Things they can help with:

- Liaison with academic staff about adjustments you might require
- Applications for Disabled Students Allowances
- Access to specialist equipment and software
- Applications for special assessment arrangements and extra time in exams
- Provision of support workers (e.g. study skills tutors, mentors, note-takers)

The service is fully confidential and will only ever be shared with academic staff with your permission. It is important that you tell UCL in advance about any such issue so that you can be supported in your studies.

UCL Student Disability Services
Room G16, South Wing, Gower Street
London WC1E 6BT
disability@ucl.ac.uk
www.ucl.ac.uk/disability
+ 44 (0)207 679 0100

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT



The International Student Support Team offers pre-arrival guidance, orientation for new students, immigration information and assistance with all welfare-related topics to all non-UK students at UCL. Things they can help with:

- Opening a UK bank account, understanding the National Health Service (NHS) and registering with the police
- Induction sessions on studying at UCL and living in London
- Initial advice and help with identifying the most appropriate support service if you need help but are unsure who to turn to
www.ucl.ac.uk/iss
internationalsupport@ucl.ac.uk

UCL CULTURAL CONSULTATION SERVICE

CCS will be able to help you if you are experiencing a challenge to your learning and/or teaching, which you believe is related to difficulties in adapting to a different culture and education system. You are encouraged to contact the CCS if you or your peers are experiencing any issues which may have an inter-personal, cross-cultural or intra-cultural dimension or which may relate to social class, ethnicity, religion, and/or gender.

culture.consult@ucl.ac.uk
www.ucl.ac.uk/ccs

UCLU RIGHTS & ADVICE CENTRE

The UCLU Rights & Advice Centre is a support service for UCL students and a central point to obtain information and advice on issues such as immigration, academic, housing, consumer, employment and finance.

UCLU Rights & Advice Centre
First Floor, UCL Bloomsbury Building
15 Gordon Street
London WC1H 0AY
ucl-rights.advice@ucl.ac.uk
www.uclu.org/services/advice-welfare
+ 44 (0) 20 7679 2998
Open Monday and Friday, 10am-1pm (no appointment needed)
Tuesday & Thursday (appointment only)
Phone advice: Tuesday & Thursday: 10am-1pm and Friday: 2:30pm-4:30pm.

AN ALUMNA'S EXPERIENCES

By Alice Ran Cai, Poland and China, UCL Psychology 2007-14



I decided to study Psychology at UCL seven years ago. I came as a BSc student and was fortunate to gain a PhD place following this, for which I have just submitted my thesis. When I first applied to UCL, I hoped to not only receive high-quality education, but to also have an amazing overall university experience. I can confidently say that the opportunities I had, the people I met, and the support I received, were beyond my expectations. One of my biggest rewards from studying at UCL was gaining an appreciation of knowledge and research, and the motivation to pursue lifelong, independent learning. My course challenged me to ask questions, to engage in discussions, to critically evaluate evidence and theories, and to clearly communicate and justify my opinions. I gained further confidence in my abilities and skills by attending various workshops organized by UCL and by listening to stimulating presentations made by world-leading experts. In addition, the numerous museums and libraries near the UCL campus made it easy for me to obtain information on any subject I wanted to read about, and inspired me to learn and explore.

UCL's excellent but rigorous curriculum and the amount of information I received sometimes seemed overwhelming, and there definitely were times when I ran into problems, challenges, and difficulties. However, being able to overcome these challenges increased my confidence, independence, and the willingness to take responsibility for my own learning. In addition, the support system at UCL is amazing, and it was comforting to know that I could reach out to for help from my peers or from members of the academic and support staff who truly care about the wellbeing and success of their students. Moreover, UCL provided me with a balance of both leisure and work by offering endless opportunities to meet students from all over the world, to make long-lasting friendships, to explore extracurricular interests, and to participate in community and outreach activities. Plus, living in a vibrant and multicultural city such as London means that you will never be bored—there is always something fun and interesting going on!

Reflecting on the past seven years, I feel like I have grown both academically and personally, and I couldn't ask for a better university experience. After completing my PhD, I will be continuing my research career at UCL as a postdoctoral researcher, investigating how psychosocial factors can influence physical health and wellbeing. I am grateful that my time at UCL has helped me discover my passion for research and education, and encouraged me to pursue my dreams and ambitions. Lastly, I just want to say that as an international student, I know how leaving home for the first time is not an easy endeavour. But in the end it will make you a better and stronger person, and I hope you will harness and make the most of all the opportunities that UCL and London has to offer!

AND FINALLY... A WORD ON CULTURE SHOCK

When you first arrive in the UK, you will notice differences between the way things are done and what you are used to at home. These include the way people dress, speak and behave, teaching and learning styles, food - potentially all aspects of life.

You will soon learn the new "rules" to get by, but it may be reassuring to know that it's perfectly normal to find it hard at first. Your fellow international students will share the experience - but so will many UK students who are away from home for the first time, even if they don't realise this.

<http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Study-work--more/Culture-Shock/>