



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS GUIDE



UNIVERSITY OF
WEST LONDON



UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
STUDENTS' UNION

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UWLSU: YOUR STUDENTS' UNION



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Hello! Welcome to UWL and to your Students' Union!

One of the great benefits of being a student at the University of West London is that you automatically become a member of the best Students' Union in the country*.

We are here for you throughout your studies and can help ensure you get the most out of your time at university. Representing you and your views throughout your academic experience is one of UWLSU's main roles.

As a democratically-led organisation, three students are elected each year by the student body to represent the views of students at a senior leadership level.

This means that UWL students have a voice and this voice is truly at the heart of everything that the UWLSU does.

UWLSU offers great opportunities through its course rep scheme, student delegate roles and student positions throughout the organisation. These roles provide invaluable skills that can further enhance your academic qualifications and your time at university.

You also have access to over 25 different sports teams that train at the prestigious Ealing Trailfinders sports grounds.

There are also great on-campus training facilities at UWLSU's very own gym.

The diverse range of societies (student-led groups) on offer is the best place to meet like-minded students and build a community. These common interest groups can be your gateway to making new friends, career networking, extra curricular activities and opportunities to gain new skills and experiences.

* Students' Union of the Year, 2018 NUS Awards and the country's no. 1 University Students' Union for student satisfaction in the 2017 NSS.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' SOCIETY

As an international student, you'll be automatically enrolled into the **International Students' Society**. The society will run events for you to attend and meet other international students. There will be theatre trips (we have secured discounted tickets), so you can see shows on in the West End as well as cultural trips around London and the local area! Make sure you get in touch with society members during the September so you don't miss out!

Another way in which UWLSU supports students is through a free, impartial and confidential **advice service**. Professional staff members provide students with advice, information and advocacy on a range of issues they may be facing, with a focus on academic issues.

The vibrant UWLSU spaces on campus are a popular hangout. At SMR you'll find the much-loved coffeeshop, **Coffee Union, Freddie's Bar and the gym**. UWLSU employs a team of student staff to work at all commercial outlets with all profits going back into the activities and services that are run for students. As well as Freshers' Week, UWLSU hosts a bumper events programme throughout the year including **Black History Month, LGBTQ+ History Month**.

We've put together this booklet to make getting settled into life at UWL and London easier, it includes information on setting up bank accounts, registering at a doctors, tips for exploring London as well as many other useful hints and tips.

For all things UWLSU visit www.uwlsu.com or come and speak to our friendly staff at our SMR or Paragon reception desks.



GETTING STARTED IN LONDON

You've just moved to London, one of the best cities in the world! There are probably so many things on your to-do list, but here are some things you might have forgotten.

PARAGON STUDENT LETS

The University's main accommodation is **Paragon Student Lets** which is situated right behind our Paragon Campus and a 5 minute walk from Brentford train station.

The UWL Shuttle bus also runs from this site on a regular basis. If you want to know more about the accommodation services offered by the University of West London then get in touch with UWL Student Services:

www.uwl.ac.uk/students/support-services-for-students/accommodation



SETTING UP A BANK ACCOUNT

This should be one of the first things that you do when you arrive, you'll need a bank account in order to pay bills, rent and of course socialising!



But I already have a Bank account from home?

Whilst you may already have an account at home you will be unable to set up direct debits which make it easier to pay bills, and depending on the bank you use you were likely to be charged for any withdrawals or spending that you do whilst you're here in London.

You can use Pre Paid Top Up cards but if you will be looking for work whilst you're here, employers will need your bank details to pay your wages into so you will need a bank account in the UK.

Applying for a bank account

Setting up a Bank account is really quick and easy to do and there are lots of different banks located near our campuses for you too choose from. But you will need to ensure that you take the following items with you to do so:

- Passport
- **Proof of Student Status** (a letter from UWL that proves you're studying here, you can obtain this from the registry team or student services)
- **Proof of Address in the UK** (such as you're enrolment letter or a bill that has your UK Address on)

WORKING IN THE UK



Other than a valid work visa and a UK Bank account, you'll also need a [National Insurance Number](#) to allow you to work in the UK. You might be asked to go to an interview at the local job centre to prove that you have applied for one but this is a simple and quick process.

You can find out more about National Insurance Numbers here: www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number

You may also be restricted on the number of hours that you are able to work due to your Visa

> For Students from within the EU there are no Restrictions on how many hours that you are able to work.

> For students from outside the EU, you are able to work up to 10 hours if you are studying for a Foundation Degree, for a full-time degree you are able to work up to 20 hours within term time.

For more information head to the UK Council for International Student Affairs website:

www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/How-many-hours-can-you-work



REGISTERING WITH A DOCTOR



When you arrive in London it is always helpful if you register with a doctors. The National Health Service (NHS) is the UK's state healthcare system providing a wide range of health care services including appointments with a doctor, hospital treatment and dental care.

To find your local healthcare practice head to the NHS website:
www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/LocationSearch/4

You will need to visit the Healthcare centre in person to inform the receptionist that you wish to register. They will then help you through this process. You'll need the following information when registering at a doctors:

- Passport or driving licence
- Proof of current address (use a utility bill or enrolment letter)

> Students on a Tier 4 student visa and coming to the UK for 6 months or longer will have paid an immigration health surcharge as part of their visa application fee. This entitles students to access NHS care free of charge in the same way as a permanent UK resident. This includes at the Doctor's surgery (known as General Practitioner or GP), a Healthcare Centre or in a hospital.

> You may need to pay for dental and optical treatment as well as for any medicine prescribed by the doctor and collected from a Pharmacy for which there is normally a standard charge of £8.80 per item.

> If you need to have continued medication, you may find it cheaper to get a Prescription Pre-payment Certificate: www.gov.uk/get-a-ppc

> If you need urgent medical care and are able to travel to a hospital then go to the Accident and Emergency department, most of these provide a 24hr service so you will be able to be seen by a medical professional quickly.

COUNCIL TAX



If you are a full time student you are able to gain an exemption from Council Tax payments. You'll need to have proof of study (enrolment letter) and you can get in contact with the local council to pass this information on.

For more information or to check if you are exempt from payments please visit:
www.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts-for-full-time-students

KEEPING YOURSELF SAFE



Whilst London is a safe city and the areas surrounding our campuses are great, it's always worth ensuring that you know who to contact in an emergency.

If you ever need the police, fire service or ambulance in an emergency then CALL 999 and you'll be able to request help.

> If you need to speak to the police for a **non-emergency matter** then dial **101** and you can speak to an operator who will take some further details from you.

> A helpful tip to remember is that in the UK we drive on the left hand side of the road to cars maybe traveling in a different direction that you are used too. Make sure you look both ways when crossing the road and only do so when safe too.

> Never leave your bag or personal items unattended, especially in crowded places. And also only use licenced taxi's. You can download UBER which allows you to get a taxi or download the TFL app which will allow you to look at trains, underground and bus services in London.

> The British Council has produced a useful information guide for international students on personal safety in the UK:

www.educationuk.org/global/articles/safety/



LONDON TRANSPORT



London is one of the biggest cities in the world and has some of the best transport links available. With 24 hour buses (along some routes), night buses, Underground, Overground and mainline train services, getting across London is easier than you can imagine.

You can use **Contactless** payment cards on the majority of these services (depending on which Zone you are travelling too) or you can apply for a student **Oyster card** here:

www.tfl.gov.uk/fares-and-payments/adult-discounts-and-concessions/18-student

- > London is split into Zones, from Zone 1 – Zone 9. St Mary’s Road campus is in Zone 3 and Paragon Campus is Zone 5.
- > The local underground stations are (for SMR) South Ealing or Ealing Broadway or (for Paragon) Boston Manor.
- > The Local mainline train services are (for SMR) Ealing Broadway or (for Paragon) Brentford Station.

If you are staying at UWL for a full year or 3 years and plan on doing a lot of travelling within the UK it is always worth looking into a **16-25 Railcard**, anyone in full-time education is able to obtain one of these (even if you are over 25, you just need proof from the University that you are studying here.)

You can get one of these from the local train station and all you need is a passport for proof of identity. You can also get a discount on this railcard using a **Totum Card** which you can purchase from the SU Reception. Through this you can save 1/3rd off travel costs!

One thing you also need to remember is that you **can’t use cash** on London buses and it is all done through contactless bank cards or via topping up your Oyster Card at various shops and train stations throughout London.

UNIVERSITY BUS

During term time, the University runs a shuttle bus between the Paragon campus and Ealing Broadway Shopping Centre, running in both directions:



>Paragon House >South Ealing Road >South Ealing Station

>SMR Campus >Ealing High Street >Ealing Broadway

It then does the same trip in reverse order and is really handy if you need to get between sites or get to Ealing Broadway Station. You'll find timetables all around campus and in halls. Alternatively Google "UWL Shuttle bus" or visit the link below and you'll be able to see a live feed of times.

<http://uwlshuttle.utrack.com>

HOW TO SAVE MONEY

From using a **Student Oyster Card** or a **16-25 Rail Card** to save on travel, to getting Student Discounts in shops there are many great ways to save money as a student.

One of these ways is by buying an **Totum Discount Card**. This will give you discount at lots of big name shops including Co-op which is really handy if you live in Paragon Halls!

You can buy one from the Reception of the Students' Union or head to the NUS website: www.nus.org.uk

If you are unsure if a shop or restaurant does Student discount then don't be afraid to ask, you could always end up saving money when you least expect it!



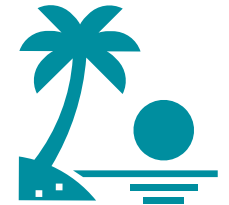
FOOD SHOPPING



There are a wide range of supermarkets available in the local area for you to get your shopping at so you have plenty of options. There are halal shops available in West Ealing as well as specialist food shops in Ealing Broadway.

Don't be afraid to shop around for the best deals. Most supermarkets change their deals every two weeks on a Tuesday so keep an eye out for bargains!

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS



There are eight public holidays in the UK known as 'Bank Holidays'. During these bank holidays, offices, banks, and many shops will be closed and public transport will be more limited.

However, lectures and examinations still may be given on the Bank Holidays that take place during a full term. A full list of the UK's national holidays is available at: www.gov.uk/bank-holidays

TRAVELLING OUTSIDE THE UK



If you decide to take a trip with friends or attend one of our Sports Tours, you'll need to make sure that you are able to make this travel or apply for relevant Visa to do so.

It is always a good idea to make a note of where you are going and look for the local Embassy for your country just in case you get into any issues whilst abroad.

You can always visit your Embassy in the UK if you need any help whilst you here. A list of UK embassies are can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-embassies-in-the-uk



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