



## King's College London, UK



### **Study Guide by Students for Students**

This study guide is an information brochure created by students for students and is intended to give prospective double degree students the opportunity to benefit from former students' experiences, knowledge, and tips. It will be updated continuously and passed on to students from generation to generation. However, there is no guarantee that its contents are correct or complete.

We hope you enjoy reading this guide and look forward to your constructive input.

*Status as of September 2015*

- 1) **Overall impression**
- 2) **Making preparations**
  - a. *Administrative matters*
  - b. *Finding information*
- 3) **Contacts/responsibilities**
  - a. *International office*
  - b. *Faculty of Law*
- 4) **Finding a room/accommodation**

### **International Hall**

International Hall is an intercollegiate hall of residences, which provides accommodation for students from the various colleges that make up the University of London. It is also one of the largest student residences available, with just under 800 residents (including undergraduates, postgraduates, and families). One of the real highlights of International Hall is undoubtedly its location. It is based in Bloomsbury, a relatively quiet part of the city but also extremely central in London terms. King's College London's Strand Campus is a 20-minute walk away, while the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, the largest law library in London, can be reached in just five minutes. Even Oxford Street and Covent Garden are within walking distance! There is also a shopping center and a 24-hour grocery store just around the corner.

The building itself comprises several wings, which vary in terms of age and the level of comfort they offer. The facilities in the older parts of the building tend to consist of small rooms with shared bathrooms. Breakfast and dinner in the hall's own cafeteria are included in the price of accommodation, as well as a weekly clean and change of bed linen. For those on a tight budget (as long as your culinary standards aren't too high), this kind of half-board arrangement is definitely an attractive option. For a rather hefty price, there are also studios available (for one or two people, though dual occupancy is not recommended), complete with kitchenettes and their own bathrooms. These are certainly at the luxury end of student accommodation in London (however, meals and cleaning are excluded and residents have to provide their own bed linen).

The hall is run on fairly strict lines, which means, for instance, that access is restricted to residents only. Visitors have to register at reception and a small fee is charged for guests staying overnight, with up to eight guests allowed per month. Room inspections are also carried out from time to time.

Other facilities on offer at International Hall include a squash court, a cinema room with a projector, a piano, a large laundry room with ironing equipment, and a bar (although this is threatened with closure).

### **Great Dover Street Appartements**

This King's College London (KCL) residence with just under 800 rooms is mainly inhabited by first-year medical students (including students of nursing, midwifery, etc.), along with the occasional postgraduate – with a noise level to match. The mostly unauthorized parties held by the 18/19-year-old residents, particularly during the fall semester, often result in someone accidentally setting off a fire alarm and causing the building to be evacuated. The staff have adapted their approach to this state of affairs and perform more of a service role than a supervisory one.

In terms of visual appearance, the building strongly resembles a prison built around an inner courtyard, with correspondingly small, cell-like rooms. The residence has a reception with 24/7 security, although the staff tend to show very little willingness to help. Visitors neverthe-

less have to register at reception. To reach your own room, you have to identify yourself three times using a swipe card and unlock two doors, which is rather annoying after a while.

The rooms themselves are equipped with small refrigerators, which are very practical but some people find the noise they make disturbing at night. The windows can only be tilted rather than fully opened for safety reasons. However, they let plenty of light in, particularly on the upper floors, and in some places you can enjoy views across parts of the cities. The awkward way in which the cupboards are divided means that storage space is very limited. The wet rooms styled as bathrooms are tiny, with nothing more than a shower curtain separating the shower and toilet, but they fulfill their purpose and – unlike the bathroom facilities in most other residences – they do not have to be shared with your fellow residents. The Internet is only available through a cable connection. Short network cables are handed out to residents at the start of the semester, but anyone who wants to be able to use their laptop in bed should bring a longer cable (approx. 2.5 m) with them from Switzerland. With a peak speed of up to 70 MB/s downstream, the Internet connection is one of the highlights of this accommodation. Other services include a laundry service (for which charges apply: £5 for 5 kg of laundry) and bed linen, which can be changed free of charge once a week.

Generously sized but not so generously equipped kitchens are shared between six rooms. It is worth establishing some communal rules for using the kitchen right from the start, otherwise different views on hygiene standards and what constitutes a desirable level of cleanliness can lead to unnecessary problems. The cleaning staff have recently started cleaning the kitchens every two weeks.

The residence's other facilities include a recently renovated computer room, a laundry room, a table tennis/cinema room, and a small, newly opened DVD library (where charges apply).

There are two small grocery stores nearby that are open until 11:00pm, plus another one by the Tube station that stays open all weekend.

KCL's Strand Campus can be reached in 40 minutes on foot or in around 25 minutes by bus or the London Underground.

### **Wolfson House.**

This 15-story high-rise building is very centrally located, right by London Bridge Tube station. Postgraduates are generally housed on the upper floors (where it is quieter and there is an attractive view). The residence has good public transport connections at all times of day and night and is a 40-minute walk away from KCL's Strand Campus. There are Tesco, Marks & Spencer and Sainsbury's grocery stores within easy reach on foot, and you can walk to Tower Bridge in five minutes or to Borough Market and trendy Bermondsey Street in just two. The accommodation is accessed with a swipe card and keys to individual floors and rooms. Security operates at the entrance. Residents can choose to live in rooms on corridors or in self-contained flats. Corridors comprise 14 rooms, along with bathroom facilities consisting of two showers, a bath, and three toilets, and a communal kitchen with an oven, microwave, kettle, refrigerator, and freezer. Residents can rent a mini-fridge for their own room for a charge. Cleaning staff come during the week to clean the communal areas, but residents are responsible for keeping their own rooms clean (a vacuum cleaner, an ironing board, and an iron are available in the cleaning room). Self-service washing machines can be found on the first floor (GBP 1.20 per load). The rooms come with a bed, a wardrobe, a bedside table with three drawers, a desk and chair, a table lamp, an armchair, a shelf, a sink, and a mirror. The heating seems to be controlled via a central system and it is certainly never cold (not something you can take for granted in England ;-)). WiFi is available throughout the building (using KCL login details). There are mailboxes on the first floor, while a list by the elevator notifies residents when parcels have arrived. These are kept at reception ready for collection.

## **Stamford St Apartments**

The residence is also run by King's College London. Of the 500 or so residents living here, around 75% are new students in their first semester and about 25% are (mostly international) students on Master's degree programs. The main advantage of this accommodation option is its location: Waterloo station, with its excellent rail, Tube and (night) bus links, is just three minutes' walk away. KCL's Waterloo Campus is just across the street, while the Strand Campus, which is where most lectures for LLM students are held, can be reached in just under 10 minutes by walking across Waterloo Bridge. There are plenty of small grocery stores nearby, with some larger (and cheaper) supermarkets around five to 10 minutes away by bus or bike.

On the downside, the rooms are very small, with roughly 11 square meters of space each – including the cramped wet rooms added in since the rooms were originally built. The furnishings are aging and the virtually ubiquitous carpeting in particular (which is found everywhere apart from in the communal kitchens) takes some getting used to. The Internet is only available through a cable connection. Kitchens are shared between five to 10 students depending on the type of "apartment," although they are all the same size and storage space is limited everywhere. The residents have to clean the kitchens themselves and inspections are carried out from time to time, at least at the start of the year. Each room has its own refrigerator.

The building also houses a fitness center run by the Students' Union. In addition, the residence offers a bike storage area and laundry facilities. Bed linen can be obtained free of charge on a weekly basis. There is a relatively attractive courtyard, but unfortunately it is not permitted to use it for communal activities in the evenings. There are also restrictions in place with regard to visitors (e.g. they have to sign in, no day visitors are allowed after 11:00pm, a maximum limit of 20 overnight guests is imposed per term, and up to three day visitors and one overnight guest are allowed at the same time). The fire alarm is accidentally set off once or twice a month on average, offering an opportunity for an impromptu 30-minute "meet & greet" session in the courtyard.

## **Accommodation**

All students who went looking for accommodation on their own initiative found somewhere to live within the first week or two. Private accommodation is not necessarily any more expensive than the options offered by KCL. Generally speaking, however, it offers much more space. One argument often put forward in favor of the student residences is their central location, but this is modified to some extent by the way the public transport network is organized:

The distance between Great Dover Street Apartments and the Strand Campus is just 2.5 km as the crow flies, but it takes a relatively long time to get from one to the other because you either have to change trains (if you are traveling by Tube) or take a significant detour (by bus). Living in an apartment that is located further away but has good direct transport links can therefore save you some travel time. You can compare the various travel routes available at [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk).

### **5) Arrival**

There is no need to take part in the university's International Students Week, as all the information you need is provided when the semester officially starts and there are plenty of opportunities to meet other new students in the first few months.

### **6) Telephone**

If you just want to make phone calls within the UK, Tesco Mobile offers an excellent pay-as-you-go deal: <http://phone-shop.tesco.com/tesco-mobile/tariffs/tariffs-payg.aspx>

Due to a lack of credit history, it is not possible to take out a mobile phone contract at the start of your stay.

Using Skype is definitely the easiest way to contact people in Switzerland. More tech-savvy students can apply for a Swiss landline number at sipcall.ch that people can use to contact them free of charge.

## 7) Bank account

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/about/structure/admin/facser/support/centre/current/services/letters/bankaccount/>

Lloyds does not charge any fees (but you won't get any interest either). A letter confirming your student status and residential address can be obtained free of charge from the Compass, KCL's central support service. You may not need this letter of confirmation, but at any rate it is very useful to have when opening a bank account. The beginning of the semester is when the biggest crowds of students rush to the banks. To open an account, you will need to book an appointment (30 minutes). It is therefore worth taking care of this right at the start.

## 8) Transport

Student Oyster card (for information and rates: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/14312.aspx>, order via <https://photocard.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/gotoApply.do?type=student&from=home>)

Barclays Cycle Hire: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/cycling/12444.aspx>

### a. Traveling from Switzerland

The quickest way to reach the center of London from London City Airport (LCY) is by DLR (the Docklands Light Railway). London City is the city's smallest airport and is mainly used by business travelers. Thanks to its short walking routes and extremely short waiting times, you can usually expect to leave the airport around 15 minutes after landing. Flights to London City are generally a bit more expensive than those to the other airports in the London area, but this is at least partly offset by the fact that you do not need to buy a costly ticket for a speedy connection to the city itself, as is the case with London Gatwick (Gatwick Express) and Heathrow (Heathrow Express).

Unless you are living nearby, cheap flights to London Luton are best avoided. Traveling from Luton to the center of London takes around 1.5 hours – in normal traffic conditions.

For your first journey to the UK, it may also be worth considering flying with British Airways, which offers a slightly higher baggage allowance (23 kg instead of 20 kg).

### c. Transport to the University

From Wolfson House:

- Bus: RV1 from London Bridge (bus station right next to the London Dungeon) toward Covent Garden; get off at Lancaster Place
- Tube: Northern Line to Bank or District or Circle Line to Temple

From Great Dover Street Apartments

- Bus: various
- Tube: Northern Line to Bank or District or Circle Line to Temple

## 9) General information about the university/university life

- a. *Teaching/studying at university*
- b. *General*
- c. *Teaching/studying at university*
- d. *General*

## 10) University/studies

- a. *Degree program structure*

[http://www.kcl.ac.uk/prospectus/graduate/master\\_of\\_laws/structure](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/prospectus/graduate/master_of_laws/structure)

- b. *Tuition/classes*
- c. *Resources*
- d. *Examinations*

Lectures run until the end of March and there is an examination period from May to early June.

Some exams may be in open-book format. The assessment for the Negotiation module involves a written assignment.

## 11) Free time/leisure

Organization, e.g. ESN

Sports activities: see university sport

- a. **Culture, information resources, benefits, events, etc.**

Join the LLM King's College, LLM London, and LLM Postgraduates Facebook groups to make sure you are always notified of any events (you may also find these groups useful for finding accommodation, making contacts, etc.). Join or use the group for your specific residence to keep up to date with what is going on.

Royal Opera House (ballet, opera): £10 Student Standby offer (register at: <http://www.roh.org.uk/studentstandby/index.aspx>), unfortunately rarely available. Alternatively, day tickets can be purchased directly from the ROH from 10:00 am (however, you will have to be there much earlier to get tickets for popular shows) or you can buy standing tickets on an ad hoc basis for around £10.

Musicals: Front row tickets or day tickets for most musicals are available for £20 (depending on the height of the stage, you may not be able to see the performers' feet) and some musicals offer student discounts.

Royal Festival Hall: Facebook group <http://www.lpo.co.uk/education/students.html> (the easiest way to find out about offers is to join the London Philharmonic Orchestra NOISE Facebook group)

National Theatre: £5 Entry Pass tickets are available for all performances at the National Theatre (<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/entrypass>)

Discounts at restaurants, etc.: tastecard (<http://www.tastecard.co.uk/>), <http://www.vouchercodes.co.uk/printable-vouchers.html>

Zizzi and Pizza Express newsletters

**b. Going out, parties**

LLM drinks every Thursday, traditionally in the Knights Templar pub (95 Chancery Lane)

Shoreditch

InterLLM drinks, once a month

**c. Excursions**

Cambridge

Dover

Edinburgh

Oxford

Windsor Castle

**12) Sports**