

The Dickson Poon School of Law, King's College London (Great Britain)

1. Overall impression

Overall, it has been a great experience and I can recommend to everyone to enjoy as much as possible. It's a great opportunity to get to know people from all over the world, get in contact with different cultures, learn about the common law system and last but not least improve your English. London has so many things to see and to do and it's impossible to go everywhere in just one year. However, one should try to make the best year of one's life there.

2. Making preparations

(e.g. administrative matters, finding information)

As with every university, it's very annoying to find the information since there is simply an overload. Accordingly, one should be patient and go there with no information. Don't worry, you will learn everything you need to know in the induction week and the following shopping period.

Yet, if you try to find information on the internet, use Firefox or Google Chrome as Safari usually is not working.

3. Contacts/Responsibilities

(e.g. important contact persons at the Partner University and Faculty)

The administration is quite annoying, both with UZH and KCL. It takes them a while to answer and usually it is not satisfying. There are many issues that have not been resolved in the university agreement. For example, every year the first invoice for the tuition fees will amount to 22,800£ instead of 15,000£. In the end, there is no problem, but it comes as a shock at first.

4. Housing / Finding accommodation

I did find accommodation via King's College and was at Champion Hill. It was an easy process. Although I couldn't choose the residence, I was happy with it. It's 40 minutes from everywhere in London, but the residence is quite new, the reception is always occupied and the area is nice and quite. Furthermore, the price is good compared to other rents in London.

However, there are other options such as Urbanest, Unite Students etc. which provide student accommodations.

5. Arrival

The arrival in London was fine. I could find my accommodation and since I was got there during the "Moving In Days", there were people around to help you with orientation. However, check beforehand, what your residence has in terms of equipment. For example, my residence was fully furnished, but there were no beddings at all and I had to provide for all kitchen utensils by myself.

For KCL, you need to get your ID, but this is super easy and there are different offices. Some of them are also open on Sundays.

Get the KCL Mobile Welcome App in order to find all information and book different activities such as boat tours, or ID collection.

At the beginning, it might seem overwhelming and complicated to settle in. It's hard to orientated, but after a few days/weeks, you will be used to everything.

6. Telephone

(e.g. costs, carriers)

I got a Giffgaff sim card for free. It was provided in the accommodation goodie bag, but you can also order it for free. There are different packages which you can purchase per month. I paid 10€ every month and got 3-4GB internet, plus free calls and SMS.

7. Bank account

I opened a bank account at Natwest, but I wouldn't necessarily recommend it. Some of my friends were with Barclays which seemed better. In the end, however, also with Natwest everything worked fine. At the beginning of the year, every bank is fully booked for opening a student account, so you might have to wait 2-3 weeks before getting an appointment (necessary to go there in person to make an appointment). You need to bring a confirmation letter from KCL, containing the full address (note also to have the right room number on it).

8. Transport (e.g. from Switzerland, to the University)

From Switzerland to London, it's easiest to take the plane. Swiss, easyjet or British airways are the best airlines. Depending on where you live, it's most convenient to fly to London City or Heathrow. In London, there is bus, tube, overground, and train. Download the Citymapper App to check your connections. You can purchase an Oyster card or use your contactless credit card as the pay as you go. There is a daily cap of 6.80€ for zones 1-2 (city centre). If you often use the public transport, get an Oyster student card (apply online) in order to get 30% off the monthly or weekly tickets. It's worth buying the monthly ticket, only if you are there more than 3 weeks, otherwise take the weekly tickets. Also, you can get the Student Railcard for 30€. It's like a Halbtax, i.e. you get off 30% when buying train tickets around UK. Also, put the Railcard on your Oyster card in order to get cheaper fares for the "pay as you go" in off-peak times.

9. General information about the Partner Faculty and student life

King's College is very good, although there are some things that do not work as they are advertised. For example, there is a tutor system where you should be able to talk to a professor about your study or life issues. Yet, I know that some tutors never get in touch. Others contact you, but are not really helpful. Nevertheless, they are very concerned about mindfulness and there are many offices where you could go if you feel unwell. Also, there is the Postgraduate Law Society which is specific for LLM. It's a student committee and they organise many different social events. It's a very good opportunity to have fun in London and see many of your colleagues.

10. Teaching and studying at the Partner Faculty

(e.g. program structure, methodology, exams, etc.)

Teaching varies quite a lot. I had some very good teachers, and some that are less good. Some lectures are organised as colloquium whereas others are more a lecture. Generally, interaction is good, so try to participate. There is quite a lot to read for the classes, but you have the time since there are just approximately 8 hours of lectures per week in total. Exams may be open book, closed book, take home or just essays.

11. City

(e.g. cultural activities, sports, discounts, nightlife, must-sees, short trips, etc.)

London has quite a lot to offer and it's a very cool city with many cultural options and nightlife. If you are interested in joining a sport club, there is a Welcome Fair where you can get in touch with the according club. Alternatively, you can do sports in Beactive (membership is free if you live at a KCL residence).

For theatre, operas, and ballets, create a student account for the English national opera ("Access All Arias") or the Royal Opera House. There are several student tickets under 30£ for any show. Ask also for student discounts in regular shops or take away restaurants (eg. Itsu).

Date: 29.08.2018