

King's College London

Student Guide



About the Author

Hello! My name is Avery Hennigan and I'm here to guide you through your journey as a student at King's College London. First a bit about myself. I'm majoring in religious studies while on a pre-med track. I studied abroad at King's my junior year in Fall 2015 and took courses in both religion and science including the Health and Society Program. Beyond career and studies I love to read fiction, hop around coffee shops, and spend hours wandering through museums.

It goes without saying that my semester abroad was my favorite time in college. I woke up each day excited to discover what adventure I got myself into. Nonetheless, there is a lot of information to navigate before you're right in the thick of it all.

I intend to give you a very practical guide to King's College as well as London. There are a lot of tips on how to save yourself time and money and I'll walk you through them in detail. After reading this guide you'll be a natural Londoner before you know it. Cheers!



Why London?

London is unique in its blend of modern and traditional. It has a diverse range of international activities while boasting a long standing English heritage. Travelers typically think of the big name attractions like the royal family or major sites, but my favorite part of London was the never-ending stream of pop up activities. I would find myself heading out to meditate in Trafalgar Square, leaving in the afternoon for a Vietnamese festival, and ending it all at a pub with friends. With such a plethora of things to do, you'll craft your own study abroad experience that you will truly call your own.



Why King's College?

There are multiple universities across London to choose from, each with specific academic traits. Although my reasons for choosing King's College were particular to my academic track, I think you'll find them applicable to a larger scope.



- 1) **Student body:** King's College is one of the top medical programs in the UK and students start their equivalent of med school as undergrads. So I took my biology classes with mostly medically-oriented students as opposed to those that wanted to go into scientific research. This made my classes have a more laid back feel compared to say UCL because the focus is on completing the track rather than attaining a brilliant GPA. I was elated to have more free time to explore London instead of burying into my textbooks.
- 2) **Department strengths:** I wanted the ability to mix and match between pre-med courses and religious studies. King's has a sound Religion Department so I found my course on Buddhist ethics as enriching as my science courses.
- 3) **Unique Classes:** Lastly I chose King's in order to participate in the Health and Society Course, which you can't find anywhere else in the world. More details on this later, but this was the most enlightening class that I've taken in college. Along with Global Health and Social Medicine, these two courses should draw your attention as truly unique opportunities.
- 4) **Campus:** King's is composed of several small campuses across London which lacks a true college campus type feeling. I personally preferred this because I felt like I was encouraged to explore and study in the city of London rather than King's College alone.

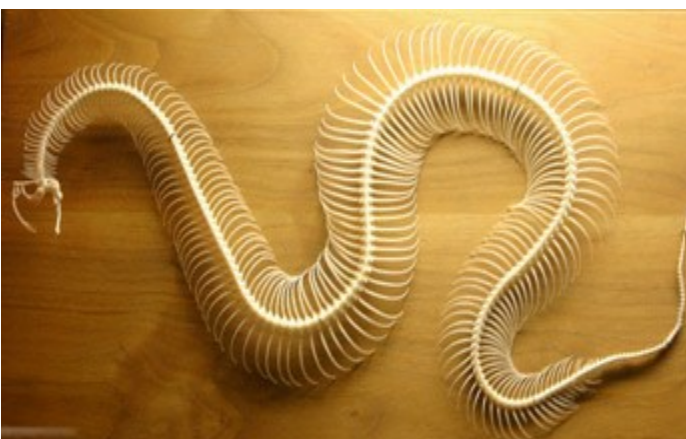


Academics at King's

King's is one of the leading research universities in the world, so take advantage of that! You'll find yourself in an academically rich environment where you can truly grow as a student. With that being said, the academic system is much different than what you're used to at Emory. It's good to walk in with an idea of what to expect from the UK academic system.

Full-time King's students attend college on three year plan, sort of like an accelerated track to their careers. Therefore coursework is treated on a more professional basis and you're expected to do the bulk of your studies at home. Grades consist of two large assignments, essentially a midterm worth 40% and final worth 60%. Don't worry about taking too many high level courses. I took three 5 levels and one 6 level, which I thought was more than manageable.

All of my modules had a nice blend of engaging lecture and hand-on learning. For instance, in my Buddhist Ethics we meditated across various styles (like mindful eating!). Likewise I dissected mackerel and compared bizarre skeletons in Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy.



The Health and Society Program was one of the most unique courses I've taken in college. Guest lecturers led discussions over a range of topics like ethics, healthcare systems, and psychosocial determinants of health. Some sessions were held outside of the classroom when we met at the National Gallery and Hunterian Museum to examine the cultural depictions and historical developments of medicine. Additionally, I was placed in three shadowing opportunities where I could discuss with UK doctors directly. Our final grade rested on a project of our choosing and I loved the freedom that this gave me. I studied how the modernization of religion impacted modern medicine in Japan—a project that later influenced my thesis and postgrad applications.

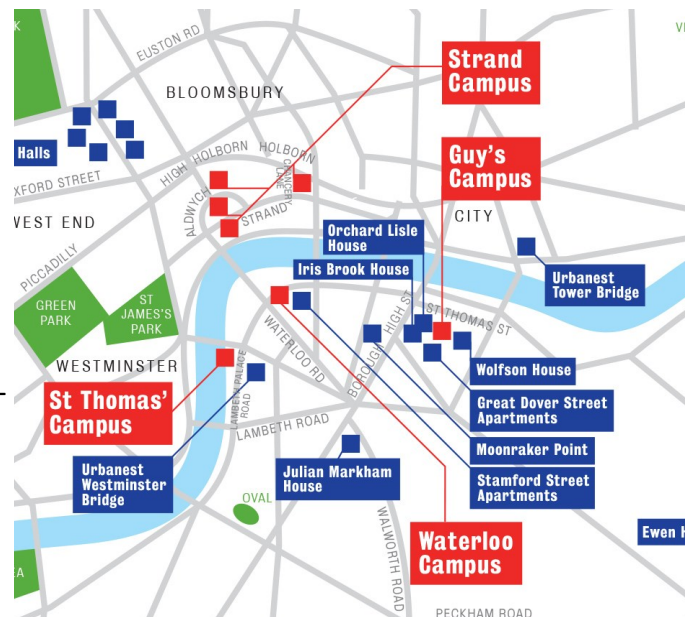
Housing

You'll fill out a preference housing application before you set out for London, but which option do you choose? I would say the three most popular for study abroad students are as follows:

Great Dover Street: a good choice if you're taking a lot of science courses. I stayed here. It's a quick walk from Guy's Campus as well as Borough Market. Be warned, however, since it's a good 40 minutes away from Strand Campus.

Moonraker Point: a bit pricier than the other choices, but by far the most luxurious. Huge rooms and sizeable bathrooms. It's also in between all three campuses.

Stamford Street: the best option in terms of location. It's right next to the Strand and Waterloo campuses as well as most of the activity in London.



What to expect? While freshman fill most of the dorms, you'll live on a flat with six other study abroad students. You'll have your own room and bathroom and share a kitchen.

Your flat mates will likely be your closest friends abroad. I met a master pianist-baker from France along with two charming Spaniards. Needless to say it was hard to say goodbye in the end.

Moving In

For better or worse London does not have the mega department stores that we're used to in the States. No Walmart, no Target, etc. Even so I would recommend buying most of your basic living needs when you get to London. It will save you much needed room in your luggage, and you won't be spending too much money if you buy from the right places.



Home Furnishing

Primark I'm placing stars around this one because it's the best move. There's a location on Oxford Street where you can pretty much buy everything you need all at one time. It's the closest thing you'll find to Target while in London.

Argos A good store to buy more specific needs e.g. power adaptors.

Marks and Spencer A bit more upscale than what you would find in Primark. I would recommend checking M&S out if you are planning to spend a year or longer abroad.

Groceries

Sainsbury's They have just about everything you might need to eat at home and at a reasonable price. Tip: keep an eye out for their 70 pence doughnuts and cookies.

Tesco Basically an equivalent to Sainsbury's but a little larger.

Lidl Hands down the cheapest place to buy groceries in London. Locations are a bit out of the way, but you can easily hop on a quick bus route to any of them.

Toiletries and Medicine

Boots You'll find bathroom supplies, cosmetics, and basic emergency aid.

NHS Pharmacies Look for the green NHS plus sign. The UK is more relaxed on what is considered over-the-counter, so it's easier to find quality medication for less complicated medical needs. Nonetheless please go see a doctor if you think you have something serious.

Cell Phones

O2, Giffgaff If you have a smartphone go ahead and unlock it. It's cheaper than buying a plan for a burn phone. Check out these two sites to find a plan that suits you and they'll send you a sim card in the mail.

Transportation

This page will contain a lot of nit-picky information but stick with me here. There are quite a few tricks to save yourself a lot of money.

- **Oyster card:** One of the first things you should buy when you arrive in London. It allows you to access both the subway system (the Tube) and all bus routes throughout the city.
- **Taking the Tube from London Heathrow**
You can either take an Uber/taxi or the Tube to get into the city. This really depends if you think it's worth carrying your luggage, but I was able to save £30 pounds by taking the Tube. The Heathrow website instructions are a bit confusing, so look below to find how I got to my King's residence. No matter the location of your residence, you should follow a similar route.

- **Pay as you go or 7 day Travelcard?** You can choose to top off your Oyster card as you go or buy an unlimited number of trips for a week. As of the time of this writing, the going rate for a single tube ride is £2.40 and bus ride £1.50. A 7 day Travelcard costs £32.40 - that's £4.62 a day. Long story short I found that I could walk and take the tube as needed rather than spend £4.62 daily.
- **Student Oyster Card:** Do not, and I repeat, DO NOT buy a student Oyster card. You pay a £20 fee and it only gives you a discount on off-peak hours. Again if you can avoid the tube by taking a bus you'll save more money that way. A better option to consider if you plan on traveling around England is the **16-25 Railcard**. It will cost you £30 but gives you the off-peak discount and saves you money if you take around 3 trips outside London. Website: <http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>

Directory

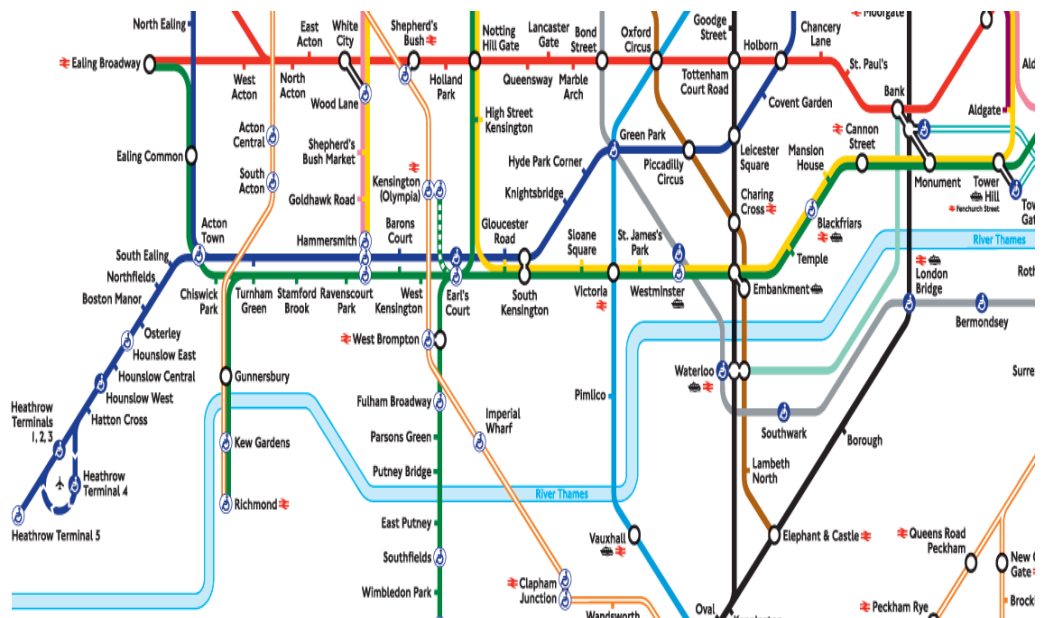
- 1 Heathrow: Take Piccadilly
- 2) South Kensington: take Central or District

Great Dover

- 3) Monument: take Northern
- 4) Borough: Depart from Tube

Moonraker or Stamford

- 3) Embankment: Take Northern
- 4) Waterloo: Depart from Tube



What to Do



Two magazines -- **Time Out London** and **Londonist** --are the best resources for staying up to date on the upcoming events in London. Check out their websites and look for free handouts as well. To get you started here's a quick list of activities to look into.

1) Walk along a bridge. The north and south banks are joined by a variety of bridges each with their own views and personalities. I personally enjoyed the beautifully lit Tower Bridge at night and crossing over the modern style Millennium Bridge.

2) Snag a deal at a market. You'll find fresh food vendors at Borough Market, clothing and accessories at Camden Market, and antique items at Portobello Market. Fall semester students can also enjoy the festive Christmas markets.

3) Mix up the museum experience with Lates. Some museum offer after-hour events for adults where you can visit exhibits and enjoy special activities like silent discos.

There are so many different and unique things to do in London so be diligent and stay on top of what's going on!



For the Foodies

I must confess that I'm no foodie myself, but it's nearly impossible not to get caught up in the spectacular food scene.

English Classics: I'd say English cuisine is pretty hearty, the kind of food you'd want on a cold rainy day. Be sure to try the traditional dishes like scotch eggs, seasonal English pies, and a full English breakfast.

International Delights: You can find just about any type of global cuisine. In particular, I enjoyed the ramen at Kanada-ya and black daal from Dishoom.

Top-notch Coffee: It's an understatement to say that London boasts a complete coffee scene. You can spend your entire semester exploring new spots and soaking in the distinctive vibes of each joint.



Emory Excursions

If there's one thing you absolutely must do while abroad, please take full advantage of the events that Emory coordinates for its UK study abroad students. Emory alumnus Anneka Reid serves as your guide and takes you along a series of outings that you would have never thought to do. We chowed down on luxurious dinners, traveled outside of London to a royal palace, cheered with fans at a football game, and witnessed a crazy modern rendition of a Shakespeare play. It's free and planned out for you, all you have to do is show up! What's more I formed some of my closest friendships through these trips. You'll meet other Emory students and develop bonds that you wouldn't have expected. When you return home these are the memories that you'll all have in common and reminisce on.



Self Travel

Before you start planning, ask yourself what you want to get out of your travels. Personally, I chose places that I wouldn't plan another trip around if I returned to Europe. There is no right or wrong answer, but with a limited number of trips it's best to have an idea in hand.

Within England

There are a multitude of destinations throughout England (Oxford, Cambridge, Bath, Dover to name a few) and they are all readily reachable by train. I absolutely loved cruising across England on a train. You get a chance to see the rolling green country side dotted by grazing sheep all the while traveling very comfortably. You'll find basically all your tickets through the national rail service, but also keep your eyes peeled for Groupons. I was able to take a guided bus tour to Stonehenge and Bath for £40.

Outside of England

Ground: France, Belgium, and Amsterdam are sometimes cheaper to get to by train or bus. Check Eurostar and Raileurope for tickets.

Air: Go straight to [skyscanner.com](https://www.skyscanner.com). They'll search through all airline options and give you the cheapest flight. A crafty way to find SUPER cheap tickets is to look at the price listings by date for each location. They kind of keep that feature tucked away, so take a look below to find how to get to that page.

Hostels and Airbnb: Unless you're really trying to save money, I would recommend staying in a private hostel room. You'll spend a few extra pounds but it's worth not waking up to snoring lodgers. Tip: convert the price listed into each currency (e.g. Polish zloty or Czech koruna), sometimes you'll find cheaper conversion rates.

