

Finding a place to live

A students' guide to
accommodation

Welcome to the ICR

Introduction

Looking for housing in London might feel overwhelming at times, especially if you are new to the big city. We have put together this guide, containing information from some of our current ICR students, about what to look for when trying to find a place to live.

Most students mainly work out of one of the two ICR sites—Sutton or Chelsea. This will likely be the same for you, and may influence your decision on where to live.

Please do be aware that we are a dual-site institute and you will be expected to travel between Sutton and Chelsea on occasion. You can discuss the extent that this will be required for your individual project with your supervisor.

There is no need to worry though, as this guide shows you locations that are good for both sites.

Typically, ICR students pay between £600 and £900 each month in basic rent for their accommodation.

There are many places where you might be able to find good deals, so it is definitely worth spending time doing some research before settling on a place.

In this guide we provide links to various online resources that are recommended by ICR students, which we hope you find useful.

Good luck with your search!

The Student Committee.

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Where you choose to live depends on...

...how much rent you're willing to pay

Rents are dependent on both location and size of house. As a very rough guide, a studio flat outside central London could range from £800 to £1,000 per month. More detailed information about the typical rents you can expect to pay in different areas can be found at [london.gov.uk/rents](https://www.london.gov.uk/rents).

...what you want from your local area

London is a very large city, and each area has a distinctive character—you will need to do some research to find out which part of the city would suit you.

A useful book is Time Out's 2015 publication, *London For Londoners*, which gives an overview of areas in London from a resident's point of view—a sort of tourist guide for locals.

...how far you're willing to commute

Check out Transport for London's journey planner at tfl.gov.uk, Google Maps at maps.google.com, or CityMapper at citymapper.com/london to find out average journey times from different areas.

Another useful transport map site is Mapnificent (mapnificent.net) which shows places that are within specified transport times to a particular location; the map is based on public transport data, so helpfully shows more distant 'islands' that happen to have fast transport links.

Where to start looking

Property websites

Zoopla

[zoopla.com](https://www.zoopla.com)

Allows you to search by area, or tube lines and stations. Also shows price changes.

Rightmove

[rightmove.co.uk](https://www.rightmove.co.uk)

Apparently, this is the property finder site that receives the most traffic.

Prime Location

[primelocation.com](https://www.primelocation.com)

Zoopla, Right Move and Prime Location are quite similar and tend to show mostly the same properties, but often, due to the different formats of the sites, some are easier to search and navigate through. The information provided about a given property may differ from site to site e.g. more pictures, floor plans, dimensions, etc. These three are very well known so they will generally have the most big agency listings, however, this means that properties there tend to be slightly more expensive.

Loot

[loot.com](https://www.loot.com)

Some different and usually cheaper listings. It is not particularly easy to search several things at once. Also available as a newspaper.

Accommodation for Students

[accommodationforstudents.com](https://www.accommodationforstudents.com)

Student-centred accommodation site. Beware the Streetview maps: they can be wrong! Also includes listings and pictures of private student halls.

Gumtree

[gumtree.com](https://www.gumtree.com)

General classified advertisements for everything from accommodation to music lessons. Ads from landlords, agencies and people looking for roommates. Very widely used and frequently updated, but very poorly regulated, and photos often don't match the properties.

Many of these websites show links to send a message to the landlord or letting company. Often, waiting for a response is too slow, and many don't actually respond. Your best bet is to just call them!

Letting agents

Websites can give you scope of what is available from different agents. But often, when you contact an agent, a property is no longer available or the agents actually have more properties on their books that are not listed on websites. It can be much easier and faster to contact agents and register your criteria with them.

ULHS have lists of agents categorised by the area of London they operate within: find more details at housing.london.ac.uk. These are useful in also informing you of how much an agent will charge. You will also see which agents are prominent in certain locations when you walk around the area in which you are hunting.

Find a housemate

Many of the websites dedicated to property hunting also list rooms to rent within flat- and house-shares.

There are several websites which are specifically dedicated to students looking for housemates, or houses with individual rooms to let. Here are some examples:

spareroom.co.uk
roomgo.co.uk
accommodationforstudents.com

Once you have been offered a place as a student at the ICR, you will receive a link to the student Facebook page where you can connect with current students who may have a room going spare, or who may know of other students who are looking for a housemate.

Student Halls of Residence

Halls tend to be more expensive than private flats but offer many benefits and can be more convenient, especially for those who are new to London. The ICR does not have its own halls of residence; however, with it being part of the University of London, students may apply to various UoL Intercollegiate Halls.

For more information on each of the UoL halls, visit halls.london.ac.uk. There is a lot of competition for a place in halls so apply early! If you are applying before you have enrolled at the ICR, please contact Registry by emailing researchdegrees@icr.ac.uk to organise your application.

There are other private Halls of Residence that are not owned or run by UoL. Those that are registered with UoL can be found on the University of London Housing Service (ULHS) site housing.london.ac.uk, or can be searched for on accommodationforstudents.com.

In general, the ULHS website is an excellent place to get information and advice on renting property in London.

Students' area guide

This area guide contains some recommendations from our students of areas in and around London that are particularly convenient for travel to the ICR sites in Sutton and Chelsea. This is by no means an exhaustive list, and you may want to consider other areas. London has an extensive public transport network, so your options are very wide. We also have some more personal accounts from students in the next section.

West London

Kensington and Chelsea



London's smallest and most affluent Borough, renowned for its stylish and cosmopolitan atmosphere. Although rent in this area is expensive compared to other parts of London, you would be conveniently located within walking

distance to the ICR's Chelsea site; the most affordable housing is to the Western side of the Royal Borough.

This area has

- Luxury shopping in Knightsbridge and Sloane Square, as well as many upmarket cafes and restaurants.
- Museums and galleries—including the Royal Albert Hall, and the Victoria and Albert Museum.
- Portobello Road Market.
- Home to some of London's most popular events, including the Notting Hill Carnival, and the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

Places you could live

West Kensington, Earl's Court, Olympia, Gloucester Road, Notting Hill Gate, Bayswater.

Travel to ICR Chelsea

You can get here in roughly 10-20 mins by bus, tube, bike or by foot.

Travel to elsewhere in London

Located in Zones 1 and 2, you are easily connected to lots of London's main attractions, both by walking and public transport.

Travel to ICR Sutton

The ICR has a free shuttle bus for staff and students that runs between ICR Chelsea and ICR Sutton; the journey takes roughly an hour, depending on traffic.

Alternatively, you could take the Circle line from High Street Kensington to Victoria (8 mins), followed by a Southern train to Sutton (32 mins). If you make this journey regularly, you may wish to get a monthly student travelcard—which is currently £176.30 for Zones 1-5.

Hammersmith and Fulham



This is one of the more affordable boroughs of West London. Our students say that they tend to live on the outskirts of this borough (South-West) as it can be expensive in some areas, but there are definitely some affordable flat shares available. Parts are located within convenient walking distance to the ICR's Chelsea site.

This area has

- Theatres and entertainment venues—including the Lyric Hammersmith and the Hammersmith Apollo.
- Several public parks and open spaces, such as Ravenscourt Park, and Shepherd's Bush Green.
- Famous for hosting the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race, and home to a number of sports teams including football, rugby, tennis, and boxing.
- Other attractions include riverside walks along the Thames, Fulham Palace, and Westfield shopping centre.

Places you could live

Shepherd's Bush, Hammersmith, Fulham.

Travel to ICR Chelsea

Depending on where you live, it's roughly 20-40 min walk, 5-10 min by bike, or 10-15 min by tube/bus.

Travel to elsewhere in London

Located on the edge of Zone 1, it's easy to get into central London (20-30 min by tube) yet it is still mostly residential with numerous parks, shops, bars and restaurants.

Travel to ICR Sutton

The fastest route is the District line from Hammersmith to Victoria (14 mins), followed by a Southern train to Sutton (28 mins). A monthly student travelcard is approximately £176.30 for Zones 1-5. The ICR also has a free shuttle bus for staff and students that runs between ICR Chelsea and ICR Sutton; the journey takes roughly 1 hour, depending on traffic.

Student perspective

Hammersmith and Fulham is a nice location in West London, and it is also a hot spot for Convergence Science/Imperial students and young professionals—there is a lot to do and plenty of options for student housing.

There are many Tube stations in the area, including Hammersmith and Barons Court on the District and Piccadilly line, and Fulham Broadway or Parsons Green on the District line.

Rent prices range from £160 to £250/person/week—depending on how close you are to a Tube station, how nice the house is, and how many people you live with (it is more expensive to live with fewer people). As a guide, it is currently hard to find somewhere nice and close to a station for less than £200 per week.

But don't be put off—Hammersmith and Fulham is a great location for Chelsea and Convergence Science students. Even if you are not near a Tube station you will be a 20 to 40 minute-walk, 10 to 20-minute cycle, or a 20 to 40-minute bus ride from your lab.

Generally, Hammersmith Broadway, Fulham Broadway, Fulham Palace Road, and North End Road have higher crime rates, with smaller residential roads around Hammersmith and Fulham usually quite safe.

Hammersmith has a wide range of shops, pubs, and restaurants—and you will likely only be about 30 minutes away from Westfield in White City, a large shopping centre. Central London is only 30-50 minutes away, where there is an endless selection of things to do. If you don't fancy travelling too far, there is a smaller mall at Fulham Broadway with a few restaurants and a cinema.

- **Alexia Martin**

North-west London

Bloomsbury (in Camden)



Bloomsbury is in the London Borough of Camden (postcode WC). If you are new to London and want to join an international community of graduate students, you could apply to live at Goodenough College in Bloomsbury (goodenough.ac.uk).

This accommodation provides likeminded students with a sense of community and encourages members to organise clubs and activities. Most of the accommodation is single bedrooms, but studios and flats are also available. While Bloomsbury is a relatively quiet neighbourhood in Zone 1, Camden as a whole is one of

London's liveliest boroughs and the centre of the capital's indie music scene.

This area has

- Student Central—free for all University of London students to join, providing you access to lots of clubs and societies.
- Public parks and green spaces—including Regent's Canal and Regent's Park.
- Historical attractions—such as the British library and the British Museum.
- Good long distance transport connections, with King's Cross, Euston, and St Pancras International station, all within walking distance.

Places you could live

Bloomsbury, Kentish Town, Camden Town, Primrose Hill, Gospel Oak, Hampstead, Swiss Cottage.

Travel to ICR Chelsea

It takes 30 mins to travel from Kings Cross to the Chelsea site on the Piccadilly line. A Zone 1 Student Travelcard is around currently £103/month.

Travel to elsewhere in London

Bloomsbury is in the heart of London (10 min walk from King's Cross station, and 20-30 min walk from Covent Garden or Oxford Circus). It is close to many London attractions and has excellent transport links.

Travel to Sutton

The fastest route is the Victoria line from Kings Cross to Victoria (8 mins), followed by a Southern train to Sutton (28 mins). A monthly student travelcard is approximately £176.30 for Zones 1-5.

Student perspective

Angel is a lively area just east of King's Cross, sitting next to Regent's Canal. It is very popular with young working professionals due to the many restaurants, bars, and pubs around.

You can find anything you want here—gyms, big supermarkets, high street shops in Angel Central, cinemas, and even the Islington farmers' market. It also feels safe, as there are always people about and great bus routes (if you don't want to walk home in the dark from the station). Popular parts of London including Camden, Oxford Street/Soho, Shoreditch, and the Southbank are all a quick bus ride (or even a walk/cycle) away. The one drawback is that there aren't many green spaces nearby—the nearest big park is Regent's Park. However, the canal is a nice alternative.

Angel Tube station is on the Northern line, which is great for getting to the city or south London—this is one option for commuting into Sutton, with a change onto the overground at Balham. Within walking distance you also have King's Cross and

St Pancras stations, which are not only served by almost every Tube line (including the Piccadilly line, which takes you straight to South Kensington in around 30 minutes for the Chelsea site), but also by the Thameslink for a direct 50-minute train to Sutton. Alternatively, you could also get the Victoria line to Victoria station and change onto a 30-minute train to Sutton.

Properties are expensive for what you get compared to many other parts of London. For example, in a 3- or 4-bed flat you would typically pay £900/month each, and the Angel area is increasing in popularity. This is the cost of the excellent location and amenities, so if a bustling social scene is not what you are after then other parts of London probably offer better value for money.

- Miki Yoneyama

South-west London

Wimbledon (in Merton)



Merton's best known district is Wimbledon (SW19), world-famous for the tennis championships held every summer. Our students recommend Wimbledon because it is at an equal distance to both the Chelsea and Sutton sites so it is ideal for someone who is expecting to be commuting to both. There are plenty of restaurants in the area with international cuisines, and some of the best pubs in London.

This area has

- Wimbledon town centre, which has plenty of restaurants, shops and cultural events.
- The famous Wimbledon tennis tournament (from late June to early July).

- Local entertainment venues and historical attractions—including the New Wimbledon Theatre and the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum.
- Outdoor spaces and parks like Wimbledon Common, and the popular Wimbledon Windmilers running club.

Places you could live

Wimbledon, Morden, Merton Park.

Travel to Sutton

Trains run every 30 minutes from Wimbledon to Sutton (19 mins journey time). A monthly student travelcard is approximately £85.70 for Zones 3-5. You can also take the 164 bus direct from Wimbledon to Sutton station (40 mins).

Travel to ICR Chelsea

South Wimbledon station is on the Northern line, which runs 24/7 at the weekend (night tube). The fastest route is the District line from Wimbledon to South Kensington (23 mins). A monthly student travelcard is approximately £121.40 for Zones 1-3.

Travel to elsewhere in London

To get to central London you can use



the Northern and District lines. You can also use South Western trains, which run every 2-5 minutes from Wimbledon train station to Waterloo.

Battersea and Balham (in Wandsworth)

Both the Sutton and Chelsea site can be reached within 45 mins of the borough of Wandsworth, particularly around the Battersea and Balham areas. Our students recommend Balham in particular because it has a nice relaxed vibe and is very well connected to both Sutton and Chelsea and the surrounding areas; Battersea is very convenient for those working at the ICR in Chelsea, as it is within pleasant walking distance.

This area has

- A market where you can buy reasonably-priced fresh fruit and vegetables.

- Lots of bars and restaurants to enjoy, such as The Bedford pub—popular for live music and comedy.
- Green spaces and parks nearby—like Clapham Common, Wandsworth Common, Battersea Park, Tooting Common.
- Battersea Arts Centre: a pioneer of contemporary theatre,

Places you could live

Balham, Battersea, Clapham, Earlsfield, Wandsworth Town, Tooting, Putney,

Travel to Sutton

There are roughly two fast trains from Balham to Sutton every hour (20 min journey time) with slower ones in between. A monthly student travelcard is approximately £85.70 for Zones 3-5.

Travel to ICR Chelsea

The fastest route involves taking the Northern line from Balham to Stockwell (7 mins), then Victoria line to Victoria (5 mins), then District/ Circle line to South Kensington (5 mins). A monthly student travelcard is approximately £121.40 for Zones 1-3.

Travel to elsewhere in London

You're directly connected to central London by the Northern line and can reach Leicester Square in less than 20 mins.

Student perspectives

Battersea is a lovely area with everything you could want—it can be both lively and fun, or a little quieter on more residential streets. It is easy to commute to either site, although unfortunately Battersea is not served by the Tube—this often means it is quicker to cycle locally. The location and amenities come at a cost—rent for a one-bed with a garden will be about £1,500/month, and if you commute to Sutton you will have to add another £100 or so to your budget each month for a Zone 2-5 travelcard. It therefore makes sense to find flatmates (or live with a partner)—finding a flat is very competitive, so search for new flats every day, offer the asking price (or more), and put down an offer on the same day you see the property. Finding a place to live can be a bit stressful!

Battersea feels very safe, with low crime rate, and has a wide variety of local amenities including two large parks (Battersea Park and Clapham Common), a high street with a mix of regular and high-end shops, and plenty of pubs, bars, and restaurants. You are also spoilt for supermarkets, ranging from Lidl and Asda on the cheaper end to

Whole Foods and Waitrose on the pricier side. There is also a post office, police station, library, and leisure centre—although gyms in Battersea are generally quite expensive.

- **Carolina Bernauer**

Tooting is a fun neighbourhood located in Zone 3, a bit cheaper than the nearby and busy Balham.

Tooting is served by two tube stations, Tooting Bec (in the north) and Tooting Broadway (in the south). They're both on the Northern line, which has night trains on the weekends! You can easily get to the centre of London, in just over 20 mins. There are also many buses and some of them run at night. Commuting to the Sutton site is pretty easy if you take the train from Balham, which runs every 30 min. You can also get the Thameslink from Streatham station which is a short bus ride away. You can get to Chelsea on the tube or by cycling, in around 30 mins.

You can get a double room in a shared flat for £600-700 (try looking on Spareroom). Tooting has loads of amenities, but the biggest one is probably Tooting Market, with food stalls that serve all types of food. It is also well known for its Indian restaurants. Finally, it has a great park, Tooting Common, and one London's most popular lidos, which is always busy during spring/summer.

It is a very safe neighbourhood and it has all you need from good supermarkets, pharmacies, and other shops.

- Clara Leboeiro Babe

South London

Sutton



Sutton is a London borough in South London (Zone 5). Much of the borough has a suburban and often even village-like feel, and a relaxed atmosphere.

The majority of ICR Sutton students live in Sutton town (postcode SM1). The town is a great place to live if you prefer a short commute and would like to save some money on travel and living costs. If you would prefer a more quiet location and don't mind a slightly longer commute to work, you could live in one of the other places in the borough of Sutton.

This area has

- A modern town centre with a lively high street and cinema.

- Many green spaces nearby, such as Banstead Downs, Sutton Green, and Manor Park.
- Several works of public art, including murals, sculptures, and war memorials.

Places you could live

Sutton, Carshalton, Carshalton Beeches, Beddington, Cheam, Belmont, Wallington.

Travel to ICR Sutton

The ICR has a free shuttle bus for staff and students that runs between Sutton station and the ICR; the journey takes roughly 5-10 mins, depending on traffic.

Alternatively, it is a 30 min walk from the centre of Sutton to the ICR. The 80 and 280 buses pass close to the ICR, taking around 10 minutes (though beware of the S3 bus to the Royal Marsden Hospital: it takes numerous side streets and can make your journey much longer than expected!). A monthly student bus pass costs £62.60, which covers all buses and trams across London.

Travel to ICR Chelsea

The ICR has a free shuttle bus for staff and students that runs between ICR Sutton and ICR Chelsea; the journey takes roughly 1 hour, depending on traffic.

Another option is to take a fast train from Sutton station to London Victoria (34 mins) and then catch the tube (Circle or District line) to South Kensington (4 mins). There are alternative train routes which allow you to avoid Zone 1 (via Wimbledon, West Brompton, Earl's Court); this gives you a longer journey time but a cheaper fare.

Travel to elsewhere in London

There are frequent trains from Sutton station to central London (Victoria, Blackfriars, St. Pancras). Fast trains take roughly 30 mins and run 2-3 times an hour, making it easy to spend an evening or weekend in the city.

Streatham (in Lambeth & Wandsworth)



Streatham (SW16—zone 3) is a district in South London; mostly in the London Borough of Lambeth, with some areas stretching west into the London Borough of Wandsworth. Streatham is popular among ICR students because it's close to lively areas like nearby Brixton, Tulse Hill, and Clapham. It has a good variety of affordable accommodation, as well as plenty of places to eat, drink and shop.

This area has

- Streatham High Road—which claims to be the longest high street in Europe!
- Public parks and gardens, such as Streatham Common, Streatham Green, and the Rookery.
- Streatham Ice and Leisure Centre—which boasts an Olympic-sized ice skating rink.
- Local events and entertainment—including Streatham Festival, and the Hideaway Jazz Café.

Travel to ICR Sutton

All three mainline Streatham stations (Streatham Hill, Streatham and Streatham Common) have direct trains to Sutton. Train times vary between 10-30 mins, and are fairly frequent. A monthly student travelcard is roughly £85.70 for Zones 3-5.

Travel to ICR Chelsea

The fastest route is a Thameslink train to Wimbledon (10 mins) followed by the District line to Fulham Broadway (13 mins).

Travel to elsewhere in London

Streatham is covered by the Thameslink and Southern rail networks so there are lots of direct trains to central London.

Kennington (in Lambeth & Southwark)



Kennington (SE11) is a district in South London; mainly within the London Borough of Lambeth, and along the boundary of the London Borough of Southwark. Living here in Zone 2, you are easily connected to lots of London's main attractions, both by walking and public transport. Vauxhall, Stockwell and Elephant and Castle are other possibilities in this area.

This area has

- Historical attractions, such as the Imperial War Museum.
- Kennington Park—which includes a flower garden, and various outdoor sports facilities.
- The Oval cricket ground—home to the Surrey County Cricket Club.

Travel to ICR Sutton

The commute is approximately one hour door to door but there are many possible routes to Sutton, which is good when there are delays, cancellations or strikes. The typical route would be to take the tube to Balham and change to the train, or take the Thameslink from Elephant and Castle direct to Sutton. A monthly student travelcard is approximately £102.60 for Zones 2-5.

Travel to ICR Chelsea

The tube journey from Kennington station to South Kensington / Gloucester Road station is around 20 mins. If you make this journey regularly, you may wish to get a monthly student travelcard—which is roughly £103 for Zones 1-2.

Travel to elsewhere in London

Kennington is popular among students because it is very close to the heart of central London—it takes less than 10 minutes on the tube to get to Leicester Square. Nearby, Elephant and Castle also has many new developments popping up, bringing with it shops, bars, restaurants and theatres, making it a very vibrant and exciting place to live.

Surrey

Epsom and around



The borough of Epsom and Ewell is in Surrey. Epsom (Postcode KT17-19) is quiet market town, feeling completely separate to London, and is surrounded by vast green space. Although it's a longer commute, you can get a lot for your money when renting in Epsom—many flats are modern and have an outdoor space like a garden or balcony.

This area has

- Peaceful countryside town setting.
- Vast green spaces, such as Epsom Common, and Nonsuch Park.
- The Epsom Downs Racecourse—famous for horse racing.
- Historical landmarks, such as the Epsom Clock Tower and Ewell's Bourne Hall.

Places where you could live

Leatherhead, Banstead, Tadworth, Dorking.

Travel to ICR Sutton

Epsom to Sutton is a 10-min train journey; a monthly ticket between these two stations is roughly £280. Keep in mind that Epsom is just outside the TfL travel zones. This means you cannot use contactless payments on trains. It also means you will not be eligible to apply for a student oyster card.

Travel to ICR Chelsea

The fastest route is a South Western train to Wimbledon (19 mins) followed by the District line to South Kensington (22 mins). You would need to buy a train ticket for the first part of your journey (Epsom-Wimbledon), and then for tube travel you will need to use Oyster or contactless pay-as-you-go. If you make this journey regularly, you may wish to get a student travel card for the Zone 1 stretch of your journey. Travel to elsewhere in London Epsom station has both Southern and South West trains calling at London Bridge, Waterloo, and Victoria. The train takes around 40 mins, and there are 6-10 trains an hour. With two train companies operating, you have more options if there are cancellations or strikes.

Driving

If you have a car, you will find that parking is easy in Epsom, and there is quick access to the M25. If you have a car, more distant places in Surrey could be an option.

Transport basics

ICR bus services

Inter-site bus

A bus operates throughout the day between the ICR/Royal Marsden sites in Chelsea and Sutton.

Sutton alighting point

Royal Marsden blue corridor car park (*0615 bus departs from the front of the hospital).

Chelsea alighting point

Close to the Royal Marsden Hospital on Fulham Road.

Timetable

Sutton departures:
0615 | 0900 | 1100 | 1230 | 1500 | 1700

Chelsea departures:
0730 | 1030 | 1300 | 1500 | 1700 | 1830

Approximate journey time

1 hour

Sutton station shuttle-bus

A shuttle bus operates between Sutton National Rail station and the ICR/Royal Marsden Sutton site.

Sutton station alighting point

Behind the station, opposite Quadrant house.

ICR/Royal Marsden alighting point

From the rear of the Children's unit, accessed by walking along the RMH corridor towards the Maggie's Centre, leaving through the doors at the very end.

Timetable

Continuous shuttle:
0630 to 1000

ICR to Sutton station:
1205 | 1220 | 1245 | 1320

Sutton station to ICR:
1230 | 1305 | 1330 | 1345 | 1405

Continuous shuttle:
1600 to 2100

Approximate journey time

5-10 minutes

Planning your journey

Often, journey times are less dependent on actual distance and more determined by which tube lines you use.

There are various apps available to help you plan a journey in and around London, such as Google Maps or Citymapper.

Transport for London's website (tfl.gov.uk) has a journey planner which is useful when deciding whether a property is conveniently located.

You can include or exclude various public transport modalities, as well as walking and biking. This website will be useful for you throughout your time in London, especially as it updates you when services are down or delayed, which is often!

Ticketing

Travel zones

Transport for London (TfL) divides London into nine travel zones within its network; the price that you will pay depends on which zones you will be

travelling across. It is important to note that you will be charged to cross a zone, even if your start and end points are in another zone (for example, if you travel between Hoxton and Canada Water on the London Overground, both of which are in Zone 2, you have to pass through Shoreditch High Street, which is in Zone 1, so you need to have a valid ticket for Zone 1 and 2).

Oyster and contactless

Make sure you have an Oyster card or contactless bank or credit National Rail and bus services. Cards can also be used on some riverboat services, and on the cable-car in East London. Full-time students can apply for a Student Oyster card that provides a 1/3 discount on all tickets. Additionally, if you have a Young Person's National Railcard, you can register your Oyster and Railcard together for more off-peak discounts (this is not available with contactless cards).

If you are using an Oyster or contactless card to travel by train beyond the TfL area, you will need to buy a paper ticket to cover the part of the journey that is out of the TfL zones.

Travel cards

When you have decided how much travelling you will be doing by public transport, you might consider it worth getting a monthly or yearly travelcard. These can be purchased on an Oyster card alongside pay as you go credit for journeys outside your travelcard zones. If you live outside of the TfL travel zones, for example in Surrey, you will need to purchase paper tickets and travelcards.

Season ticket loan

The ICR offers a travelcard loan scheme, which allows you to borrow the value of a yearly travelcard and pay it off on a monthly basis. A yearly travel card offers significant savings on a monthly card, so this scheme is well worth considering.

TfL raises ticket prices at the start of January each year, but tickets can be purchased at current prices that are valid after the price rise, so the best time to buy the ticket is at the end of the previous year.

If you start at the ICR in October, it is advisable to buy weekly or monthly tickets for the first three months of your studentship. Then, at the end of December, just before the prices go up, you can buy a yearly ticket to

start on the 1st of January. This will maximise the benefit you get from the season ticket loan.

Cycling

Cycling is becoming an increasingly popular activity in London, particularly with the introduction of TfL's cycle hire system, and the Mayor's office has ongoing plans for the future of cycling across the city. Cycling can be a cheap, quick and healthy way to get around.

However, London is a challenging city for inexperienced cyclists, and you should be aware that roads are often busy and have high levels of air pollution.

Bicycle purchase loan

The ICR can alternatively provide a loan towards purchase of a bicycle and equipment. The bicycle will be owned outright and the loan is repayable over 12 months.

Please be aware that this isn't the same as the bicycle loan scheme offered to staff, which provides a tax-based deduction; student stipends are not liable to income tax so students are not eligible for this.

Cycle hire

TfL provide a cycle hire scheme (tfl.gov.uk/modes/cycling/santander-cycles). This isn't included in the Oyster ticketing system; you can use a credit card for casual use, or apply for a key fob, which gives discounts for regular users. Bikes can be hired and returned at many hire points around West, Central, North and East London—coverage in South London, however, is minimal.

Maps

Cycling maps that cover most of Greater London are produced by TfL. You can find them at some tube stations or request them for free online.

Staying safe

Generally, London is a safe city—but as with all metropolitan areas it does experience its fair share of crime.

There aren't any 'no-go' areas in London, and what feels safe to one person may feel unsafe to another.

Staying safe when flat-hunting

Landlords (and even scammers) can sometimes provide misleading adverts online—when something is cheap and looks too good to be true, it usually is. If at all possible you should try and see a property in person before renting—if there is genuine reason you cannot, ask for a video tour and take a look at the surrounding area on Google Maps. With in-person viewings, it is usually a good idea to take a friend with you. and take 15 minutes to look around the local area. Listen to your instincts, and try to imagine how you would feel at night. Your safety has to be the priority, so take any feelings of discomfort seriously. Before you make an offer, check that all of the doors and windows are lockable, too. If you aren't comfortable living alone, a flatshare might be a good way to provide some added security.

General safety

The University of London Housing Service provides some general tips for staying safe, some of which we've included below.

Stay alert

Wearing headphones or using your phone might distract you from your surroundings and make it difficult to spot trouble approaching.

Invest

Invest in things that will make you feel safe. This might include a personal alarm, a door chain, a UV pen to mark your valuables, and/or contents insurance.

Plan ahead

Think about how you will get to and from your destination, and consider what time you will be travelling. If you can, plan to travel by busy and well-lit streets, rather than quiet or badly lit alleys or parks.

Take precautions, wherever you are

It is natural to feel comfortable and safe in your own neighbourhood, but do not get complacent—take the same precautions you would anywhere else.

Further information

Housing advice

The London Student Housing Guide (housing.lon.ac.uk/housing-guides) has fantastic and comprehensive advice on all aspects of moving house and living in London, including what to look out for when viewing property, help with contract terminology, budget calculators, what to do when you move in, and staying safe.

The ULHS also offers services such as checking contracts and legal advice.

Council tax

Council tax is levied on residential properties, not inhabitants. If all residents of a property belong to certain categories, which include full-time students, it will be exempt from paying this tax. This doesn't apply if any of the residents fall outside these categories.

You may find the council tax monitor, found at the following website, useful: londoncouncils.gov.uk.

You will need to send a letter from your university to your local council, proving your student status. You can obtain a council tax exemption letter by emailing researchdegrees@icr.ac.uk.

Council tax will be charged for any period you are renting the property but are not registered as a student, even if it's the few months between your programmes of study.

Short-stay housing

Hunting for accommodation can take time and you may require short term accommodation while you are finalising your housing arrangements. There are several reasonably priced services for short term accommodation listed on the ULHS websites (housing.london.ac.uk)

General advice

If you need more information or some specific advice, please contact Registry via researchdegrees@icr.ac.uk, or the ICR Student Committee via studentcommittee@icr.ac.uk.

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Text content

Contributions from

The Student Committee (with special thanks to Carolina Bernauer, Alexia Martin, Miki Yoneyama, and Clara Leboreiro Babe)
Craig Jeffcott
Charlene Jennett
James Alexander
Nancy Darke

Graphic design

Designed by

Craig Jeffcott

Updated by

James Alexander

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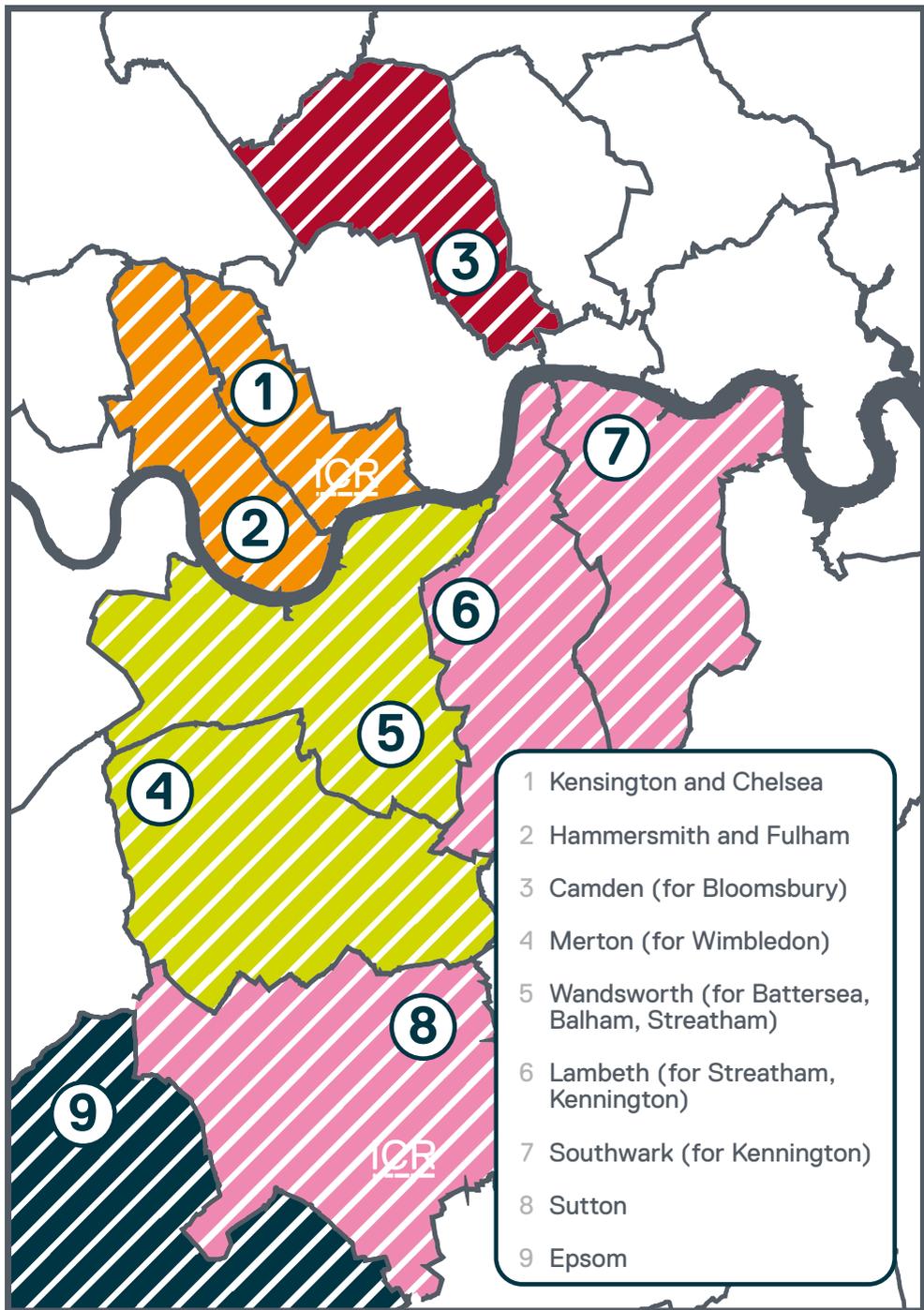
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