

London Covent Garden

Student Guide

2011



Welcome to our college

Welcome

Welcome to Kaplan International Colleges. This guide will help you make the most of your chosen course and will give you useful information that you can refer to during your stay.

So, what's studying at Kaplan really like?

You have probably already imagined what your life will be like in London. You may have ideas about life in the United Kingdom based on films, television or stories from friends and family. This guide aims to make your transition into the United Kingdom as enjoyable and easy as possible and will tell you what to expect when you attend a Kaplan college. We hope that this information will help you to form realistic expectations and encourage you to take advantage of the many opportunities ahead.

Will I be able to adjust to a new culture?

At Kaplan we understand that living in a new place may be challenging at times – but it will also be fun. You will soon meet people from around the world, try new things, and live in a different culture. One of the best ways to make sure that your transition goes smoothly is to maintain a positive attitude and stay healthy. View your new environment as a place to learn interesting things about yourself and others. Try to get enough sleep, eat properly, exercise, and participate in social activities. Take time to observe and enjoy the new things going on around you and appreciate the differences you find in your host country.

What can I expect from my classes at Kaplan?

English language training delivered at Kaplan International Colleges is designed to reflect your needs and level of English. Through a range of interesting and varied activities our curriculum focuses on all aspects of your language development: grammar, reading, listening, speaking and writing. Our students are at the centre of the learning process – you will build a solid foundation for your English, and improve your ability to communicate with accuracy and confidence in your classes.

I have more questions...

Please contact your local representative if you have more questions before you depart. After you arrive, Kaplan staff at the college will be happy to help you with any problems that you have or any questions you want to ask.

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Before you leave...

We understand that at times you may feel nervous when preparing for your stay in the United Kingdom. There are some important things you need to know before you leave that will make your life easier when you arrive. Use our checklist on the next page to ensure that you do not forget anything and you are well prepared for the exciting times ahead of you.

Pocket money

We recommend that you budget £80-100 for every week of your course. This should be enough for personal expenses, laundry, local travel and Kaplan activities. You will need additional money if you plan to rent a car, take weekend trips or travel. Bring £100 with you in cash and the rest in travellers' cheques. These should be in small denominations: £20-50 cheques if possible. Or you can use a credit card. You should not carry around large amounts of cash.

Clothing

Students dress casually for classes. You should bring some nice clothes for going out to restaurants, nightclubs etc. You should also bring clothing for sports and outdoor activities. You can usually rent sporting equipment. The climate is changeable and may be very different from your own. The typical temperature is 20 C in summer and 0 C to 10 C in winter, although it can drop below freezing. Bring warm waterproof clothing if you are arriving in autumn or winter. An umbrella would also be useful as it often rains in Britain.

Bank account

If possible, try to set up your bank account before you arrive. If you are staying for longer than six months you may be able to open up a bank account in the UK (although Kaplan cannot guarantee this). You will need to bring a wide variety of personal documentation with you to open an account. It can take a long time so make sure you have money available in the meantime. We advise you consult with your bank at home to get their advice on banking in the UK.

Electrical current

Standard voltage in the UK is 240 volts. To make sure that you are able to use all your electrical appliances bring an adaptor with you.



Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure that you have packed everything you will need and that you are well prepared for your trip to the United Kingdom. Check off each item as you pack it, or complete the task.

- Passport**
Remember to bring your passport and any other form of personal identification you may need. For example, your driving licence.
- Acceptance letter**
Pack your acceptance letter and Kaplan documentation (given to you by your Kaplan representative) in your hand luggage so that it is easy to access on arrival.
- Student visa**
Ensure that your student visa is with your passport and is stored in your hand luggage. You will need your student visa when passing through immigration.
- Homestay/residence address details**
Remember to pack your homestay or residence address details within your hand luggage so they are easy to access on your arrival. You will have received these details from your Kaplan representative.
- Accommodation factfile (homestay or residence)**
You can download the accommodation factfile from our website: www.kaplaninternational.com. This document gives further details about the accommodation.
- Proof of Health/Medical Insurance**
You must bring proof of your Health/Medical Insurance with you. Also keep a copy with your family at home in case you lose any documentation during your stay.
- £100 in cash**
Store this cash on your body or in your hand luggage. Try to avoid counting or pulling out your money in busy public places.
- Relevant payment if you are taking an exam**
If you plan to take an exam in the UK please note you'll have to pay extra at the school. The exam fee is £60 (Cambridge KET), £63 (Cambridge PET), £95 (Cambridge FCE), £63 (BEC Preliminary), £95 (BEC Vantage), £98 (BEC Higher), £113 (IELTS).
- Travellers' cheques in low denominations**
Store these on your body or in your hand luggage. Try to avoid counting or pulling out your cheques in busy public places.
- Correct clothing**
Pack something warm in your hand luggage and ensure that you are wearing layers in case you get hot.
- Adaptor for electrical appliances**
Remember standard voltage in the UK is 240 volts and the fitting may be different so bring an adaptor.
- Prescription medication**
Pack medication carefully in the original packet in case you are asked questions in customs on your departure or arrival.
- Emergency information stored in your wallet or purse!!**
This can be found on the last page of this booklet.
- Laptop**
The college provides a free wireless hotspot service, so take advantage by bringing your own computer.

When you arrive

Arriving at the airport of a foreign country can be overwhelming and stressful. You could be feeling very tired and disoriented. To better prepare yourself, make sure that you have followed the checklist and have read the information below about your arrival and how to get to your accommodation. Do not feel shy about asking airport staff for help, as most will be happy to give assistance.

Kaplan Transfers

Students should arrive at Heathrow, Gatwick, Luton or Stansted Airports. If you book a taxi transfer the driver will meet you at the airport terminal when you arrive, and will have a sign with your name on it. Kaplan Transfer Service must be arranged in advance. Transfer Service prices for 2011 are: Heathrow £85 (one way), Gatwick £95 (one way), Luton £105 (one way) and Stansted £105 (one way).

Independent Transfers

London Heathrow Airport to Central London

Underground

Piccadilly Line to Central London.

Departs every 2-3 minutes from 05.30 - 23.30hrs.

Journey time: 50 minutes approx. Price: £4.50 (one way).

Bus

National Express from LHR Terminal 3 to London Victoria Coach Station. Departs every 30 minutes from 05.45 - 23.00hrs.

Journey time: 1 hour 10 mins approx. Price: £6 (one way).

London Gatwick Airport to Central London

Train

Gatwick Express - Gatwick South Terminal to London Victoria.

Departs every 15 minutes from 05.50 - 00.50 hrs, then hourly from 01.35 until 05.20. Journey time: 30 minutes.

Price: £17 (one way).

Bus

National Express from both terminals to London Victoria.

Journey time: 1 hour 5 mins. Price: approx. £7.00 (one way).

For timetables visit www.nationalexpress.com.

Stansted/Luton Airport to Central London

Bus

Stansted - Liverpool Street. Journey time: 90 minutes.

Price: £17.50 (one way)

Train

Stansted - Liverpool Street. Journey time: 41 minutes.

Price: £20 (one way).

Luton - Kings Cross. Journey time: 30 minutes to 1 hr.

Price: £12 (one way).

King's Cross Station to Central London

Underground

Next to International Terminal. 5 minutes to Central London on Northern Line. Price £4.

Bus

No's. 1, 68, 188, 501, 502, 171 every 2-3 minutes to Central London. Price: £2 (one way).

Your first day

On the first day of your course you need to report to the college reception at 8.30am with your Kaplan documents and passport. Your first day will be a Monday unless there is a public holiday on the Monday, in which case your first day will be Tuesday.

Your course will begin with an all-day introduction that will include:

- Completion of forms and collection of any outstanding payments
- A Placement Test to determine the level of the course you require
- A welcome talk by the Principal or Director of Studies
- Information about your classes
- Information about the college and area
- An overview of college activities and excursions
- An introduction to Structured Study
- A tour of the college and facilities

You will also receive information about your class schedule, classroom number, study level, Specific Skills course, and the hours you are to attend class. We will put you in the most suitable class for your level of English.

Please bring your Kaplan documents, your full London address, your passport and pen and paper for note-taking purposes.



College Facilities

Classrooms

There are 14 classrooms which are bright and comfortable. Each room can seat a maximum of 15 students. All rooms are complete with desks and chairs and a whiteboard. There are televisions, DVDs and overhead projectors available for lessons.

Resource Centre

There are 16 computers in the multimedia centre along with a vast collection of learning software for students to use. The multimedia centre is a great place to utilise technology to maximise your learning.

Self Access Area

The college has a well established library with text books, self-study materials, books, magazines, CDs and DVDs.

Student Lounge

The student common room is an attractive and welcoming room overlooking the garden. There are 4 computers which students can use for email while relaxing with friends. The college has free wireless connection so students can get online on their own laptop computers from anywhere in the college.

Cafeteria

The college doesn't have a cafeteria but there are many shops nearby where students can buy their lunches. Students can eat in the common room or on the patio outside in nice weather.

Sports facilities

The activities coordinator can help with organising outdoor sports events which usually take place in public parks e.g. football

Gym facilities

Students are able to join the local gym for indoor sports and fitness training.

Activities/Social Programme

Kaplan arranges a full schedule of excursions and activities including excursions to the famous museums, clubbing evenings in Soho and West End theatre trips.



Kaplan students in a classroom



Multimedia room

College Timetable

Below is an example timetable. Class times are subject to change and you should only use this timetable as an example of what type of structure to expect.

Classes are from Monday to Friday and you could have classes either in the morning or in the afternoon.

Morning timetable

08.30 - 10.00	Class
10.00 - 10.15	Break
10.15 - 11.45	Class
11.45 - 12.00	Break
12.00 - 13.30	Elective

Afternoon timetable

12.00 - 13.30	Elective
13.30 - 14.00	Break
14.00 - 15.30	Class
15.30 - 15.45	Break
15.45 - 17.15	Class

Local Information

Transport - buses and trains

London has a very efficient public transport network of buses, trains and tubes. Daily, weekly and monthly Travelcards can be bought for cheaper travel around London. If your course is 14 weeks or longer you can get a 30% discount on your Travelcard. The college reception can give you a Student Travelcard application form.

Banks and Post Office

There are numerous banks and Post Offices in the immediate vicinity of the college. Post boxes are red and located on many street corners.

Restaurants and cafés

London is renowned for excellent restaurants, cafés and pubs catering for all tastes and preferences. Many of these are within walking distance of the college.

Department stores and supermarkets

There are many supermarkets nearby which are often a good economical option for lunches. Oxford Street, with its many fashionable shops and department stores, is within walking distance of the college.

Telephone and Internet

There are public telephones within a 5-minute walk of the college. Students are advised to buy phone cards from the college reception for long distance calls and call in the evenings or on weekends as it is cheaper then. You can also buy UK SIM cards from reception to use in your mobile phone. Internet and email can be accessed in the common room via Kaplan computers or through your own laptop and the wireless hotspots.

Places of worship

There are places of worship for all religions and faiths close to the college. A list of these and their locations is posted at the college.

Cost of Living

Approximate prices in GBP

Sandwich	£3.50
Lunch	£5.00
Hamburger	£5.99
Meal in restaurant	£15
Tea / coffee	£1.50+
Tickets:	
Cinema	£10-12
Bus (per journey)	£2.00
Weekly travelcard or equivalent (approx. per week)	£30.00



Patio garden



Reception



Kaplan students



Tower Bridge

Sample Activities Schedule

Please note that this is a sample programme and activities may change. See a current activities schedule at: www.kaplaninternational.com

Week one

Monday	Welcome drinks in a traditional pub - £4
Tuesday	The British Museum - free
Wednesday	Play football - £5 / Trip to see professional football match - £25-£45
Thursday	Tate Modern Art Museum - free
Friday	Clubbing in Soho - £20-£40
Saturday	Excursion to Bath - £52

Week two

Monday	National Portrait Gallery - free
Tuesday	Shopping in Covent Garden
Wednesday	West End Theatre Trip - £25
Thursday	Cruise on the Thames to Hampton Court - £10.50
Friday	Curry night in Brick Lane - £10
Saturday	Picnic on Hampstead Heath - £5

Half-day excursion prices range from £15 to £20.

Full-day excursion prices range from £30 to 65.

Homestay accommodation

Homestay in the UK can include many different types of homes and families. They include young, senior and single parent families and couples with and without children. Hosts have varying ethnic backgrounds and different interests and lifestyles. Please refer to the United Kingdom homestay accommodation factfile for more details.

Your life in a homestay

Living in a homestay will allow you to practise your English in a real-life setting. It is important to remember that you are both part of a family and a guest at the same time. You may have to help with household chores, keep your bedroom tidy and make your bed each morning. Make sure that you always ask for permission to invite friends and remember to ask before you change channels on the television!

Meals

Breakfast: Breakfast is usually a light meal consisting of cereal, fruit, toast, juice or coffee. Hosts will usually ask you to prepare your own breakfast.

Lunch: You will be responsible for buying your own lunch at the college, from a local restaurant or the local shops.

Dinner: You will usually eat dinner with your host, or occasionally you may prepare your own meal with food supplied by your host.

What to bring

You can buy toiletries and other personal items in the local shops, but if you have specific items that you need, you should bring them with you. Your host will provide you with bed sheets, pillow case and towels. If you have any prescription medications that you are required to take, you should bring a supply with you. Although not required, some students like to bring a small token of their country as a house gift upon arrival at their host home.

Telephone use

You should buy a phone card or use your own mobile phone to make telephone calls. Your host's telephone should only be used for emergency incoming calls. Remember to notify your family back home of any time differences to avoid calls in the middle of the night. It is often very expensive to make international calls from a home line, which is why we recommend using a phone card.

Laundry facilities

In London, homestay hosts provide 1 free washload per week. For any additional washloads students must pay £5 per load.

Getting to and from college

Your host will help you to find your way to and from college on your first day and will show you how to use public transport. Journey time will depend on the location of your homestay. Your college will give you more information about this. Please refer to the UK and Ireland accommodation factfile for more details.

Smoking

When you book your accommodation, please request a host that allows smoking if you smoke. Most hosts will ask smokers to smoke outside. Always ask your host on arrival for their specific house rules regarding smoking. It is general courtesy to ask someone for permission to smoke next to them, even if you are outside. Restaurants will not allow you to smoke inside.

Things to remember...

- You are a guest as well as part of the family
- You may have to take part in family chores
- Buy a phone card for international calls
- Do not hang your laundry to dry in your room
- Ask permission to have a friend come to visit you
- Notify your host if you are not coming home for dinner
- Notify your host if you are not coming home for the night
- Ask permission to smoke

Residential accommodation

Please refer to the relevant London accommodation factfile for more details about your specific residence.

What to bring

The residence includes appliances and furniture. In the kitchen you will find a cooker, microwave, fridge, freezer and crockery and utensils to prepare your food. You will be given linen, duvets and pillows upon arrival. Personal toiletry items can be bought locally, but you must bring towels.

Phone Use

You will have access to a telephone for incoming and outgoing calls. You must buy a phone card upon arrival to use for calling out. Please limit your calls to 20 minutes. You can buy a phone card at college reception or at local shops. Some phone cards will be cheaper for calling home to your country. Ask reception staff for advice when buying your phone card.

Laundry facilities

There are laundry facilities in the basement. Average cost per load of washing is approximately £5. An iron and ironing board are available for you to do your own ironing.

Security

You are responsible for keeping your own room secure. Kaplan is not responsible for items that are lost or stolen from the accommodation. Keep your personal belongings safely stored. Kaplan advises you to have your own Travel Insurance to cover any loss or theft.

Going to and from college

The residences are a 25-minute journey by Underground from the college.

Things to remember...

- Buy a phone card to make telephone calls
- Keep your valuables hidden in a safe place

Private accommodation

Only students aged 18 and over are permitted to go into private accommodation. If you are 16 or 17 years old you will be housed in a homestay and should be home by 11 pm each night.

If you are over 18 here are some tips if you want to find your own apartment or share a house with friends:

- Ask the Accommodation Officer for a list of good local letting agencies or if they know of any accommodation to rent locally.
- Check whether the accommodation you are going to see is in a safe area.
- Take a friend with you when you go to view any accommodation.
- If you are sharing an apartment or house find out who has access to the accommodation.
- Make sure the accommodation has a recent safety certificate - all cookers, electric fires are safe and smoke alarms are fitted. Make sure you switch everything off before you leave the accommodation each day.
- Make sure your room is secure and that you have insurance for your laptop, camera, TV, DVD, personal music player and other valuable items.

Health and Safety

If you or a friend is seriously ill or has had an accident call 999. Stay calm and describe to the operator on the line what type of help you need (ambulance, fire or police) and your location. You may be required to describe any symptoms. Explain as much as you can, don't worry if you are not confident with your English - say as much as you can, as clearly as you can. For further information on health and safety in the UK visit the British council website at www.britishcouncil.org/educ-safety-first.pdf.

Medical insurance

All students must have medical insurance for the duration of their stay in the UK. Students need to organise their own medical insurance before they travel. Kaplan does not offer travel and medical insurance in the UK, but students can either use the link on the Kaplan International Colleges website to book travel and medical insurance directly with an insurance provider, or they can choose their own.

If you get sick

If you get sick while you are in the United Kingdom you should visit a doctor. You can ask the Welfare Officer or your homestay host where the nearest doctor is. If you have a minor illness you can often ask staff at a local chemist for advice. If you are ill, make an appointment to see a doctor and take any relevant insurance or medical documentation with you. You may be required to register with your local doctor.

Medical costs are at the discretion of your local doctor or hospital. A guide to costs in the United Kingdom are as follows:

- A consultation with a doctor (minimum £40)
- Prescriptions at a chemist (minimum £6.50 per item)
- Dental treatment (minimum £50)
- Eye tests or new glasses (minimum £30)

Protecting your belongings

We strongly recommend that you take out insurance for your personal belongings, especially cameras, personal music player and laptop computer. Personal items cannot be covered by Kaplan homestay or residence insurance. You can cover these items with your own personal travel insurance. Please make sure that you are properly covered in case of loss or theft.

■ Things to remember...

- Call 999 in case of fire, medical emergency or need for the police.
- You must have medical insurance to attend a Kaplan course.

Laws and customs

You may find that laws of the UK differ from those in your home country. You must obey the country's laws and respect its customs. It is important that you understand the laws, rules and customs that you may encounter.

Laws

- No one under the age of 18 in the United Kingdom may buy or consume alcohol, cigarettes and tobacco. It is against the law to buy alcohol, cigarettes and tobacco for someone you know to be under the age of 18.
- Driving under the influence of alcohol is a very serious crime and police make regular random checks.
- Buying, selling and using drugs (including cannabis) is illegal.

The police and Kaplan are very strict in enforcing these laws.

Kaplan's rules

Kaplan has rules that must not be broken. These rules may apply to academic work at college as well as life in your residence or homestay.

- If you leave your Kaplan course, the government may take away your student visa and advise you to return home.
- You must attend all classes. If you do not attend classes your representative will be informed. If a student is under 18, parents will also be informed. If you do not then improve your attendance you will be sent home.
- Always tell Kaplan if you are going to be absent from college for any reason and tell your homestay host if you are going away overnight.
- If you commit a criminal offence or have to be severely disciplined you will be sent home and no refund will be given. We will also inform the immigration authorities.
- Be on time for all your lessons.

Customs

Customs are an accepted way of behaviour in a country. You need to know the customs of the United Kingdom to help you feel comfortable with people. Some important customs to know include:

Women: Women in the United Kingdom are equal to men and should always be treated fairly. Men and women share equally in household work and childcare.

Queues: Always stand in line and wait your turn when buying tickets, in a bank, post office or waiting for a bus. Keep to the right when standing on escalators.

Friendliness: English people talk to strangers in public areas. This is a great way to practise English, but caution should be taken. You should not give out your address and telephone number, or accept inappropriate invitations. Although most people are friendly, some may be reluctant to speak with strangers.

Please and Thank you: These are very important words! Always use them if you ask someone to do something for you, or if they help you or give you information.

Things to remember...

- If you are under 18 years of age it is illegal to drink alcohol
- Buying, selling and using drugs (including cannabis) is illegal
- Notify Kaplan if you are going to be absent from college
- Women are treated equally to men in the UK
- Remember to say please and thank you

Important Dates to Remember

National Holidays 2011

New Year's Day	01/01/2011
Good Friday	22/04/2011
Easter Monday	25/04/2011
May Holiday	02/05/2011
May Holiday	30/05/2011
August Holiday	29/08/2011
Christmas Day Holiday	25/12/2011
Boxing Day Holiday	26/12/2011

The dates above are the dates for observed holidays in the year 2011. For holiday dates in other years, consult your Kaplan representative. If you arrive on a week where the Monday is a national holiday, your first day of college will be a Tuesday.

There will be no classes for 2 weeks in December as the school will be closed for Christmas. Students enrolled in the Academic Year Programme will also have 2 to 3 weeks of vacation during their stay. Please refer to the Kaplan brochure or your Kaplan representative for further details on these holidays.

**We look forward to seeing you at Kaplan International College London.
If you have additional questions please ask our staff on arrival.**

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KAPLAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGES

Keep these numbers with you at all times!

Emergency Kaplan Number:
+44 (0) 7802 274758

Emergency Number (Police, Fire, Ambulance):
999

Information in this guide is subject to change. Published September 2010.