

# Mature Students

There are many advantages to coming to College as a mature student. You will have many life skills and experiences behind you that you can bring to the learning environment. Generally speaking you will know yourself better now compared to when you were 18, you will know how you work best to maximise your skills and you will be clearer on what you want out of the College experience.

One of the first observations that mature students make is that it can feel like you are surrounded by a sea of 18 year olds. Don't let this phase you, 30% of the student population are mature students.

*"(I remember) feeling about 75 years old when I sat on my own in the student bar, having failed to link up with the mature student bash that was going on (I was in the wrong place!) But realising that it was ok to be there and overcoming my own resistance to enter the student world."*

Quote from a Mature Student

## Key tips

1. Know where and when you are enrolling and what documents you need to bring with you.
2. If you have commitments at home try to arrange more cover than you think you will need, especially in the first few weeks so that you have time to get to know the College and your fellow students.
3. Read through the information you have been sent by your School so that you know what to expect and who to look out for.
4. Make sure that you have your finances in place, especially if you have children, caring responsibilities and/or a disability. Speak to a Student Adviser if you think you have not claimed everything or to check your student funding award.
5. Do not be overwhelmed by any reading lists that you are given and do not rush out to buy all the books that are suggested. You may find that you do not need all of them; some of them will be in the library and others you will be able to pick up second hand
6. Find out who your Personal Tutor is and arrange to meet with them. Personal Tutors should approach you for a meeting and are a valuable source of support
7. If you do begin to feel overwhelmed remember that it is normal to feel this way, that you are here on merit

and deserve your place as much as the next person and that it is ok to talk to someone about how you are feeling either in Student Support or in your School.

## Studying

If you have been away from studying for some time this may be one of the areas of College life that you are most concerned about. Study support is arranged through your School and it varies across the institution. In some Schools students have to take part in subject specific study development course as part of their credit framework, in other Schools optional short term sessions are arranged and in all Schools students are encouraged to approach their Personal or Academic Tutor if help is needed.

*"...getting through the 1st year with a good grade, meeting so many new people and realising that being a mature student puts you in a much better stead than even I realised."*

The **English Language Centre** offers study skills drop-ins and classes for all King's students and staff. All the support is free, runs throughout the academic year, and focuses on the language and study skills that will help you make the most of your time at King's

## There are two types of support available:

- ♦ In-sessional (if English is not your first language)
- ♦ Study Skills support (for native or near-native English speakers)

## Support available includes:

- ♦ effective reading, research and note-taking skills
- ♦ writing clear and well structured essays
- ♦ referencing your work
- ♦ giving effective presentations
- ♦ revising for and taking exams
- ♦ time management and other study skills

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## Practice

Work out what works best for you. Try different styles of making notes in lectures and or researching in the library. Re-read your notes the day after taking them and see if they make sense to you. Ask other people what techniques work for them when they are organising their time. Some people find brainstorming issues helpful – others use ‘spider’ diagrams to put all their thoughts on paper. Soon you will develop your own style.

## Study groups

If you are finding that you need help then one option is to organise a study group with others on your programme. All libraries have ‘Group study areas’ where you can work together. If you have caring responsibilities it is important that you allow yourself some childcare or other cover for study time as well as lectures and seminars.

## Study Skill Guides

There are a number of very useful guides available both in the library and good bookshops that offer sound advice on ways to improve your study skills. Although these are not the only ones available we do recommend:

- Cottrell, Stella, *The Study Skills Handbook (3rd Edition)* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) RRP: £12.99
- Crème, Phyllis and Mary R. Lea, *Writing At University: A Guide for Students (2nd Edition)* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2006) RRP: £14.99
- Rose, Jean, *The Mature Student’s Guide to Writing (2nd Edition)* (London: Palgrave, 2001) RRP: £13.99

[www.palgrave.com/studyskills/index.asp](http://www.palgrave.com/studyskills/index.asp)

## Academic Support

All students are assigned a **Personal Tutor** when they come to College. If you are having trouble organising your work, prioritising what you need to do to complete your assignments and are generally concerned about your progress – talk to your tutor. They can access College resources on how to help students study well.

**Academic Services** are responsible for the College’s regulations. On enrolment you will be given an overview of the regulations, *College regulations: a guide for students*, which is also available from the

Policy zone on the College website along with the full-text of all the regulations. They can provide you, by email or telephone, general regulatory advice, official interpretations, and information on applications for waivers, suspensions and restrictions of access to PhD theses. Contact details on their website:

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/about/structure/admin/acservices/>

KCLSU has its own **Academic Advice Service**, which all students at King’s College London can access throughout the year. **KCLSU** is here to support you throughout your educational experience and if you need to talk to someone about changing your course, appealing an exam result or preparing for a College committee. The service is free, impartial and confidential and they are happy to refer students to other services within the College where appropriate.

## Using the Library

Integral to your academic experience is using the library. **Information Services and Systems (ISS)** run libraries on all of the four main teaching sites. At the Strand campus the Maughan library is five minutes walk away on Chancery Lane.

Library services are available on all King’s campuses to support teaching and research activity. The collections reflect the subject interests of the departments based on that site

## Student Finance

Both the **Student Funding Office** and the **Student Advice Service** are available to assist you with your Student Finance needs.

The Student Funding Office at King’s is designed to assist you on any matter related to student funding, including information on tuition fees, bursaries, scholarships, student loans and the additional financial help available at King’s to assist you in your studies (e.g. Access to Learning Fund). However for one-to-one support on budgeting, debt management, or financial planning please contact a Student Adviser. This Service can also advise on benefits and how to maximise you income, funding complaints, housing problems, consumer issues and much more.

Both service websites contain a great deal of useful information on this topic and the additional support available within King’s. If you are not sure where to start or who to speak to call the Student Advice Line 020 7848 6858 (Mon, Weds and Fri 10.00-16.00).

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Please note: Full-time students are usually exempt from paying Council Tax (please see our *FAQs Council Tax* Guidance Sheet). You can request an Exemption Certificates from the Compass.

The Student Advisers also advise on housing rights, consumer rights, employment, childcare and immigration.

### Other sources of assistance

The **Accommodation Service** co-ordinates student applications to the King's residences. We have found that the majority of mature students choose not to live in College accommodation. You may already live in London or feel that communal living is not for you. However if you do have accommodation difficulties during your time at College, you may wish to contact the Accommodation Office or the University of London Accommodation Office for advice.

[www.kcl.ac.uk/accomm](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/accomm)

It's never too early to visit the **Careers Service**. Being part of The Careers Group, University of London, King's students have access to an incredible wealth of information and resources. Trained staff can assist with psychometric testing, C.V. writing, career planning, short term placements or work and postgraduate study. [www.careers.lon.ac.uk/](http://www.careers.lon.ac.uk/)

**The College Dean** has religious and spiritual oversight within the College community in accordance with the purpose for which the College was established. This includes overseeing the provision of multi-faith facilities. The Dean also runs the Associate of King's College programme (AKC). You can study on this unique course alongside your chosen subject, giving you the unique opportunity to think about theology, philosophy and ethics in a contemporary context. [www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/dean/](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/dean/)

A full-time Anglican Chaplain heads the **College Chaplaincy**, which additionally includes Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Free Churches Chaplains, and part-time Chaplains at the Guy's and Waterloo campuses. The Chaplains are available to see any member of College on any matter in complete confidence. They can be contacted through the Chaplaincy offices in the first instance. The Rabbi to Jewish students in London visits King's and works as an associate of the Chaplaincy.

[www.kcl.ac.uk/chaplaincy](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/chaplaincy)

Muslim prayer rooms are located on the main campuses and the Chapels or quiet rooms are available for all staff and students who wish to drop in for private reflection and prayer and throughout the week. Full details are available from the Chaplaincy website. In addition, **KCLSU** has several faith-related student societies, including Christian, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish and Sikh.

Your School has a School Disability Adviser who liaises with and is supported by the **Disability and Dyslexia Service**. If you have a disability you can contact the service to arrange support. It may be that you have not previously declared this disability to the College – this is your right but it may restrict the speed at which we can support you. It is always best to let your Personal Tutor or the Disability and Dyslexia Service know of your disability so that they can arrange support. If you wish your disability to remain confidential and only disclosed on a need to know basis then please make this clear to the member of staff you are talking to. <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/about/structure/admin/facser/support/dds/>

### Frequently asked questions

- **Why is it that all the younger students seem to be doing so well despite putting in less effort than me?**

A complicated question! First of all just because someone appears to be doing well does not mean that things are ok for them. In the first term for an 18-21 year old undergraduate it is often the first time living both away from home and independently. This can mean that they express this by living an active social life on top of their studies. This does calm down later in the first year and certainly on into subsequent years.

Naturally it can be annoying if you are relying on a fellow student to attend clinical meetings, study seminars or presentations with you and they come under prepared. If this persists and it is having a detrimental effect on your studies then talk to them about it and if this has no effect talk to your tutor. Secondly, age has something to do with it. We all know that as we get older it can take us longer to do things. And don't forget most of the other students will have come straight from school so will be used to being in the learning environment. The important thing for you is 'How are you

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doing?’ in light of what you have to do and want to achieve rather than what others are doing. If you do find you are feeling like this then talk to other mature students for support.

- **What do I do if I know I am going to miss an essay or submission deadline?**

Speak to your personal tutor as soon as possible and let them know why your piece of work is going to be late. They may be able to help you by extending the deadline although in most cases you will need to have mitigating evidence. If you are having academic problems that lead to your late submission then speak to your tutor. It may be that you need some guidance in working more effectively

- **How do I check how I am doing on my course?**

Speak to your Personal Tutor or your Academic Adviser (depending on how things are set up in your School). Experience shows us that mature students are often over anxious about their progression and usually are doing well on their programmes.

All students worry about what is expected of them. You will instinctively get to know how you are doing during your time at College and this concern will diminish as time progresses.

- **I've never used IT before – where can I get help?**

The Training and Development Unit run some courses for students on how to use some of the most common packages. In both the main libraries as well as in dedicated rooms there is what's called 'PAWS' stations(Public Access Work Stations). These rooms are for students to use when e-mailing, word processing and researching the internet. Libraries have E-mail help desks.

Students are allowed to bring their laptops into the libraries but are not allowed to connect them to the network.

- **What if there is a family crisis and I am not able to attend College for a period of time?**

From time to time things will happen that mean that you cannot come to College for a period of time. There may be a breakdown in your childcare arrangements or a member of your family may become unwell and needs your assistance. If this is the case let your department know as soon as possible.

If it looks like this will be a prolonged absence then you will need to arrange to be kept up to date with lecture notes. On some programmes it may mean missing compulsory course work placements – it may be that you will be allowed to make this up at another point but it may also mean that you have to repeat this chunk of the year before you are allowed to progress.

It is therefore difficult to suggest how each individual department would be able to support you. The best thing to do is to talk to them as soon as possible and be aware that they will be understanding and will do what they can to help you.

### Need further advice or information?

#### **Student Advice & International Student Support** *Casework & Guidance*

Student Advice Line: 020 7848 6858  
Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00-16.00  
[advice@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:advice@kcl.ac.uk) [www.kcl.ac.uk/advice](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/advice)

**The Compass** *Information and letters*  
020 7848 7070 [thecompass@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:thecompass@kcl.ac.uk)  
[www.kcl.ac.uk/thecompass](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/thecompass)

**Student Funding Office**  
*Applications and funding information*  
Locations and telephone numbers on website  
[funding@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:funding@kcl.ac.uk) [www.kcl.ac.uk/funding](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/funding).

**The Counselling Service** *Emotional support*  
Locations and telephone numbers on website  
[counselling@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@kcl.ac.uk)  
[www.kcl.ac.uk/counselling](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/counselling)

**The Chaplaincy** *Pastoral and spiritual support*  
Locations and telephone numbers on website  
[chaplaincy@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:chaplaincy@kcl.ac.uk)  
[www.kcl.ac.uk/chaplaincy](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/chaplaincy)

**The English Language Centre**  
*English language and study skills support*  
Location and contact details on website  
[www.kcl.ac.uk/elc](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/elc)

**King's College London, Students' Union (KCLSU)**  
*Student activities and academic advice*  
020 7848 1588 [advice@kclsu.org](mailto:advice@kclsu.org)  
[www.kclsu.org](http://www.kclsu.org)