1. Bring community interests into the classroom

King’s has an interdisciplinary, problem-oriented and outward-facing ethos reflecting its long-standing commitment to “service to society”. The majority of King’s students are exposed to real world and local cases, problems and examples in teaching content, with 63% of students reporting that such examples are used ‘often’ and ‘very often’, and a further 30% reporting that such examples are ‘sometimes’ used. The pedagogic case for this approach is strong. Bringing community interests into the classroom has clear benefits for students; developing increased self-confidence, focus and motivation, empathy, openness to diversity and difference and the ability to apply knowledge and skills to authentic problems and situations. These skills equip students for employment and life beyond the university.

**Put it into practice:** Get students to design and create projects that can extend the boundaries of the university, for example writing up a business plan for a local charity or designing a smart phone application for social use. Allow students to use local communities for their projects and dissertations; this is common practice in such disciplines as Law, Education, Pharmacy and Engineering. Emphasise ‘impact’ aspects of your own research within your teaching to give visibility to community interests in research excellence.

2. Take advantage of London’s cultural capital

London is our campus. It is a city with a wealth of world-class learning environments. King’s central position means special access to Whitehall, Westminster, professional London, the City, media, culture and the arts. The College is associated with the wider University of London and our Strand campus adjoins the Courtauld Institute and Gallery at Somerset House. Departments at King’s already use national and international resources such as the British Film Institute, British Museum and Globe Theatre for fieldwork, using national collections as teaching resources and collaborating with curators, librarians and other experts to develop and deliver highly specialist content. However, only 15.8% of students reported participating in fieldtrips, visits and offsite activities related to their programme in the past academic year, suggesting that far more could be made of the College’s unique connection to the capital.

**Put it into practice:** Use the community to broaden and enrich programmes. Develop connections beyond King’s with a view to developing learning opportunities and resources in the capital. Encourage students to make the most of London in their own time, alongside study fieldtrips and excursions. Encourage students to keep a field notebook to articulate and reflect on the practice and theory of their subject in action outside the classroom. Supply prompts for field activities; these might include interviewing a professional in the field, or including evidence of skills developed during fieldwork activities.

3. Emphasise and publicise College and London-wide events for students to attend

Aside from London’s wealth of permanent public buildings and collections, the capital also benefits from visiting international exhibitions and events, amongst a calendar of regular local London occasions and events (for example the Olympic and Paralympic Games, London Fashion Week). London’s diary can engage students in once-in-a-lifetime learning experiences.

**Put it into practice:** Engage with networks and community experts in your field to discover forthcoming events that may have relevance for your students. Highlight sources for information about events, workshops and lectures that fall outside formal study for your students through face-to-face teaching, but also through other physical and virtual channels. Encourage students to attend talks and events that are not timetabled, at King’s, at other London academic institutions and universities, and beyond.
4. Promote volunteering
Nationally, over 15% of first year undergraduate students volunteer – and this percentage is highest in higher ranking universities. At King’s, 9.5% of students report volunteering through KCLSU. An additional 24% of students have volunteered through other organisations in the last academic year. Notably, a further quarter of King’s students plan to volunteer during the remainder of their studies. Volunteers bring benefits to local, national and international communities, whilst gaining experience and skills.

**Put it into practice:** Encourage your students to investigate volunteering opportunities through KCLSU and other routes. Highlight particular opportunities that have a disciplinary angle with relevance to study.

5. Develop outreach and community work
King’s has many established outreach programmes that foster connections with local communities, widening participation in King’s programmes and encouraging transitions into higher education from South London schools. The diversity of outreach across King’s provides many students with distinctive and rich learning experiences. Mentoring schemes, school visits and work with disadvantaged groups also raise the aspirations of individuals (especially young people) in the local community. Some departments also have strong connections to particular strands of community work, supplying support and practical help through advice and skills (legal, medical, educational).

**Put it into practice:** Highlight the benefits of outreach opportunities open within your department, for communities and for students. This can be an opportunity to put learning into practice and reflect upon the value of study.

6. Bring in community-based experts for teaching
69% of King’s students report that their programme has drawn on community-based experts for teaching (e.g. service users, professionals and others from outside academia) in the past academic year. London’s community of experts can engage students in powerful learning experiences. They can also help students critically engage with notions of expertise and knowledge-making.

**Find out more**
**Volunteering**
KCLSU Volunteering and Fundraising
www.kclsu.org/volunteering
Reach Out and Inspire (student outreach)
www.kclsu.org/reachout
Do-It Volunteering Made Easy www.do-it.org.uk
Volunteering England www.volunteering.org.uk
Team London
www.london.gov.uk/priorities/volunteering
King’s Experience London Award
www.kcl.ac.uk/london-award

**Examples of London institutions with research-based programmes**
British Film Institute www.bfi.org.uk
British Library www.bl.uk
National Theatre www.nationaltheatre.org.uk
Royal Institution www.rigb.org
Royal Society www.royalsociety.org
Southbank Centre www.southbankcentre.co.uk
Tate Galleries www.tate.org.uk

This briefing is one of a series of KLI Quick Guides focussed on curriculum enhancement. Guides can be found at www.kcl.ac.uk/kings-quickguides
Guides are updated during the academic year. If you have comments or contributions to make, please contact kli@kcl.ac.uk

7. Engage your students’ pre-standing community connections
King’s core mission is ‘in the service of society’. Many students are already engaged within King’s, its student communities, union and local London communities through societies, sports, voluntary work, residential associations, religious groups, care work and other activities. Other students will also contribute to development projects at a national and international level. 65% of students feel King’s actively encourages them to become a better informed and active citizen. Recognition is available for students already engaged in their communities.

**Put it into practice:** Encourage students to pursue the King’s Experience London Award to gain recognition for work they are already undertaking.