




**Postgraduate Handbook  
2010/11**

**in association with the:**





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There are plenty of opportunities for casual work in the Union. With different pay rates and shifts available at all times of the day, there is sure to be a position that fits in with your studies.

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Stewarding Team  
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# Welcome to Imperial

Welcome to Imperial and the start of your postgraduate degree. As a member of Imperial College London you are also a full member of Imperial College Union, a democratic, student-led organisation. So what is the Union all about?

## We are the Union

We represent your views about your education and research at all levels of the College; run campaigns to make sure your welfare is being looked after; have nearly 300 clubs and societies which you can join and run; two bars, a nightclub and two shops, all to bring you the best prices and best university experience possible.

Getting involved in the Union through sport, drama, music, campaigning or standing up for students' views is a way to make your mark on one of the best universities in the world and have a great time doing it. Clubs and societies are open to all students, from first year undergraduates to final year PhD students. It is no coincidence that Imperial has the most clubs and societies, and the most active students in the country. We are engineers, scientists and medics; we are proactive by nature and dedicated from the start.

## How to get Involved

Well, you can start by having a look around and coming to the newly renovated bars! We offer meals during the day and in the evening, as well as great drinks prices. Whether you like live music, clubbing or a quiet drink with your friends, you'll find it here.

As to how to get involved in our representation network, your course or group will be having elections soon for



**Alex Kendall**  
**Union President**

representatives. The Union provides full support to you if you are elected as well as training, giving you the confidence to stand up for your peers. Furthermore, Imperial is exceptional in that it is home to the excellent Graduate Students' Association, a democratic body within the Union focussed exclusively on postgraduates.

As for activities, there is not enough space here to give credit to the fantastic work the clubs and societies do, each run by a committee of volunteer students. Have a look at what's on offer during Freshers' Fair (which you are actively encouraged to attend despite the undergraduate-orientated name!), online or in the Clubs, Societies & Projects Handbook.

Remember, the Union is run by students, so if you have a problem or an idea, come and see us!

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# What is ICU?

Imperial College Union is the Students' Union of Imperial College London and our purpose is to support, represent and entertain the students of Imperial College. All students at Imperial are automatically members of the Union.

This booklet expands upon the topics outlined below, detailing what you can use ICU for and how you can get the most out of your Union.

## What do we do?

There are three core functions of the Union: representation and welfare, entertainments and clubs and societies.

We run numerous facilities including a range of bars, a nightclub, a café, a shop and a newsagent. The final phase of the Union's latest refurbishment involved a major overhaul of our bars and clubs which will be ready in time for Welcome Week at the start the autumn term.

We are also here to help the students of Imperial in both the good times and the bad, which is why we provide an extensive welfare network. The Advice Centre can help with any problems you might have.



But the Union is not just buildings and shops. With around 300 Clubs, Societies & Projects we provide the widest range of sporting, recreational and social activities of any university in the country. Postgraduates can join any of the Clubs, Societies & Projects within ICU and you'll have the chance to see them all demonstrating their activities during Welcome Week.

## Who are we?

The Union is run by a team of elected officers, volunteers and full-time staff who all work together to ensure we provide the best services we can for students. The President, on the opposing page, and the Deputy Presidents, who you'll meet further on in this booklet, head the Union. They are all current Imperial students on a gap-year or at the end of their studies.

Their jobs are to represent all students at Imperial and their doors are always open (unless they are at a meeting representing you!), so if you have any queries or problems, whatsoever, make sure you get in touch with them. Feel free to just waltz into their offices issuing demands; they thrive on helping others!



**Here to represent and help you:  
The Union Sabbatical Officers**

# Representing you

Hey! I'm Alex and I will be your Deputy President (Education) for this academic year. As DPE, my role is to oversee the representation network for both undergraduates and postgraduates here at Imperial. I make sure that any minor academic issues you are having are solved in the early stages and I represent you on larger issues by sitting on numerous College boards.

## Postgraduate surveys

As DPE I monitor the results of student surveys. These surveys allow Imperial to collect anonymous feedback, which can then be benchmarked against those of other institutions. This information provides the foundation upon which we can introduce improvements; we make sure that recurring problems are acted on, and new issues are not swept under the carpet!

Some surveys you may come across are the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), depending on your course. They only take a few minutes to complete, so make sure that you take the time to do so!

## Enacting real change

The Union is not just about collecting data, but rather acting on it and we have achieved noteworthy results within College in the past. A few years ago, students in their writing-up stage were not considered active students within College. This meant that they did not have library or departmental swipe-card access and were also not exempt from paying Council Tax. The Union fought successfully to have this policy changed.



**Alex Dahinten**  
**Deputy President**  
**(Education)**

On top of this, we also pressured College to agree on paying the full "London weighting" to PhD students, which all Imperial students now receive. These are just a couple of examples of how postgraduate complaints have led to real policy changes and they demonstrate just how important the Union is as an organisation when representing and improving conditions for postgraduate students.

Like the rest of the Sabbatical team, I run an open door policy, so don't hesitate to drop-in for a chat should you need some guidance on anything ranging from problems with your supervisor to academic appeal procedures. Best of luck with your studies and I'm sure you'll enjoy your time at Imperial!

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**Deena Blumenkrantz**  
**GSA President**

Hello, I'm Deena, this year's Graduate Students' Association President. Over the next few pages you'll learn all about the GSA, how it operates and how it represents you. But first, I thought I'd introduce myself and share some of my reflections on postgraduate life at Imperial.

## My PhD motivation

October marks the beginning of my third year as a postgraduate at Imperial. I am doing a PhD in Molecular Virology, specifically focusing on understanding transmission of Influenza. Previously, I worked in an Immunology-based lab at Imperial, but switched to Virology because I felt I needed to get to know my enemy better. As a young child my mother drove the idea into my head that preemptive care was the best way to tackle disease, so I went into the field of medical research wanting to make vaccines. Research is great for dreaming of what you might be able to do in the future, but meanwhile, back on earth, I

aim to find links between genetic sequences and molecular function, in the hope that I find something new and publish!

## My vision for the postgraduate experience

Having experienced the representation structure at many levels within Imperial, I have great hopes for this year. My aim is to make the GSA work like a well-oiled machine of information through collaboration with staff and volunteers at College and within the Union. In this way I hope to provide you with a stimulating environment, where you can freely push at the boundaries of knowledge and interact with others who share your interests. But, as with so many things in life, the more you put in, the more you get out. So, make sure that you get involved with the GSA, and the Union, to maximise your enjoyment at Imperial.

## GSA communication

You can keep up-to-date with the GSA's activities by keeping an eye on your College email account. We send out a regular newsletter and timely, single item emails to draw your attention to events or meetings within the next week or more. The rest of our communication will be funneled through the GSA website, Facebook and Twitter, so please Bookmark, Like and Follow to find out about and get involved with everything do!



**Deena Blumenkrantz**  
gsa.president@imperial.ac.uk

# What is the GSA?



The GSA is the Graduate Students Association. It is a body within Imperial College Union that operates to serve postgraduate students. As a postgraduate student at Imperial you are automatically a full member of the Graduate Students' Association.

## What do I get as a full member?

Full members (aka you) can call upon the GSA President, the GSA Academic or Welfare Officer (from your Faculty) or your Department, Division, Section or Group Representative to help you with any issue, at any time, throughout your studies.

The people in these roles are trained to understand how the Union and College work. They know who should be contacted or consulted in order to instigate appropriate responses to your concerns.

## So, what exactly is the GSA? What are its aims?

The GSA is an arm of Imperial College Union, which specifically serves postgraduate students. Like Imperial College Union, the GSA is student-led and supported by both Union and College staff. It operates as a network of postgraduate students who decided to proactively participate in moulding the educational experience at Imperial.

The GSA hopes to provide a platform where students can voice their opinions and put their studies in perspective. It is a body where you are appreciated for putting forward new ideas, being accepting of differences, measuring achievement with an ample dose of humour and showing excitement about future possibilities.

The GSA aims to cultivate a sense of community amongst postgraduates by representing postgraduates when they need academic or welfare related support, but that is not all! The GSA also brings postgraduates together, breaking down faculty, department and divisional separations by holding social events and supporting online interactions.

## How does the GSA operate?

The GSA starts with postgraduate students who volunteer their time to attend Student-Staff Committee meetings. These volunteers are your Representatives. The meetings occur regularly throughout College on all levels. Issues discussed at the more diffuse levels, such as within Sections, include things such as the ordering of shared consumables and location of shared machinery. At the Divisional level, issues related to expansion and contraction can be discussed. Department meetings can cover how the Department should respond to internal or external audits or surveys.

Postgraduate studies at Imperial are split



into two 'Graduate Schools'. The Graduate School of Engineering and Physical Sciences (GSEPS) contains the Faculties of Engineering and Physical Sciences as well as the Business School, Department of Humanities and the School of Education. The Graduate School of Life Science and Medicine (GSLSM), as you might guess, contains the other two Faculties.

Each of the five faculty areas have both an Academic and a Welfare Officer. The Academic and Welfare Officers are responsible for scheduling and chairing their Academic and Welfare Committee (AWC) meetings. AWC meetings bring together Representatives from all the departments, within a faculty, to discuss problems they are facing. Officers from each Faculty also get together regularly with the GSA President to share best practice and discuss obstacles, at what is called the GSA Executive Committee meeting. GSA Officers and the GSA President also attend Union meetings and GSEPS and GSLSM meetings, where the quality of courses are reviewed and future plans for the institutions are developed.

Last but not least, the GSA has three volunteer directors. The Events Director decides what social activities the GSA will organise. The Publicity Director coordinates the advertisement of GSA events and activities via the Newsletter and other online methods. The Marketing Director oversees

the GSA brand, sells GSA merchandise and brings in extra monetary support. These Directors are vital for the GSA's social function and gain valuable transferable skills.

## What kind of events can I look forward to?

The GSA runs a Pub Quiz on the last Thursday of every month in the Holland Club. In the past the GSA held movie nights, pub meets and fieldtrips to the Bowling Alley. Future ideas range from tours of Hampton Court Palace to paintballing! But really, it is up to you; attend an Events Planning meeting and make your dreams come true!

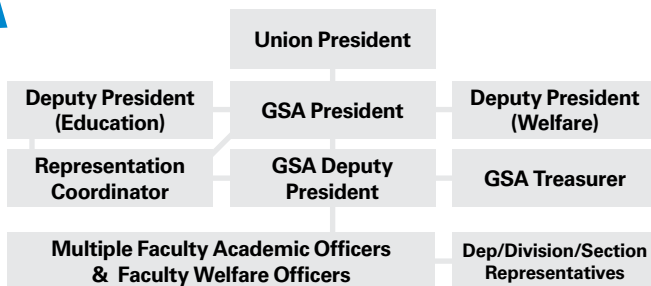
## How can I become active in the GSA?

Keep your eyes and ears peeled; opportunities to get involved will be advertised on the Union website as well as in the GSA Newsletter or by email from your Department.

## Who is my representative?

See the website to find photos and contact details of your Representatives: [www.imperialcollegeunion.org/gsa](http://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/gsa)

### The Structure of the GSA



# What is life like as a postgrad?

After three or more years of being an undergraduate, you will be undoubtedly well-adjusted to the university way of life. That said, for PhD students especially, the postgraduate lifestyle will starkly contrast that of your first degree.

## The Big Differences

Masters students can expect heftier workloads, more in depth and focussed subject material, a greater need for independent learning and quite probably a lengthy research project lasting a term or longer. But for PhD students, life is far different.



Timetables filled with lectures are out, replaced with a 9-to-5 culture towards research. The onus is firmly on you to organise your own time and work schedule. PhDs are closer to a job than studying. Hopefully you will be given your own computer and workspace, probably in an office shared with other postgraduates.

PhD students are assigned two supervisors. You will meet with your main supervisor, ideally once per week, to talk about your progress and receive any suggestions about the direction you should take your work in. All supervisors have different styles of working with their PhD students. At one extreme,

some supervisors leave their PhD students entirely to their own devices; they are left to work on what they feel like and determine the direction of their research themselves. At the other extreme are the supervisors who micro-manage their PhD students dictating exactly what experiments they will run. These supervisors tend to give you far more direction, but conversely less independence and opportunity for your own input. Needless to say, many supervisors occupy a middleground.

It is important to keep a good relationship with your supervisor as you will be working very closely with him/her for at least three years. But, he/she is not your friend. Supervisors have limited responsibilities to you and much of their own work to complete! You need to be well-organised and work independently, far more so than in any undergraduate degree. Your supervisor will not remind you of deadlines, so you need to keep on top of those, especially as you will be given them many months and months in advance.

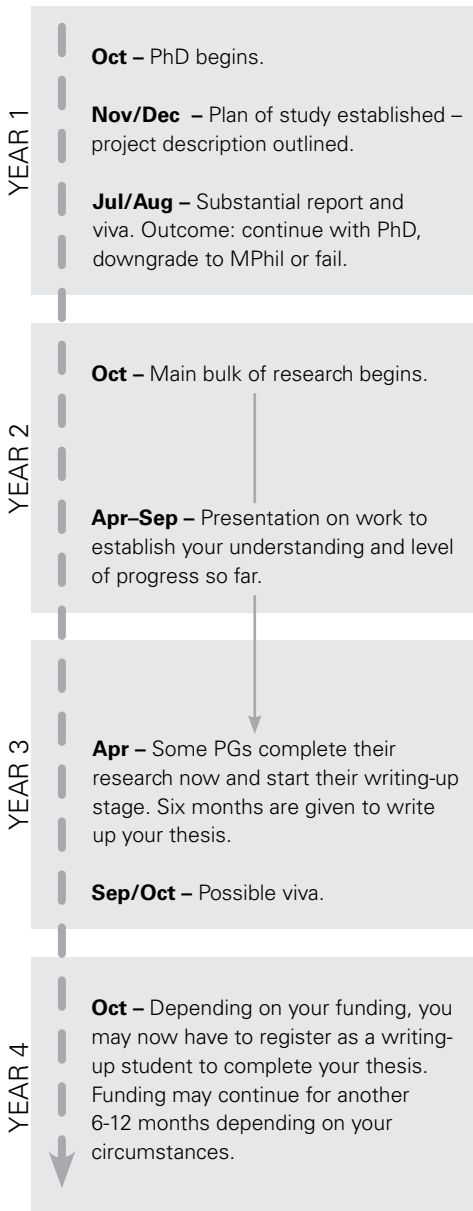
One final thing worth noting is the small matter of your thesis! If you thought writing a dissertation was an achievement, you will want to reconsider that once you start writing one of these. You will enter a 'writing-up' phase after two-and-a-half to three years, where you will be tasked with writing the 100,000 words or so required. After a viva and any subsequent revisions you need to make, hopefully you'll finally be able to call yourself a doctor!

## Tips from PhD Graduates

In researching this booklet, we spoke to a number of postgraduates who recently completed their studies. They offered the following tips for anyone about to embark on a PhD:

- Use a calendar to keep track of deadlines and meetings as your supervisors won't do it for you!

## A Typical Timeline of a PhD Student\*



\*NB: This is a typical, not a **definitive** timetable.

- Join the Clubs, Societies & Projects at Imperial. You will have lots of work to do, but by joining clubs you will have a commitment to something outside of your PhD, which will motivate you to complete your work in good time, else you miss out on the social side of university life.
- Attend GSA Events. You will meet people with similar frustrations as you and be able to blow off steam as well as possibly spark up collaborations.
- Join learned societies as you will be able to meet people and attend conferences with experts in your field. Additionally, many learned societies offer travel grants. Your department will only have a limited conferences budget, so this is a good way of attending more.
- Publish! Try to get your work published in scientific journals. This is easier said than done, but successfully doing so can significantly increase your chances of getting a job in academia.
- Don't worry if you find yourself reading the same papers six times over. And then reading them several times over again a year later!
- Socialise beyond your year. At different times, different people will be too busy meeting their own deadlines to help you, but there will always be someone, just ask around. Both PhD students and Post Docs can be helpful when you don't want to bug your supervisor.
- Get teaching experience as an undergraduate laboratory supervisor or classwork assistant. You will earn money, improve your communications skills and widen your understanding of your subject area.
- Set up a Remote Desktop connection to your office computer so that you can access your work from home and access papers from anywhere. And remember to back up your data! Weekly, if not daily!
- Live more frivolously than you did as an undergraduate! Your PhD entitlement is not insignificant. Capitalise on living in London by getting out and sightseeing. Eat well and make sure to do some exercise too!

# IC Campuses

Imperial has many campuses scattered across London and even further afield where there is green grass and undulating countryside for miles. The South Kensington campus is the main one and is described in detail throughout this booklet, but many postgraduates are also located at the various satellite campuses.

South Kensington



The majority of students are based at the South Ken campus. The Union is based here, and it is also where most of the College administration takes place.

The closest tubes are South Kensington and Gloucester Road, both on the Piccadilly, District and Circle lines, and with a wide variety of bus stops in the area, it is easy accessible.

St. Mary's



St. Mary's serves both local and distant populations in many specialist medical areas. These include Infectious Disease,

Immunology, COPD, Paediatrics, Hepatology, Epidemiology and Public Health. Due to the overlap between those practising medicine and those researching diseases St. Mary's is a world-class and pioneering hospital.

Food options around St. Mary's are plentiful and vary from vegetarian at **Fresco's** to one of the best sandwich shops in London, **Bomboush**. Both are just outside the gate on Praed Street. Favourite local watering holes include; **The Fountains Abbey**, used for its convenience; **The Union Bar** along the canal, attractive due to its class; **The Chapel** near Edgware Road station, which has a large beer garden; and **The Victoria** by Hyde Park because of its appreciation for authenticity.

Hammersmith



There's not much in the immediate vicinity of Hammersmith hospital, Wormwood Scrubs prison excepted! It is next door to **Wormwood Scrubs Park** as well though, which is mildly more delightful. The enormous **Westfield Shopping Centre** is a 10 minute walk away. BBC TV Centre is just down the road if you fancy catching few live TV recordings.

The best bars in the area for drinks are the **North Pole** (gastropub) or **The Pavillion** (local pub). Otherwise its a trip down to Shepherd's Bush Green. Eats can be had at either the **Hammersmith café**, equivalent to the one in the SAF building in South Ken or the **hospital canteen**. The latter is the cheapest of the pair.

**Chelsea & Westminster**



Located on Fulham Road in a very swish area of West London, the C&W Hospital is home to the AIDS Vaccine Initiative, and much research here centres around HIV. Due to the expensive location, you may prefer to bring a packed lunch, but on those days when you don't wake up early enough, treat yourself to a sandwich across the street at **Tray Gourmet** or walk over to **Luigi's Deli** for a luscious lasagne. For a drink or to catch a Premiership game, head to **The Sporting Page Pub** down on Limerston Street.

**Silwood Park**



Silwood Park is a postgraduate-only campus located in leafy Ascot. Most research undertaken is in biology, with a focus on ecology and it is also home to the Reactor Centre and Silwood Business Centre.

Most postgraduates who work at Silwood also live in the accommodation there. Unless you own a car, there are not that many places to grab a hot meal or drink, but the **Refectory** serves hot breakfasts and lunches. And, the bar at Silwood is a sociable place to hang out.

Silwood also hosts a number of parties during the year, including **Silfest**, a renowned summer music festival, a summer ball and a Christmas party lasting several days.

**Royal Brompton**



Like C&W Hospital, the Royal Brompton is also in a lovely (read: expensive) part of town. Research focuses on respiratory function with groups working to find solutions for diseases like asthma and sleep apnoea. The nearest, best eateries lie on King's Road, the best pub being **The Builders Arms** on Britten Street.

**Charing Cross**



Despite its name, Charing Cross campus is actually in West London! Several divisions are hosted here including Medicine, the Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology, Neurosciences and Mental Health, Epidemiology, Public Health and Primary Care, and Investigative Science.

There is much to do in the local area: the riverside, with its beautiful walks, is just across the road and for shopaholics Westfield shopping centre is a 30 minute walk away. There is a wide choice of places to eat: **The Whole Hog** sandwich shop is a Hammersmith institution. Favourite restaurants include **Reun Thai** and **The Gate**, a much loved vegetarian restaurant. If you fancy a pub lunch or after work drinks **The Old Suffolk Punch** and **The Distillers** offer traditional fare. For river views try the **Crabtree**, or **Riverside Studios**, where you may also spot a celebrity or two!

# On offer at the Union

Hi, I'm Ravi. I am currently taking a year out of my physics degree to represent the students of Imperial College as the Union's Deputy President (Finance & Services). Essentially I help govern the way the Union handles both its finances and commercial services. I oversee the Union's internal finances as well as the finances for all the clubs and societies. Contrary to common perception, many postgraduates are members of the clubs and societies within the Union, so I echo my colleagues advice and encourage you to get involved!



**Ravi Pall**  
**Deputy President**  
**(Finance & Services)**

## Union services at a glance

Also within my remit falls responsibility for all of the trading and commercial outlets provided by the Union. These services are here for your benefit during your time at Imperial. These services range from selling stationary to pints of drink. They include the Union newsagents (make sure you try the pick'n'mix!), the Union shop where all manner of items are available (ranging from stationary and clothing to lab books and gifts) and our bars and catering outlets. Both the Union Shop and newsagents are located on the Sherfield Walkway in the middle of the South Kensington campus, so you're never far from any essentials you might need. The bars are the perfect place to grab something good to eat, cheaply, or to go for a night out or simply to relax in the evenings after a hard day's work.

## The Union's refurbishment

Part of my remit extends to developing the Union's services and revenue streams. The money generated is then ploughed back into the Union for the benefit of its members, including being pushed into the clubs and

societies we host. It is also my job to fairly and efficiently allocate the distribution of money.

The Union has been under refurbishment for over five years and this year will see the final phase – Phase 3 – coming to completion. This year will see the launch of our new nightclub called Metric, as well as our new bar: FiveSixEight. Developing these services is key to helping you have a fantastic time at Imperial, in venues you can be proud of. We can't wait to cut the ribbon and let you all in!

Finally, keep an eye on our website for the Services Forum, a meeting in the Union where you can voice your ideas and opinions about the Union. If you think we're not catering to your needs, this is the perfect place to instigate change. You have the right to sculpt the Union how you want it to be.

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# Union Facilities

## Bars & Nightclubs

### Metric

The Union's new nightclub has been designed to provide the best student night out in London. Metric aims to provide exactly what students at Imperial want by offering an ideal party venue three or four nights a week and a great place to drink and relax the rest of the time. The Union also offers the chance for Clubs, Societies and Projects to run their own themed nights on Thursdays or Saturdays. These nights, run by students, aim to provide unique and tailored experiences, different to the rest of the week's entertainment.

Everyone is welcome in Metric, but the GSA runs regular events for those looking for postgraduate-only socials. These are detailed more in the next section.

### FiveSixEight



**FiveSixEight (early artistic impression)**

The Union's new bar and café is your first choice for a drink or meal on campus. FiveSixEight offers gastro food at great prices; where else at Imperial could you hope to buy a bison burger?! If your experiment has another hour to run or you are between meetings FiveSixEight is the ideal place to grab a quick pint (or soft drink)!

Tuesday nights are when the infamous Super Quiz takes place, offering great weekly and termly prizes for winning teams. Of course, the real prize is the opportunity to put cocky undergraduates in their place!

### The Union Bar



**The Union Bar**

Unchanged since 1957, The Union Bar is the longest serving bar on campus. The Union Bar is all about a traditional pub atmosphere. Think great ales, pewter tankards, wooden stools, wooden tables and historical items from Imperial's past. Patronised by students, academic staff and alumni, The Union Bar is one part of Imperial that you can be assured will never change. No one would allow it, with so much history in one place.

### The Reynolds Bar

To try and keep the bars in South Kensington as bearable as possible we have kept all Medics away by giving them their own bar! In all seriousness, the Reynolds Bar, situated at Charing Cross Hospital in Hammersmith, is another great bar for all students. Having also just undergone a refurbishment, it is home to the majority of undergraduate medics and their unique social practices – certainly something to witness, especially their monthly 'bops'.

## The Advice Centre

The Advice Centre offers free, impartial advice to all students at Imperial. Nigel Cooke is our Student Adviser and can offer information and advice on many issues you may have. Typical issues he tackles include: academic issues, accommodation problems, money advice, employment and consumer rights and international student issues. Some of the most common ones are detailed in the Welfare Directory of Woes, from page 29 onwards

If Nigel can't help you he will be able to point you to the person who can. The Advice Centre is located in the Union Building on floor 2M. His door is always open. The Advice Centre also runs a comprehensive website that contains plenty of helpful information about student life.



### Nigel Cooke

Student Adviser

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## My Postgraduate Experience

### Masters

I can't believe it's nearly over. This has been the hardest year of my life, no question about that one, but also one of the most interesting and most enjoyable.

I came to Imperial to study an MSc in Hydrology and Water Resource Management, having worked for a few years after my first degree. This was nothing like my undergraduate days and much more like working in industry – design projects got me thinking on my feet to solve problems, whole courses were taken by leading companies and the summer dissertation is a million miles from the abstract learning I did before.

Imperial College is also a very different place. It's a science campus in the middle of a city, not a central arts campus with science as a

suburban afterthought. The people here are very different – whisper it soft, there are a lot of geeks – which is actually a refreshing change, especially as a more mature student.

London is phenomenal, overwhelming and easy to lose yourself in. My advice, is to take it easy, focus on your own neighbourhood (I stayed in postgrad halls in Ealing; travelling to meet old friends in Camden is a serious trek), and don't try to do it all at once. The same goes for the studies – take it easy, don't worry if you can't make sense of it all at first pass – this will happen a lot. It will click eventually.

You are so lucky to be coming to Imperial. I'm sure you know it. Best of luck for a year which will change your life (no question about that one either!).

**by James Simpson**



## Student Activities Centre

Acting as the hub to all of Imperial's Clubs, Societies & Projects the Student Activities Centre (SAC) provides IT and staff support for Club Officers, the students at the top of the clubs who are responsible for ensuring they have sound finances and for making sure they run in accordance with Union rules.

You can find the SAC on floor 2M of the Union Building. Room bookings, minibus bookings, finding out how to start a Club, Society or Project, printing and photocopying and so-on can all be done here. You get the idea!

The SAC is also home to the Union Reception, so our friendly staff can help you with any queries you may have or point you to the right people who can.

### The Student Activities Centre & Union Reception



#### Student Activities Centre (Union Reception)

[union@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:union@imperial.ac.uk)

T: 020 7594 8060 F: 020 7594 8123

IC Extension: 48060

## Retail Outlets

### The Union Shop

You will probably find the Union Shop one of the most useful shops on campus. Situated on the Sherfield Walkway, this is the one place that you need to visit to fulfil all your stationery needs. Offering pens, pencils, pads, folders and more, the Union Shop houses all the stationery you could ever want. Stationery fetishists will be in heaven! They also offer essential computer supplies like memory sticks, blank DVDs and network cable.

The Union Shop also has an enormous range of branded Imperial merchandise. If you're a student here you have to own an Imperial hoodie; it's pretty much law. They are available in loads of colours and designs to suit every taste. So join in with the cool kids and get branded up!

### The Union Shop



### The Union Newsagent

The Union Newsagent does exactly what is says on the tin. Newspapers, fizzy pop, water, confectionery, and our personal favourite, pick'n'mix are all sold here. They somehow manage to sell the Guardian and FT at cheaper than usual prices too. You'll find the Newsagent on the Sherfield Walkway too.

# Recurring Events

Every year, both the Union and the GSA hold loads of social events, to which you are all invited. Some happen on a weekly basis, others are one-off mega extravaganzas. They are all advertised on the Union website, so keep an eye on it for all the latest news.

## Welcome Week

Welcome Week takes place during the very first week of term – it is the Union's version of Freshers' Week, welcoming postgraduate students as well as freshers.

Welcome Week has been designed to host events that all students will love to attend, not just lashed-up, excitable 18 year-olds! Full details of events can be found at [imperial.ac.uk/newstudents](http://imperial.ac.uk/newstudents). However, here are a few we think you will especially want to attend.

### Monday 4 October – The Big Tickle

Live comedy at the Union brought to you by BBC Three's Lee Nelson and friends.

### Tuesday 5 October – Freshers' Fair & Afterparty

Don't be put-off by the name, Freshers' Fair is attended by both undergraduates and postgraduates. This is your chance to see all the Clubs, Societies & Projects, all in one place. In the evening they showcase what they do at the afterparty in the Union. Come and watch, with a pint in your hand!

### Thursday 6 October – Jazz Big Band

Imperial's renowned Jazz Big Band perform classic pieces in the Union.

### Saturday 9 October – Postgraduate Mingle

This is the big one: the GSA's official welcome event, open to all postgraduate students, with big name DJs and live acts at the Union.

## Union Events



The Union runs a range of different nights in the nightclub on a weekly basis. A new set of nights will be created to coincide with the opening of our new nightclub, Metric, but in the past nights have included a Sports Night on Wednesdays and themed music nights.

At the end of each term the Union hosts a larger celebratory event including the Christmas Ball, Easter Carnival and the Summer Ball. The latter is the premier social event of the year, taking place across the entire campus, attracting some fantastic music acts. Previous bands have included the Noisettes, Plan B, Tinie Tempah, Athlete, Pendulum and many more.

New to the Union next year will be the introduction of We Are Metric nights. These are themed club nights devised and run by the Clubs & Societies of Imperial College Union, with the help of the Union itself. The autumn term is already packed with We Are Metric nights, so look out for an Oktoberfest night, a golf pros and tennis hoes night, and many more!

Also of note are the annual Sabbatical Officer Elections that take place during the middle of the spring term. Any full member of the Union can stand for election (and if you're successful, your face will be in this booklet next year!), although PhD students can only complete a Sabbatical year after their final year, lest you feel the wrath of your supervisors!

## GSA Events

If you want a fun night out with your fellow postgraduates or your aim is to avoid the undergraduate riff-raff altogether, then the GSA's events definitely will be for you.

The GSA Pub Quiz is held on the last Thursday of every month. Taking place in the Holland Club, underneath the Sherfield Building, wannabe Mastermind contestants and novices alike fight it out in a battle of intellect and capacity for useless trivia to win prizes. Entry is free, so get along and get competitive!

The GSA also organises regular pub and bar visits and will be organising regular film nights following a very successful first screening during the summer. There are also plans to host sports events as well as field-trips both within and outside of London. Keep an eye on the GSA website and on the regular GSA Newsletters to find out when they will be!



GSA Summer Picnic in the Park

Also, follow 'GSAevents' on Twitter to learn what's coming up next.

Along with monthly events, the GSA also hosts bigger annual socials. This year's include a black tie bash in December, a spring BBQ, summer picnic and much more!

Suggestions for new social activities are not only welcome, but actively encouraged, so if you have any ideas, email [gsaevents@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:gsaevents@imperial.ac.uk).

## My Postgraduate Experience PhD Year 2

At first glance, the second year appears to be the most relaxed of the three years of your PhD: the middle year by which point you know where you're going (although you probably still don't know how you'll get there), and still with plenty of time left to get results.

Don't be fooled; in your second year you'll be dealing with non-working experiments, and if your research is leading down a dead end, this will be the time you realise it. Even if everything is going at its smoothest, plans will still have to be adjusted as you progress.

The major milestone of the second year is the MPhil transfer. It isn't designed to be difficult to pass; it's mainly to check that you know what you're doing, that you have



a firm grasp on your subject and clear plans for the future. So, make sure you read as many papers as possible, and put together a detailed timeline (like all the other timelines you may have done, this detailed schedule will quickly go out of the window when reality kicks in, but the idea is the important thing).

Problems I came up against in my second year included the collapse of a collaboration, sorting out intellectual property contracts and the perennial problem of finding a methodology mistake, and needing to redo a whole tranche of experiments. Triumphs include a first successful run of my experiment, some tentative results, and creating and exhibiting a poster about my work at a conference.

**by Chris Reynolds**

# College Facilities

Whether it's eating, drinking, exercising or something else, there are copious facilities across the campuses at Imperial. For a comprehensive list, you should check out [imperial.ac.uk/campuslife](http://imperial.ac.uk/campuslife), but these pages will give an overview of the main facilities on the South Kensington campus.

## The Library



There are libraries at all the main campuses. They contain many, many books and plenty of desks, but they are a lot more than just places to study. For instance, the library subscribes to over 30,000 electronic journals and databases; it is a hive of diverse resources. The library website also contains comprehensive subject guides, and if you ever need any assistance, you can get the contact details of the subject librarians from the website too; they can help you get the best information for your research. The Central Library in South Ken is open 24 hours during term times and has a café too for when you get the munchies!

## Ethos



Ethos is the snappily named sports centre at Imperial. It's only been open for a few years, so the facilities are tip-top and best

of all Imperial students get gym access for free! Also within its walls are squash courts, a swimming pool, a sports hall home to basketball, 5-a-side, netball, table tennis, badminton and more, and a climbing wall. And a café. You will have to pay to use most of these facilities though. One pro tip: if you join the relevant clubs within the Union, you can often get free or subsidised access to the facilities.

## The Senior Common Room



Places for lunch or a coffee abound on the South Kensington campus. The main ones are the Junior Common Room (JCR) and the Senior Common Room (SCR) both located on the Sherfield Walkway. The SCR is intended for postgraduates and staff only, but the JCR is open to everyone. The former has a very reasonable restaurant serving excellent hot food and a café serving drinks, cakes and pastries. The JCR has a café, burger bar and deli. Downstairs is The Queen's Tower Restaurant, the main canteen on campus serving different cuisines from across the globe.

Tucked away within many of the departments on campus are numerous smaller cafés all serving hot drinks and food in exchange for your grant/hard-earned. It is left as an exercise to the reader to wander around campus discovering them all!

## Eastside Bar



College also runs a number of bars and even a few swanky restaurants. The Holland Club is a little pub located underneath the Sheffield Building. It's strictly for postgraduates and staff only, so there's no chance of seeing spotty undergraduates here. Over at Prince's Gardens, located on the ground floor of the Eastside halls

of residence is the imaginatively titled Eastside bar. Eastside halls only opened in 2009 so it's a very plush venue replete with a long bar that slowly changes colour. Food is also served. The crowd is mixed, attracting undergrads, postgrads and staff. Lastly, if you're feeling particularly extravagant, Imperial has two finer dining restaurants: 170 Queen's Gate and 58 Prince's Gardens, although in all honesty it's unlikely you'll end up in either of these unless it's special occasion or your supervisor is feeling particularly generous that day.

College also has a dedicated arts department called Arts Imperial. They are responsible the Blyth Centre, located on Sheffield Level 5, home to an art gallery that holds regular exhibitions and a collection of music practice rooms which all Imperial students can use. Arts Imperial also runs small music concerts and art workshops which are free to attend.

## My Postgraduate Experience MRes & PhD Years 1 & 2

I joined IC in 2007, accepted on the Wellcome Trust Immunology program, encompassing a 1-year MRes and 3-year PhD, placing emphasis on practical over taught learning.

During my Masters I experienced several Imperial campuses: South Ken, St Mary's and Hammersmith. Although all this moving can leave one unsettled, the large number of Masters students in a similar position ensured there were always familiar faces around making my first year more enjoyable.

Another factor to my enjoyment as a postgrad are the Holland Bar and Senior Common Room (SCR). These staff/postgrad only facilities create an environment filled with peers, combating any isolation felt from working in a lab.



After nearly two years of my PhD spent at Hammersmith Hospital, I still take regular trips back to other campuses for work (including the Graduate School annual poster symposium) and play (for numerous parties and quizzes) meaning you never feel too far removed from the grand scheme of things.

In the final year of my PhD, inevitably my mind turns to: "What next?". Imperial's "finish up and move on" courses on top of career fairs have gone a long way to help answer this question. The graduate school also advertise other opportunities related to science.

Overall, it wasn't hard to fit in at Imperial as a postgrad, and they do work very hard to help you on your way when you're ready to leave.

**by Stephen Holland**

# Life in London

There is stacks to do in London: from enormous nightclubs to cosy haunts tucked underneath railway bridges, from old men pubs to trendy bars, from the glitz of the West End to the scissors and sticky tape world of independent theatre. This section will detail some of the best places to go. Most will be in and around South Kensington, but some particular favourites, located further afield, will also be listed. It will be by no means exhaustive, however. Part of the joy of living in London is the opportunity for discovery (or you could grab yourself a copy of Timeout!)

## Cafés



Mantovani's

South Kensington is littered with the usual array of multinational coffee chains, but a pair of independent coffee houses are famed for their excellent coffees and food, fair prices and chilled atmospheres. Nestled in amongst the familiar corporate hoardings are **Caffe Forum**, just south of Gloucester Road tube and **Mantovani's** just by South Kensington station. In Caffe Forum, you can get a fresh, large coffee for about £2 and if you go at the right time, a pizza for 6 quid with another thrown in for free!

Further afield, Soho is a hive of awesome cafés. **Kaffeine**, **Flat White** and **The Breakfast Club** all offer delicious grub and full, warming coffees. The Breakfast

Club in particular does amazing fry-ups and smoothies. If you're the daring type, you can even gamble how much you should pay for breakfast: win a coin toss and get 50% off, lose and pay 50% more!



The Sandwich Shop

Finally, there is **The Sandwich Shop**. While technically not a café, they do serve coffees. Dirty ones in polystyrene cups. The Sandwich Shop is a legendary sandwich bar, a 5 minute walk from the South Kensington campus. It serves builders and students-alike filthy baguettes, cakes and vaguely authentic looking stir-frys and curries. It's cheap, nasty and wonderful.

## Pubs

With pints often coming in above the £3 mark, pubs in London are extremely pricey. You'll find that out pretty sharpish. South Kensington is also one of the swankiest areas in London going, which can make for a wallet-busting combination if you're not careful.

Nevertheless, jars must be consumed and pubbing must be done. East of the South Kensington campus you'll find three of Imperial's 'locals'. Firstly is **The Queen's Arms**, just off Queen's Gate Terrace, a 2 minute walk from the Huxley Building. While a fairly unremarkable London pub,

The Queen's Arms is perfectly pleasant for a drink or some decent pub grub. Another two minutes down Queen's Gate Terrace is **The Gloucester Arms**, a comparatively more shabby establishment with cheaper prices and cheaper food. This is by no means a bad thing, it just depends what you're after at the time. The Gloucester Arms also shows football matches. Further past The Gloucester Arms and through a few winding streets is **The Builders Arms**, the most lively pub of the three. The food is more gastro, the atmosphere swankier and European and the selection of drinks is very continental. In all, it is the nicest of the three 'locals' and worth tracking down.



Southwards on Gloucester Road and slightly beyond are **The Hereford Arms** and **The Anglesea Arms**, respectively. Both are very decent drinking establishments, The Anglesea Arms especially with its bustling front garden and dark oak interior, alcoves, nooks and crannies (albeit when it's not full of yuppies).

West along Old Brompton Road is the **Troubadour** a trendy-cum-old-fashioned gastropub serving decent food, with a quaint beer garden and steeped in history. The likes of Jimi Hendrix, Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan and Paul Simon all played here during the '60s. The club is still running today in the basement and remains an intimate live music venue.

The list could go on and on, so here are some names of a few other favourites. Just have a google: The Red Lion, Soho; Jon Snow, Soho; The Redan, Notting Hill; Lock Tavern, Camden; The Malt House, Fulham Broadway; The

Steeles, Chalk Farm; The Raven, Shepherd's Bush; The Distillers, Fulham; Elbow Rooms, Old Street/Angel; Citizen Smith, Putney; Sun & 13 Cantons, Soho; The Porterhouse, Covent Garden; The Enterprise, Chalk Farm.

## Restaurants

Recommending pubs in London is difficult enough with the amount of subjectivity involved, but picking places you should go for achowdown is another challenge entirely, with the sheer amount to choose from.

There are a few decent eats in the immediate area around the South Kensington campus, but most aren't particularly student friendly. The **Oriental Canteen** is a wonderful, cheap little Chinese restaurant near South Kensington tube station. Delicious grub is served in garish plastic bowls with plastic chop sticks. Service is fast and so is customer turnaround, so don't expect to be ushered on your way if you get nattering over empty plates! Beware of **Paper Tiger** a few doors down. It's cheap Chinese buffet is not to be approached without careful consideration.

Just round the corner, at the other end of the restaurant spectrum is the **Beirut Express**, an excellent Lebanese restaurant, its menu brimming with delicious mezze and other delights. The prices aren't cheap, but it's worth the expense if you want to treat yourself.

The same story applies to many of the restaurants in South Kensington, so you're probably best just eating in a pub or Caffe Forum, mentioned previously. One slightly less expensive restaurant is **Byron**, a posh burger joint by Gloucester Road tube station. Or there's always Burger King a few doors down. Of course, there's always the **Union**, which serves good, hot food at extremely reasonable prices. Beyond South Kensington, you really should just go and explore!

## Clubs

Clubs in London are a bit like TV programs. There are more than you have time for and it's not always obvious which are worth your time. It's a matter of what kind of experience you're looking for.



For a bog standard night out **Leicester Square** has a plethora of clubs and bars which are a tad expensive and mostly play commercial R'n'B. This area is essentially the Hollyoaks of clubbing in London.

If you're looking for something with a bit more depth, the area of East London that includes Old Street, Brick Lane and Shoreditch is a good bet. **Cargo** on Old Street is unlikely to disappoint and **Cafe 1001** on Brick Lane, in particular, has a great variety of dubstep, reggae and drum'n'bass while the large seating area outside gives you a chance to have a chat if it all gets a bit hectic.

A little west is the world famous **Fabric** in Farringdon. The greatest DJs known to mankind play regularly at Fabric's acclaimed Fabriclive night on Fridays. However it is also (fairly or unfairly) associated with drug taking; in other words, don't be surprised if some of your fellow ravers don't seem quite with it.

The rest of London's gems are more spread out. **Shunt** in London Bridge has a quirky community feel whereas **The Notting Hill Arts** club is a bit closer to home and puts on such a variety of nights that there's little point in me trying to define the club.

## Theatres

The London theatre scene is wonderful. Bloody marvelous in fact. It caters to all tastes: from those who can't get enough of whatever Andrew Lloyd Webber is churning out to those who find a man contemplating the meaning of his own navel enthralling and insightful.

The **West End** plays – the mainstream productions in London – are dazzling, enormous, overwrought, frequently sugar-coated and expensive, but something that must be experienced at least once if not more while you live in London. The theatrehalls themselves are beautiful, vast and intricately detailed. Some of the West End productions have been going for many, many years such as *Les Miserables*, *We Will Rock You*, *The Producers* and *The Phantom of the Opera*. New ones pop up all the time and you'll probably see them advertised all over tube stations and in the freesheets.

### The Phantom of the Opera



The West End encompasses a huge amount of plays and musicals, but doesn't even scratch the surface of theatre in London. Outside of the West End, the best places to see exciting new theatre are the new writing theatres such as the **Soho Theatre**, the **New Vic**, and Imperial's local theatre: **The Royal Court** in Sloane Square. These theatres have international reputations, and are a great place to see modern plays. Often, these plays end up transferring to the expensive West End theatres (such as Tom Stoppard's *Rock And Roll*), so it can be a chance to see some future classics.

You really ought to venture to the Southbank of the Thames where you'll find the **National**

## The National Theatre



**Theatre**, which puts on an eclectic mix of over 20 new plays and classic productions every year. Tickets are often very reasonable too, with many shows having seats for £10.

A short walk along the Southbank is **Shakespeare's Globe** theatre. Open during the summer and early autumn months, the Globe showcases a handful of Shakespeare's classics every year, as well as some original plays too, generally with a historical slant.

The theatre has been faithfully reconstructed to resemble the original Globe theatre built in 1599. So, when it rains, the show must go on and the audience gets soaked! The authenticity stops short of the audience throwing missiles, however, so leave your rotten eggs and tomatoes at home. Not that plays ever warrant such action anyway.

Last but not least, you don't even have to leave campus to see productions ranging from Shakespeare to Shaffer. Imperial's **Dramsoc**, **Musical Theatre Society** and the **Medics' Drama Society** produce at least 8 or 9 shows a year and while they haven't got budgets as big as the aforementioned theatres, university drama is as close as you get to professional without being at the Gielgud. They will probably impress you. You'll see their posters around the campus, and may even find one of your friends is involved.

## My Postgraduate Experience PhD Years 1, 2 & 3

Having completed my undergraduate studies at Imperial, I loved it too much that I decided to stay on to do a PhD. Nah! I stayed on because I was offered a scholarship and gave up an investment-banking job!

Life as a postgraduate student is full of ups and downs. In my first year, I enjoyed learning a lot about the field and was very enthusiastic, but I was always clueless as to the direction of my work. I struggled to put a framework around my work and this was frustrating. I found that being an undergraduate was much easier, just study what is in the syllabus and sit for the final exams! Relatively easier I say, but not fun. However, the flexibility and the learning process of the PhD can be fun. Only in my third year now, I learnt that

doing a PhD is not about the final outcome, but about the learning process and the networking.

However, at the back of my mind, I always had this impression that PhD students are geeky and nerdy with no social life whatsoever. But one day when I was hanging out with my non-PhD mates, I met my colleague at a club! This warmed me up to other mates in my group and we started having lunches together, having nights out and lastly trips together as friends! This environment is very important in order to motivate one, especially when doing a PhD.

So, my advice to beginners is to find like-minded friends and have a blast during the PhD as it is the last years of one's student life!

**by Sohasini Sudtharalingam**



## Cinemas



The IMAX, Waterloo

There are zillions of cinemas scattered throughout London. And as is the norm in the Big Smoke, the ticket prices are quite phenomenal. If you can find a cinema with Adult tickets for less than £10 you're doing well. Student tickets tend to cost around £8.

The nearest **Odeon** to the South Kensington campus is on High Street Kensington, about a 15 minute walk away. South of Gloucester Road are a pair of **Cineworld** outlets, which actually have a good selection of indie as well as mainstream films to cater for the King's Road and Sloane Square luvvies. Shepherd's Bush is home to two enormous, very modern **Vue** cinemas.

One joy cinema in London is the range of world cinema shown. The **Curzon** chain of cinemas specialises in showing the best in independent and world cinema going. Other fantastic independent cinemas include **The Gate** and the **Coronet**, both in Notting Hill. Close to campus is the Institut Francais home to the **Ciné Lumière** which shows brilliant french films as well as some more mainstream stuff, often for fairly cheap prices. The **Prince Charles Cinema** off Leicester Square is even better for cheap tickets, starting from £1!

And, of course, it would be a crime not to mention the downright amazing **National Film Theatre** on the Southbank, owned by

the British Film Institute where everything from the first Lumière brothers' films are shown to modern mainstream cinema, with nary a dud among them.

If black and white cinema is less your thing, instead an enormous screen and an awesome sound system gives you the quivers, then get yourself down to an **IMAX**. There's several in London, Waterloo being the premier one.

## Museums & Galleries

You really have landed in the right part of town if museums and galleries are your thing. London is littered with cultural hotspots, none more so than in the vicinity of the South Kensington campus. Literally next door is the **Science Museum**, probably the best of its kind in the world. Likewise, there's the awe-inspiring **Natural History Museum** a few minutes walk away, another of Britain's wonders. And if that's not enough, just across the road is the **Victoria & Albert** museum filled with stunning art, exhibitions and collections of pretty much everything under the Sun. Phew. Best of all, much of their content is completely free!



Natural History Museum

Further afield is the **The British Museum** in Russell Square which holds historical collections from many cultures around the world, throughout the years. Other places

worthy of a visit are **The London Maritime Museum**, **The Imperial War Museum** and **HMS Belfast**, an old World War Two cruiser permanently moved to the Thames for people to walk around.

In terms of galleries, the **Tate Modern** and **Tate Britain** are surefire hits. The **Southbank Centre** is also very cool, chock full of a wide range of art, from visual to musical to literary.

## Live Music Venues

In a sense, listing music venues is slightly pointless as you're far more likely to look up the bands you like and *then* see where they are playing. That said, this section should illustrate what type of music each venue



**The Lock Tavern**

favours and help you decide which ones you might gravitate towards.

Camden in North London is a hive of activity for upcoming musical talent. Cruise the pubs and bars and you'll probably meet The Next Big Thing™ without even realising it. It's a practically a certainty that you'll meet Amy Winehouse falling out of her dress. The music tends to be indie-orientated to match the skinny jeans culture of the area. Good spots include: **The Lock Tavern**, **Barfly**, the **Proud**

**Galleries**, **The Flowerpot** and the much larger **HMV Kentish Town Forum**.

Closer to Imperial the **Troubadour**, mentioned in the Pubs section, regularly hosts live music spanning most genres going.



**Cargo**

In Soho, there's numerous jazz and blues bars, the **Ain't Nothing But Blues Bar** being one particularly cosy and funky venue chock filled with massive jazz hands-wielding blues lovers. The legendary **Ronnie Scott's** is also in Soho.

If an enormous, speeding beat is more your thing, the previous mentioned **Cargo** in Shoreditch is a great night out. Essentially a nightclub and live music venue situated under a railway bridge, it promotes electronica, dubstep, breakbeat, drum'n'bass and pretty much anything else with a dirty rhythm. Likewise, **Café 1001** has some awesome live music, covering all sorts of genres. It's a cracking, low-key venue that also serves fresh food ranging from breakfast pastries to barbecue grub to go with your music.

On top of all of this, you of course have the enormous music venues that play host to the pop world's megastars: the **O2** and **Wembley Arena** being the biggest. Expect to pay top dollar to sit literally hundreds of metres away from a spec on a stage.

# ICU: Here to Help!

Hi, I'm Charlotte, your Deputy President (Welfare). You're going to have loads of great experiences during your time at Imperial, but most of you will come across a problem or two along the way. The Union's welfare team is here to help whatever the issue and make sure you get the most out of your time here.

## My door is always open

My job is to ensure that if you do experience any difficulties, the support network is prepared to help you: from health problems, feeling blue and personal safety through to stuff like housing, money worries and careers advice. My colleague Alex, the Deputy President (Education), is here to help with any problems you're having with your studies, but lots of problems fall under both our remit so feel free to approach either of us.

Or, further still, you can approach **Nigel Cooke** who runs **The Advice Centre** within the ICU. Again, he covers areas similar to myself and Alex, but with the benefit of many years worth of experience. Finally, there is also the **Student Hub** in the Sherfield Building,



**Charlotte Ivison**  
**Deputy President**  
**(Welfare)**

but this is a less personal, more enquiry-based service compared to those offered within ICU.

All of our doors are always open so feel free to drop in for a chat (or you can phone/email) no matter what the problem!

## Welfare campaigning

As well as helping students individually I'll be running campaigns throughout the year to give you helpful information on the big issues that affect you, including sexual health and environmental awareness. I also represent students on College welfare committees, where I let members of College staff know what matters to you and then give you feedback to tell you what College are up to and what changes they're making to support you.

That's it from me. Welcome, and good luck!

**Charlotte Ivison**  
dpwelfare@imperial.ac.uk  
T: 020 7594 8060  
IC Extension: 58064



**Student Hub**  
Student Life Support

As well as the welfare support offered by the Sabbatical Officers, ICU runs **The Advice Centre** manned by the Student Advisor, **Nigel Cooke**. The Advice Centre is on Floor 2M of the Union building, or you can contact Nigel by emailing [advice@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:advice@imperial.ac.uk) or phoning **(020) 7594 8067**. College's central student support service is the **Student Hub** located on Level 3 of the Sherfield Building.

# Welfare Directory of Woes

The Welfare Directory of Woes contains common problems that previous postgraduates have been through during their time at Imperial. Each Woe is accompanied by a suggestion for how to resolve the issue. That said, if your problem is not one of those listed, or you're simply not sure who to approach, you can speak to Charlotte, Nigel Cooke in The Advice Centre or College's Student Hub. Their details are on the opposing page. They will be able to help, or the very least, point you in the right direction.

## "My landlord is being a jerk!"

If you've lived in rented accommodation before, you're probably away of the pitfalls involved. Common problems include unscrupulous landlords making off with your damage deposit despite you leaving the flat in better condition than when you arrived, appliances breaking, leaks and dreaded beg bug infestation.

If you're unsure where you stand on any accommodation issues get in contact with College's **Student Accommodation Centre** which can offer you information on your housing rights. They can also help you find a place to rent if you haven't already found one.

The Student Advisor, Nigel Cooke, has many years' worth of experience dealing with landlords so he is also worth approaching.

### – Student Accommodation Centre

– accommodation@imperial.ac.uk  
– 020 7594 9444

## "I have no money. Help!"

Living in London is expensive. Having to cover tuition fees for a Masters course, on top of living costs can be very tough.



As well as offering general financial advice, Imperial's **Student Financial Support** department offers a number of different Funds available to students in difficulty, such as the Hardship Fund available to students whose financial situation has changed since they began their course.

### – Student Financial Support Team

– student.funding@imperial.ac.uk

## "The Council are chasing me for Council Tax, but I thought I didn't have to pay it?!"

Full-time students don't have to pay Council Tax, that is correct. This includes Masters and PhD students. If the Council are sending you letters asking for Council Tax you probably just need to send them proof that you are indeed a full-time student. Head to the **Registry Office**, where you can request a student status certificate for Council Tax exemption purposes, which you can then post on to your council.

PhD students often run into trouble with their Council when they arrive at the Writing Up stage of their doctorate. In the past, College hasn't recognised Writing Up

students as full-time students. Imperial now does. But, this message hasn't passed on to all the councils in London and many still chase writing-up students for Council Tax, despite documents stating their full-time status. The Advice Centre can help if this happens to you.

**– Registry Office, Level 3 Sherfield**

– registry.advice@imperial.ac.uk

"My funding hasn't come through! I'm eating alphabet spaghetti straight out of the tin!"

On occasions, a student's funding hasn't come through. If this happens to you, your first port of call is your supervisor. If they can't do anything about it, approach your department's Postgraduate Tutor who should be able to help you. If at this point, you are still getting nowhere, come to the Union and speak to either the GSA Chair, the Student Advisor, Nigel Cooke, or the Deputy President (Welfare), Charlotte Ivison.

"How in heck do I get around London without my wheels?!"



Whether you're a UK student from outside of London, or you're an international student arriving in the UK for the first time, London is

a large, sprawling place regardless of where come from. Using a car to get to university is not a very practical means of transport.

**Transport for London** runs the London Underground, buses and the recently created Cycle Hire scheme. Get yourself an Oyster Card to save yourself money on TfL transport. Oyster journeys are heavily discounted compared to buying normal tickets. Students can get further discounts with Student Oyster Cards, and on top of this you can get weekly, monthly or annual passes. Check the TfL website for details. Or, buy your very own bike and hit the roads – just go carefully!

**– Transport for London**

– tfl.gov.uk

"My supervisor is a total moron. He/she just plays with his/her lasers all day, totally ignoring me."



If you feel you are not receiving enough support from your supervisor it is possible to get help and even possible to switch supervisors completely, if necessary.

Your first port of call is to speak to your department's Postgraduate Tutor. If this doesn't work, approach your department's Course Representatives. These are student volunteers who will ensure that your problem is passed up the Union hierarchy. If this fails, you can approach the Union yourself and we'll assist you as much as we can.

"I think I'm depressed."

If the stresses of university or anything else in your life overwhelm you it could lead to depression, which is common amongst students.

The **Student Counselling Service** is a College-led team consisting of qualified counsellors who are there to help students out. If you think you are suffering from depression, approach them for assistance. They also offer help for any concerns you might find embarrassing or difficult to talk about with your friends or family including: homesickness, anxiety, bereavement, sexual issues, abuse, depression and suicidal feelings.

After an initial meeting, the counsellor will assess how many times you should meet again in the future. They can offer up to six sessions before referring you to an external specialist.

– **Student Counselling Service**

– counselling@imperial.ac.uk  
– 020 7594 9637

"Is there someone I can chat to about my faith? Is there anywhere I can pray on campus?"

Should you have any questions or issues regarding your faith, or simply want to further explore your faith, the **Chaplaincy** is the place to visit. The team consists of mainly Christians, but supports every faith.

The Chaplaincy Centre itself can be found in the East Basement of Beit Quad. There is also a prayer room where you can pray or meditate.

For the large Muslim community at Imperial, there is a prayer room located on the north side of Princes Gardens. Additionally, prayer sessions are held in the Union on Fridays.

The Islamic Society should be contacted for opening hours and prayer times. Similarly, the Jewish Society holds midday prayers near campus too.

– **Chaplaincy**

– chaplaincy@imperial.ac.uk  
– 020 7594 9600

"I've had my wallet stolen and been slapped about a bit. Ouch."



Along with the fast times and the dazzling lights of the city comes crime. The most common problems students face are theft and assault. but there are ways of reducing the risks you face. The **Suzy Lamplugh Trust** provides plenty of information on reducing the risks of being a victim of crime. Remember to lock your rooms when you leave!

If you are a victim of crime, and you live in halls, tell the wardens straight away. If it happens on campus, tell College security. And, if it happens in your rented flat or out and about in London, call the police!

– **Suzy Lamplugh Trust**

– www.suzylamplugh.org  
– 020 7091 0014

"My disability is hampering my university life."

The **Disability Advisory Service** is located in the Sherfield Building and is available to students to discuss issues concerning

accessibility, accommodation, financial entitlement and more. Those of you who are eligible to apply for the Disabled Students Allowance and for Government funds administered by Local Education Authorities can seek help from the Service too.

– **Disability Advisory Service**

– disabilities@imperial.ac.uk  
– 020 7594 9755

"I need funds. Gizza a job mate!"

The Union has a number of part-time jobs available for students. You can earn money by working behind the bars or in the catering area, doing data-entry for the finance team, stewarding at Union events, working as part of the Entertainments team or DJing.

Most departments offer paid teaching opportunities where postgraduates can assist in undergraduate laboratory classes, or similar such sessions. Speak to your departmental tutor to find out more about this.

International students (excluding most EU students) must note that you are only permitted to work part-time for 20 hours per week.

– **ICU Jobs Website**

– imperialcollegeunion.org/jobs

"The Home Office are chasing me... I've got visa problems."

Visa issues are a common problem for international students. The International Office should be your first port of call for resolving any of these issues. They can also provide you with advice on the Points Based System and employment in the UK.

– **International Office, Level 1 Sherfield**

– international@imperial.ac.uk  
– 020 7594 8040

"I'm an international student and I need to register with the police."

Certain international students will be required by a stamp in their passport or a condition on their original/ renewed visa, to register with the police within 7 days of arrival. Please check your passport/ visa to see if this applies to you. Registration costs £34, but there is no charge for renewal. You have to renew whenever you move address.

If you do need to register with the police, you will need to go to the Home Office's **Overseas Visitor Records Office** located in Borough. Head to their website, or contact the International Office for more details.

– **Overseas Visitor Records Office**

– ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk  
– 020 7230 1208

"I got bitten by a ferocious cat and my foot feels like it's about to fall off. What should I do?!"



If you do yourself a mischief, and it's obviously really bad, get to a hospital! If you are unsure but worried, ring **NHS Direct**, a free health advice service.

On campus, we have the **Imperial College Health Centre**. All Imperial students can register with the practice. The Health Centre is open on most weekdays from 8am to 6pm, except Tuesdays when it closes at 1pm.

During student holidays the Health Centre closes at 5pm. They also have emergency opening hours.

- **NHS Direct**  
– 0845 4647
- **Imperial College Health Centre**  
– imperialcollegehealthcentre.co.uk  
– 020 7584 6301



"I need advice about my sexuality."

If you are questioning whether you are homosexual, heterosexual or whateversexual, or you are happy with your defined sexuality and you just want to discuss it, you can get in touch with the **London Lesbian & Gay Switchboard** for advice. Alternatively, Imperial College Union has a very active **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender society**, called **IQ**, which you are more than

welcome to get involved with. **The Student Counselling Service** also offers counselling on such issues.

- **London Lesbian & Gay Switchboard**  
– www.llgs.org.uk  
– 020 7837 7324
- **IQ (LGBT society)**  
– iq@imperial.ac.uk
- **Student Counselling Service**  
– counselling@imperial.ac.uk  
– 020 7594 9637

## My Postgraduate Experience

### PhD Years 1 & 2

As a medical student, opting to pursue a PhD in the middle of my studies posed a pretty huge challenge. Before starting in the lab, I was familiar with one technique and had heard of 3 or 4 more, all of the others I hadn't even imagined. With the support of my post-doc supervisor & PhD supervisor (as well as my fellow students!) it didn't take long to settle in. So, if you're in a good lab with helpful people, then I believe anyone can succeed in research.

A typical day for me will include 12 hours of work, a run home, food and sleep with not much room for anything else. If I was better organised, I might have been able to squeeze this down to 10 hours. In my lab, however,



there are people here from 6.30 am until 11pm so it's a pretty intense environment.

At the weekends, I will usually work at least half a day on both days, as will a good few others. Many certainly manage to not work so many hours, but I always think that you should work as hard as possible to be as good as you want to be. The social side of a PhD is very mixed, but in Virology we're very fortunate to have a good/interesting bunch of people combined with a good tea room which can get pretty full during tea/lunchtime! A PhD is a once in a lifetime experience, and you can make as much of it as you want to.

**by Nicholas Peter**

"People are cracking jokes about me and it's gone beyond banter and into the realms of the sinister."



If you feel you are being unfairly treated or discriminated against by your colleagues or fellow students, the Union has an **Equal Opportunities Officer, Stuart Haylock**, who you can get in touch with. The Officer's duty is to uphold equality on campus. So, whether you feel uncomfortable in your working environment or you are being treated in a blatantly discriminatory way, contact the Officer who will either be able to help or escalate the issue to the next level.

– **Equal Opportunities Officer**  
– [stuart.haylock08@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:stuart.haylock08@imperial.ac.uk)

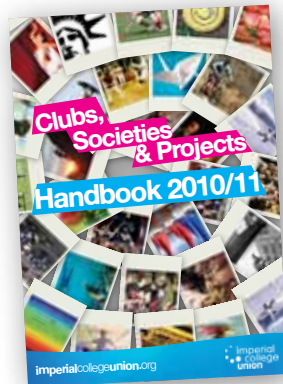
"So many exams... So much coursework... Such little time... Brain going to explode..."

This one applies to Masters students studying for exams and also PhD students feeling the weight of a hefty workload and impending deadlines – work-related stress is a common problem at university. Even if you feel you know how to prepare yourself for exams or manage your time impeccably, there is a fair chance that you'll still feel like

you can't possibly see beyond the date of your final exam or deadline. The **Imperial College Health Centre** runs an Exam Stress Workshop which lasts for half a day examining, in depth, the anxiety experienced during exams or performance periods and the different ways to manage it.

– **Imperial College Health Centre**  
– [imperialcollegehealthcentre.co.uk](http://imperialcollegehealthcentre.co.uk)  
– 020 7584 6301

"I'm struggling to make friends and I don't really know where to go in London. Sad panda face."



London is an enormous place, teeming with people, life and activity. But, living in such a bustling area can be as suffocating as it is liberating. With so much to do and so many new faces, it can be an overwhelming experience knowing what to do. If you haven't already checked out the Imperial College Union Clubs, Societies & Projects Handbook 2010/11, have a perusal and you should find a group of friendly people in there that share your interests.

– **Imperial College Union Clubs & Societies**  
– [imperialcollegeunion.org/clubslist](http://imperialcollegeunion.org/clubslist)

# Useful Contacts & Websites

## Where can I find a flat?:

- Imperial Student Accommodation Office  
Level 3, Sherfield Building  
020 7594 9444  
accommodation@imperial.ac.uk
- gumtree.co.uk
- craigslist.co.uk
- spareroom.co.uk
- moveflat.com

## Where can I get homeware?:

- Debenhams
- Habitat
- IKEA
- Argos
- In supermarkets and pound shops!
- gumtree.co.uk for used stuff

## Where can I buy electronics?

- Argos
- Maplin
- Tottenham Court Road

## Where can I get stationary?

- Imperial College Union Shop
- WHSmith
- Ryman

## Where can I find scientific papers?

- pubmed.gov
- isiknowledge.com
- sciencedirect.com
- College Library

## Where can I get help with my computer?

- ICT Department  
imperial.ac.uk/ict  
West Wing, Level 4, Sherfield Building  
020 759 49000  
service.desk@imperial.ac.uk

## How can I contact the Library?

- 020 7594 8820  
Library Help: libhelp@imperial.ac.uk

Library Enquiry Desk: libenq@imperial.ac.uk

## Where can I find out more about the Graduate Schools?

- imperial.ac.uk/graduateschools

## Where can I find out about getting a job?

- Careers advice: imperial.ac.uk/careers/pg

## How can I contact College Security?

- Emergencies: 020 7589 1000, internally:  
4444

## Where is lost property kept?

- Lost Property Office  
Room 150, Sherfield Building  
020 7594 8915

## How can I work collaboratively with people at the same time, online?

- Google Docs: docs.google.com

## Where can I get free online storage space for backing up my work?

- dropbox.com
- adrive.com
- humyo.com

## How can I find out the telephone number of a business/company in the UK?

- Dial 118 118 and give the voice at the end of the phone the name of the place you're after

## How can I contact Ethos, the sports centre?

- 020 7594 6660

## I have a news story/enquiry/complaint! How can I get in touch with the student newspaper?

- Felix  
West Basement of Beit Quad  
020 7594 8072  
felix@imperial.ac.uk

**Imperial College Union**

Beit Quadrangle  
Prince Consort Road  
London  
SW7 2BB

Tel: 020 7594 8060  
Fax: 020 7594 8065  
Email: [union@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:union@imperial.ac.uk)  
Twitter: @icunion  
[imperialcollegeunion.org](http://imperialcollegeunion.org)

