

Student Handbook



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I: Principal's message

Thank you choosing to study at South London Academy. You are joining a truly international community at South London Academy since we welcome learners from the UK and EU. We provide a range of courses in subjects such as Dental Nursing, English Language, Pharmacy Service Skills, Pharmaceutical Science, Health and Social Care and IT courses.

We understand that the decision you made to study away with us is of major importance as you seek to improve your education and plan your future life; we are determined, therefore, to help and support you as much as we can so you settle into life as a learner at South London Academy as smoothly and as quickly as possible.

The Academy's mission is to deliver educational and training excellence, enabling learners to fulfil their potential by participating in learning opportunities. Learners who enroll at South London Academy are expected to share this vision and to strive to succeed in all their activities.

As a learner of South London Academy we trust you will look enthusiastically at the opportunities your course provides. We see qualifications as the passport to future success, helping you to clarify and pursue your chosen path. To succeed and achieve the highest standards you need dedication and commitment, to be focused on your goal and the determination not to allow anything to distract you.

We certainly value the dreams, aspirations and goals of our learners, and are determined you will benefit from a friendly and supportive learning environment that will challenge and reward you. You can expect our tutors to be knowledgeable, dynamic and supportive, our courses to be engaging, motivating and affordable, and all our staff to be helpful, polite and responsive.

This handbook has been prepared to provide you with information on a range of key matters relevant to the time you spend as a learner at South London Academy. It is essential that you take the time to familiarize yourself with its contents and follow the advice or guidance provided. As an enrolled learner at SLA you have certain rights, but you also have responsibilities, and we expect you to comply fully with Academy requirements. Familiarity with the contents of this handbook will therefore provide you with the best chance of successful and enjoyable studies. In the event that any matter needs clarification, please speak to the appropriate member of staff at as soon as possible.

Whatever your personal goals may be, we are here to give you the knowledge, skills and experience that will enable you to succeed in the modern world – and we look forward to working together to make this a reality.

Good luck – and I hope you get the most you can out of your time studying at South London Academy!

Principal

2: Personal contact details

You must ensure we have your correct address, phone number, mobile telephone number and email address at all times. If any of these details change you must inform us immediately by contacting the college via Email or Phone or Face to Face.

Klaspad is an essential tool for learners at South London Academy. In Klaspad you can find study materials, check your attendance record, view your timetable, pay your fees, find administrative documents (eg. term dates), and check your library record.

To change your personal details, simply log-in with your user-name and password and send us a request with the details (see the manual for further details). The Request facility is also used when asking for various support letters and materials as explained elsewhere in this handbook. There is also a 'Change in Personal Details' form you can complete in Student Affairs.

You can also use Klaspad to browse the library catalogue and access the Academy's e-books and e-journals – make sure you know how it works. You can contact the library or email it@southlondonacademy.org.uk to request help and support if required.

3: Student Affairs (and the Student Request Form)

Student Affairs is located near to reception. This is the first point of contact for you regarding pastoral (or welfare) support matters.

Student Affairs supplies the range of welfare support materials that are available. These can be requested using the Student Request Form, available directly from Student Affairs; the materials include, for example, the bank account letter, council tax letter, doctor's letter, National Insurance letter, travel/ holiday letter, academic reference, placement support letter etc.

At least 5 working days' notice should be given for the document you wish to request; the academic reference may take 10 working days. Letters and other support materials are only issued to learners with an acceptable record of attendance and fee payments.

Please note this handbook focuses mainly on pastoral (welfare) support information and must be read in conjunction with your programme handbook.

4: Student Welfare Coordinator

While the Student Affairs team is all available to help you, there is also a designated Student Welfare Coordinator based in Student Affairs whose job it is to provide additional help and support.

The Student Welfare Coordinator works closely with the Student Representative Council (SRC - see below) to facilitate an effective partnership between the students and staff. This is a key role at South London Academy since learners have representation in our academic frameworks and regulations. The Welfare Coordinator can be contacted about any personal matter or about any issue regarding representation. They also link with the SRC regarding recreational activities and the Academy's 'buddying' scheme for new learners at induction.

Safeguarding

We are committed to safeguarding all staff, students and visitors. There is a legal duty for staff to report any suspicions or disclosures of abuse for under 18 year olds and vulnerable adults to the Designated Senior Persons for Safeguarding in the college.

Staff cannot guarantee confidentiality for disclosures of this nature. A safeguarding policy for everyone is available at the reception. If you have any safeguarding concerns talk to any member of staff or contact:

Safeguarding Officers: Yadav Shrestha (phone ext. 301)
Director yshrestha@southlondonacademy.org.uk

Safeguarding Officer: Jackie Arnold
jarnold@southlondonacademy.org.uk

Anti-Bullying

We are committed to provide a caring, friendly and safe environment in which everyone can thrive and achieve. We have zero tolerance of bullying, and if you have any concerns: tell your tutor, the college counsellor or any other member of staff, or contact your tutor immediately or student representative members for immediate action.

5: Placements & careers

If you have enrolled on a course which includes a placement, SLA will only assist you in finding that placement if you are having trouble finding one on your own. The person who you should contact for help and support is your course assessor. We sometimes have employers contact us, therefore your course assessor can help to organize interviews for you if you are interested in the placement. As a part of assisting you in finding that placement, we provide guidance on finding jobs and support in making applications, improving CVs and covering letters. We also run CV Support workshops and will also help in preparing other relevant documentation. We also assist if a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is required for your course.

We also provide help and support on career related matters.

6: Student Representative Council

The purpose of the Student Representation Council (SRC) is to identify and represent student opinion so that it permeates and influences SLA's decision-making process in academic and other matters. This should help the staff and students to engage purposefully with each other with the intention of improving the student learning experience; it is also intended to help generate an exciting environment in-and-around the Academy by organizing activities and events to enrich the social life of SLA students.

The SRC is comprised of class representatives who are nominated or elected by their class, and course representatives who are nominated or elected by the class representatives. The main role of a student representative is to represent the views of her/ his class or course so those views can be considered when making decisions affecting the student learning experience.

The class and course representatives are involved across SLA's governance structure, for example in course (programme) team meetings, academic committee, health & safety and administrative committee. There is also a staff-student consultative committee specifically to address matters of common interest.

There is also an executive team elected by all the representatives at the beginning of each academic year. The executive team also meets regularly and consists of the following roles:

- President;
- Secretary;
- Student-Staff Liaison Officer;
- Equal Opportunities Officer;
- Sports/Events Officer;
- Clubs and Societies Officer.
- Safeguarding Officer

A dedicated Student Representative email is:

The main functions of the Executive Team are to:

- make sure that all classes and courses have a student rep at all times;
- plan and monitor the calendar of events for their current academic year;
- organize, coordinate and make sure that all the Student Reps are briefed and trained to enable them to deliver on their responsibilities with the help of the Student Welfare Coordinator;
- ensure that every event organized is in line with the Academy aims and objectives;
- support, monitor and encourage all their fellow students to participate in all events organized;
- always show interest and understanding of all the different issues that affect academic progress, focused on student needs and aspirations and be ready to engage with the different stakeholders in the provision and delivery of their education;
- evaluate all activities and make sure they are as inclusive as possible;
- take an active part in the induction events for new students of the Academy.

The SRC and Academy encourage you to be a participant in all activities - you too could become a representative or Executive Team member! A Student Representative Handbook is also available in the library. The SRC will provide further information about their activities, including recreational activities.

7: Student 'surgery'/ appointments

A student 'surgery' enabling learners to meet with a member of Senior Management Team is held weekly in term-time to discuss any matters of interest or concern. While we have an 'open-door' policy, this is a time when you know someone will be available and an appointment is not required. Dates and the venue are displayed around the Academy.

If you need to make an appointment to see a member of staff, this can be done by emailing the person concerned (contact details are at the end of this handbook) or by visiting reception and making a request.

8: Equal Opportunities

SLA is committed to ensuring that everyone studying or working at the Academy should be valued equally and fairly on the basis of merit regardless of age, class, disability, gender, marital status, nationality, race, ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation or social background. All learners (and staff) are expected to fully support this policy.

This statement applies to recruitment and admissions, to the coverage of the curriculum, to teaching and assessment of progress, and to welfare and support services. Any member of the Academy community who believes himself or herself to have been subjected to unfair treatment as described in this policy & associated procedures should report their concern to their tutor, Student Affairs or a senior manager. A copy of the full policy is available separately from Student Affairs.

9: Disability

You will have been asked to tell us about any disabilities you may have as part of the application process. This is most useful so we are aware of your individual needs from the outset and able to decide on the best and most appropriate form of support to provide. This may include, for example, providing larger print learning materials, allowing additional time for the completion of assignments or examinations, creating a personal evacuation plan in case of emergency.

A further opportunity to inform us is provided at induction; the Student Welfare Coordinator can be contacted who will then work with you to decide on the best and most appropriate form of support to provide. We do encourage all learners to provide us with the necessary information as early as possible; if we are not informed it is likely to affect the provision that can be made and the chances of success.

Please also see your programme handbook for further guidance.

10: Identity Cards

You will be issued with a SLA Identity Card as part of your enrolment. This card contains your photograph and must be worn at all times on SLA premises. The reason for this is to protect the safety of all learners and staff so consequently SLA operates a 'No ID No Entry' policy. If you arrive without your ID card you will be required to pay £2.00 for a temporary card.

If you lose your card you must report it to Student Affairs in writing immediately; replacement cards incur a charge of £5.00.

11: Learning Agreement Part 1 (LAG1)

This is the agreement you signed at enrolment that sets out what you can expect from SLA and what you must do in return. This focuses particularly on learners who are studying courses at SLA. Please keep your copy of the agreement safe and remember to read it carefully and follow the guidelines. SLA reserves the right to vary the conditions of LAG 1 after giving reasonable notice.

12: Learning Agreement Part 2 (LAG2)

This focuses particularly on UKVI requirements for Tier 4 overseas students regarding attendance and progression. Again, you must read it carefully and follow the guidelines.

SLA reserves the right to vary the conditions of LAG 2 after giving reasonable notice, particularly when immigration and visa rules are changed.

I3: Being prepared

You must ensure you arrive properly prepared and equipped for all sessions and appointments, thereby helping yourself and supporting the efforts of those around them in the Academy community. This includes possessing the necessary stationery, books and any other required resources.

I4: English speaking

South London Academy is a truly international Academy with learners from all over the world – and we are really proud of this fact.

However, all courses at SLA are delivered and assessed in English and all Student Affairs are provided in English. English is the official language of the Academy and only language that should be spoken. Particularly if you are studying English Language, this will help give the opportunity to improve your reading, writing and speaking skills.

English classes to support learners who are on a different main course are available at additional cost; in addition, you are encouraged to listen to the wealth of television and radio broadcasts available in the UK. Many channels may help you develop your language skills and your understanding of the world in which you live; BBC Radio 4 and BBC World Service may, for example, be useful given the varied mix of news, current affairs, drama, literature, religion, travel, culture, media, education, history, and philosophy to name but some of their output.

Similarly, watching the television can also be of benefit if you focus on high quality broadcasting – but don't forget that if you own a television in the UK you are required to buy a license (please visit www.tvlicensing.co.uk for further information).

I5: Attendance

100% attendance is expected - studying at SLA must take precedence over all other matters. An excellent record of attendance helps provide a solid foundation for academic success. If absent, you not only miss the essential content delivered in the session concerned, but also the important interaction that occurs in the wider learning environment provided at the Academy.

It is our expectation you will attend all your scheduled sessions so you participate fully in the learning process and gain the maximum benefit possible from the widest range of activities and experiences. Any learner not attending a compulsory session must apply for their absence to be authorized as identified in this section.

I5.1: Advanced application

Email studentaffairs@southlondonacademy.org.uk or complete the form in Student Affairs before the absence if it is known. You should detail the date your absence will start, the reason for being absent, and your expected return date. You will be expected to provide evidence (eg. a doctor's letter) or explanation to prove that you were unable to attend.

I5.2: First day application

Email studentaffairs@southlondonacademy.org.uk by 9am on the first day of the absence at the latest. You should detail the date, the reason for being absent, and your expected return date. You will be expected to provide evidence (eg. a doctor's letter) or explanation to prove that you were unable to attend.

15.3: Daytime departure application

Any learner who absents his or herself from any session during the day should complete form in Student Affairs before departure in order to apply for authorization. You should detail the date, the reason for being absent, and your expected return date. You will be expected to provide evidence (eg. a doctor's letter) or explanation to prove that you were unable to attend.

15.4: Late applications

Late applications for the authorization of absence could be emailed to studentaffairs@southlondonacademy.org.uk or the form completed in Student Affairs.

15.5: Application decisions

Once the application for authorization has been received, SLA will decide whether the reason given can be classed as authorized or unauthorized. Only SLA can determine this classification, and SLA's decision is final.

All absence is automatically unauthorized and will remain so unless SLA agrees to authorize it.

15.6: Authorised absence

Being authorized means you are absent with permission. SLA wishes to be a caring institution where possible and may be able to support learners who have a genuine reason for their absence. The reason for absence must be detailed and supported by evidence or explanation. Such reasons might include, but are not limited to, genuine sickness, family bereavement or religious observance.

All learners must be registered with a GP in the UK. If sick, you will be required to produce a letter from your GP as evidence to verify your application. Evidence will also be required to verify non-medical applications for authorization.

15.7: Unauthorised absence

This means you are absent without permission, either because you did not apply for authorisation, or because the explanation you gave was unacceptable, or because you did not provide evidence to prove that your application was true. The general rule is that if it can be arranged outside of timetabled hours, it **must** be. Unacceptable reasons might include, but are not limited to, holiday taken during a semester, working, or transport costs. Please be aware, however, that SLA regards it as unacceptable to have any unauthorised absences.

15.8: Attendance warnings and suspension

Warnings are sent to learners who have 4, or 8 continuous absences without prior authorisation. Suspension may follow if there are 10 unauthorised absences or attendance falls below 80%.

16: Punctuality

100% punctuality is also expected – it is a simple matter of courtesy. **You must ensure you plan your journey so you arrive in time for the start of your class.** You can go to the class if you arrive up to 15 minutes after it started but if you arrive within 15 minutes after the class started, you must sign the late arrival form provided by the Tutor who will then return it to Student Affairs. Any learner arriving after 15 minutes will not be allowed into their class and must report to Student Affairs; entrance to the class will only be allowed if then authorized by Student Affairs.

17: Signing-in

You are required to sign-in when arriving at the Academy, and out again when you leave. This is because we need to know exactly who is in the building in case there is an emergency. In the event of emergency, for example, we must be able to account for everyone marked as 'present'. Under no circumstances are you to sign-in for someone else. Doing so is regarded as a disciplinary matter.

In addition, please remember that to get your attendance mark you must have attended your lecture/ session and be given your mark by the appropriate member of staff.

18: Course Progression

The Academy reserves the right to suspend or expel learners who fail to attend mock exams and/or complete and submit compulsory coursework assignments on time, and/or who fail to make satisfactory progress in their registered courses, without any liability to the Academy.

Learners who make exceptional progress in their studies and who are subsequently able to cover their course syllabus and pass associated examinations prior to the scheduled end date of their course will not be able to maintain their learner status beyond the date of completion of their examinations without re-enrolling on a new course of study representing clear academic progression from their previous academic endeavors.

Learners wishing to continue studying at South London Academy after their previous studies have ended in either of the above circumstances must re-enroll on a new course of study. New enrolments in either of these cases will incur the standard course fees.

19: Course transfer

The Academy has strict regulations regarding requests from learners to transfer from one course of study to another once the learner has accepted an offer for their original choice of course by submitting a deposit to the Academy. The Academy reserves the right to refuse any such transfer request with no liability to the Academy.

In the event that a course transfer is authorized by the Academy, no fees will be refundable where a learner transfers to a course with a lower course fee. Learners who wish to transfer to a course with higher tuition fees than their original course must pay the difference between the fees before the transfer will be approved. A separate administrative charge of £250 will be payable to the Academy over and above all monies paid to the Academy to date.

20: Examination registration

Learners are responsible for ensuring they register with their awarding body/ organization by the deadline set (where applicable). Learners are also responsible for ensuring they register for examinations by the deadline set, and that they know when the examinations are being held and attend accordingly (where applicable). In addition, learners are liable for the cost of awarding body/ organization registration and examinations. The Academy reserves the right to suspend or expel learners who fail to attend mock exams and/or complete and submit compulsory coursework assignments on time, and/or who fail to register with their awarding body/ organization and their examinations, without any liability to the Academy.

21: Conduct

It is not possible to list all the things you should or should not do. In the main, all learners have a duty to be industrious, conscientious, responsible, open and honest at all times. This is the foundation of the relationships we seek to enjoy at SLA. Learners are also expected to be respectful and courteous to each other and to staff at all times, as staff are in return.

SLA believes that all decisions made and actions taken must be reasonable. In addition to the guidance in your Learning Agreement, you must:

- Comply with any reasonable request made of you by a staff member;
- Be aware of the noise you make in the building and avoid causing any unnecessary disruption to others;
- Take care when you communicate, refraining from the use of rude, profane, obscene, or improper language and gestures;
- Ensure your clothing is clean and modest, avoiding offensive slogans and motifs;
- Move sensibly around the Academy, avoiding the need to shout, run, jump, push, trip others or throw an object;
- Observe all health and safety regulations, and not commit any act which places the health and safety of yourself or any other member of the Academy community at risk;
- Consume refreshments only in the place provided and refrain from chewing gum at any time; ensuring that all rubbish is disposed of properly;
- Maintain an appropriate level of decorum at all times, in particular avoiding inappropriate displays of affection;
- Take appropriate care of Academy property, resources and facilities;
- Report any damage or loss of Academy equipment and/ or property to Student Affairs (any deliberate loss or damage will be charged);
- Check the notice boards and your email account on a daily basis for information (the Academy cannot be held responsible if you miss anything which was displayed for you to see);
- Conduct yourself appropriately in the local area, avoiding any nuisance being caused to our neighbors;
- Enter and use only designated parts of the premises;
- Turn your mobile phone off (or make it silent) when in tutors and meetings etc;
- Observe all Academy policies and procedures.

Normal rules governed by UK law also apply within the code eg. theft, fraud, drugs and smoking (strictly forbidden on SLA property).

22: Zero Tolerance Policy

SLA will not tolerate rude, violent or aggressive behaviour. Neither will we tolerate behaviour that is racist or sexist or that in any way acts against our Equal Opportunities policy. Any learner in breach of this rule may be suspended and/or expelled from the Academy.

23: Refreshments

Refreshments may only be consumed in the designated recreational areas; the only exception to this is the provision of water by the water machines. In particular, refreshments may not be consumed in the library or IT labs or classrooms. Drinks and snack machines are also available. Learners use the facilities provided at their own risk; please also ensure you help keep the facilities clean and tidy and ready for other people to use.

24: Personal property

You are advised not to bring any valuable items to SLA and to keep all your personal property with you at all times. SLA is not liable in any way for any lost or damaged items.

25: Security

Only staff, current learners, prospective learners and official visitors are allowed to enter SLA. All other visitors, whether friends or family, without prior appointments must wait in the reception area unless permission is given to enter the Academy premises by the staff of SLA.

26: First Aid and accidents

There is always a trained first-aider available – this information is provided at notice boards. There is also an Accident Book held at reception. All accidents must be reported and recorded in that book without exception.

27: Fire and emergency procedures

You must familiarize yourself with the locations of the emergency exits and fire alarm points - these are clearly marked around the building. Instructions of what to do in the event of fire are also displayed around the building.

27.1: If you discover a fire:

- Raise the alarm – operate the nearest fire alarm point;
- Leave the building by the nearest safe exit & alert a staff member at the assembly point of the fire's location;
- Only fight the fire if you are trained and feel confident to do so.

27.2: If you hear the fire alarm:

- Evacuate the building
Walk don't run
Stay calm and quiet
Do not push
Leave your bags & belongings;
- Use the nearest route;
- People with impaired hearing may be unaware of the alarm - alert them as you leave;
- Obey Fire Marshall instructions;
- **Report to the Assembly Point (Gordon Square);**
- Register with the Fire Marshall;
- Do not re-enter the building until you are told it is safe.

27.3: Learners must also remember:

- Keep calm;
- Keep fire doors closed;
- Keep escape routes clear;
- Keep windows and doors closed (in the event of a fire);
- Do not use the lifts;

- Smoking is not allowed in any part of SLA property at any time.

28: Data protection statement

SLA is bound by the Data Protection Act of 1998. This Act (law) regulates the way organizations can collect, use, keep and disclose personal information. It gives individuals the right to know what information an organization holds about them and it gives them the right to correct any information if it is wrong.

The data that SLA keeps includes your personal details (such as name, date of birth, gender, local and/or overseas addresses, country of residence/nationality, allergies and illnesses), academic records and accounting records.

SLA has security systems in place to protect all stored information from misuse or unauthorized disclosure or modification. SLA does not retain records for which we have no further use. SLA will not disclose information to a third party without first obtaining the written consent of the learner other than to meet its' obligations to organizations where we must legally comply, such as with the UK Visas and Immigration or Transport for London.

You may access the data we keep by appointment. To do this you must complete the 'request to view learner file' form available from Reception. The form will be passed to the Data Controller (Operations Director) and learners will be notified in writing of the day, date and time that has been allocated for viewing. A copy of the full policy is available separately from Reception.

29: Library

The Academy is committed to supporting learners in achieving their qualification through the provision of appropriate learning resources. The Academy library is intended to provide a collection of suitable books and other resources for reference and loan which can be used by learners to enhance their learning experience.

All learners who are currently enrolled on a programme and studying at South London Academy are entitled to access and use the library. Users are allowed to borrow items from the library provided it is properly authorized and recorded by library staff. In general, learners are allowed to borrow a maximum of two books for up to seven days. Books can be renewed up to a maximum of three times unless reserved by another user;

Please note that items overdue for return incur items fines; users are also liable to pay for any loss, theft, or damage to any item borrowed, and may also face disciplinary action as a result. The Academy reserves the right to withdraw learners' access rights to the library & other service (eg. letter requests or use of Oyster card) until any amount owed has been settled.

The library is open to learners 10.00am-4.00pm Monday to Friday. A copy of the full library usage policy is available separately from the library or Student Affairs.

30: IT facilities

The main IT lab is open to learners 9.00am-5.00pm Monday to Friday. All the computers have internet connection and there is Wi-Fi access within the Academy for the use of laptops.

Learners may use all the applications installed on the computers, and have the use of designated printers. Learners do not have access to the Academy servers but are able to access the common, shared folder and

their user profile. The user profile contains each learner's network information as well as allocated user storage space where it is recommended they save their personal files and assignments.

31: IT Usage policy

This policy applies to all users of Academy controlled systems as follows:

- All users will be issued a unique identifier (ID) and password for their personal and sole use for access to all Academy IT systems;
- The user ID and/ or password must not be shared with, or used by, anyone else for any reason;
- When users are first issued a password or IT staff have to change the password for any reason, it is recommended that users then change that password before making further use of Academy facilities;
- All computers require a user name and password to be entered before use, and screen savers that require a password to unlock should also be used;
- Users must not visit internet sites that contain obscene, hateful, pornographic or otherwise illegal material;
- Files downloaded from the internet and elsewhere, including mobile code and files attached to electronic mail, must be treated with the utmost care to safeguard against both malicious code and inappropriate material. Such files, or any other not known to have come from a reliable source, must be scanned for possible malicious code before being opened;
- Inappropriate material includes, but is not limited to, any data, text, image or programme which is unlawful or could bring the Academy into disrepute, material that could give offence or is criminal, and material which is covered by copyright but for which the user has not obtained permission from the copyright owner and for which there is no licence to copy by the Academy;
- Users must not use the internet to send offensive or harassing material to others;
- Users must not use the computer to perpetrate any form of fraud or software, film or music piracy, or any other form of illegal activity;
- Users are responsible for ensuring any information stored locally on a computer or laptop is backed-up on a regular basis;
- Sensitive or confidential data may only be accessed from equipment in a secure location and files must never be printed on a networked printer that does not have adequate protection or security;
- Users are not allowed to load unapproved software or any other material onto SLA's PCs, laptops or workstations.

A copy of the full policy is available separately from Student Affairs.

32: Copyright

Printing and duplication facilities are provided in the Academy Library and elsewhere, and learners must ensure they are compliant with the copyright laws and also notices that are displayed by each copier and printer. Moreover, the Academy also discourages individuals to carry out copying of any copyrighted material in its photocopier and printer.

33: Fee payments

You may have chosen to pay your fees in one amount or a payment plan may have been agreed with the Academy. Fees can be paid by Bank Transfer or by cheque or in cash.

While it is important you manage your finances effectively, if you are experiencing difficulty with your fees you must contact the Accounts office to discuss your options as a matter of urgency. You can visit the Accounts office by the reception or you can email accounts@southlondonacademy.org.uk to make an appointment.

If you are in difficulty, the Accounts office will try and help you. Please note, however, that charges may be applied, especially if payments are missed. South London Academy also reserves the right to refer non-payment to professional recovery agents if necessary, the cost of which must also be met by the learner.

Further information regarding fee payments, deposits and refunds is available in the terms and conditions to which you have already agreed, available from the website or from reception.

34: Banking and finance

You will probably find that you need to have your own UK bank account if you don't have one already, and you should try to open an account as soon as possible. A letter to help you open an account is available from Student Affairs; you must tell us with which bank you are trying to open an account & write it on the Student Request Form. The banks can take some time to open an account so don't delay!

Local banks include:

- Barclays (107A Plumstead High Street, London SE18 1SE);
- Barclays (29 Lakedale Road, Plumstead, London SS18 1PP);
- Barclays (41 Woolwich New Road, Woolwich, London SE18 6ET);
- Halifax (50 Powis Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6LQ);
- HSBC (15 Wellington Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6PH);
- Lloyds TSB (19-21 Powis Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6HZ);
- Natwest (1-7 Powis Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6LE).
- Santander (41 Powis Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6JD)
- The Money Shop Pawnbroking (16 Beresford Square, London SE18 6AY)

Some Building Societies also offer full banking facilities and the Post Office operates the National Savings Bank and some banking services.

35: Accommodation

We appreciate that where you live is a very important part of your life at the Academy and we recognize that meeting your needs as far as possible will help you to make the most of this new and exciting period on your life. It is important for you to have suitable, safe accommodation while you are studying, especially if you are new to the UK. Start making arrangements as soon as you have been accepted on your course.

You may have taken advantage of our support in using Homestay, the learner residence or house sharing. However, you may wish to find your own accommodation, probably in private rented accommodation or with friends/ relatives. While it is your choice where you live, it is essential that you live in a place with quick and easy access to SLA as this will help ensure you get to all your classes on time.

The following websites provide assistance with finding private rented accommodation:

- www.accommodationforlearners.com
- www.euracom.co.uk
- www.globalien.com
- www.learner-accom.com
- www.studios92.com
- www.uklodging.com
- hwww.unite-learners.com/learner-accommodation-London
- hwww.homesforlearners.co.uk/south-east/learner-accommodation-london
- <http://www.londonlearnerpad.co.uk/Home>

There is also International Learners House which has 700 bed-spaces in single, shared rooms and flats which can be rented for both short and long stays. Facilities include a conference centre, restaurant, cyber cafe, travel agents and fitness centre, details as follows:

- Address: 229 Great Portland Street, London W1W 5PN;
- Telephone: 020 7631 8310 (for accommodation);
- Telephone: 020 7631 8300 (all other calls);
- Fax: 020 7631 8307;
- Email: accom@ish.org.uk
- Website: www.ish.org.uk

35.1 Tenancy agreements

Renting a house or a flat requires you to have a contract or tenancy agreement which you must examine closely before signing. Tenancy agreements are usually signed for a period of 6 months (minimum) but can be longer. The agreements sets out the rights, responsibilities and obligations you and your landlord have, so make sure you read it carefully before signing it.

As long as you pay the rent and do not break the conditions in the agreement, you have the right to stay for 6 months. After 6 months, if your landlord wants you to leave, he/ she must give you notice as set out in the agreement and you must leave.

If you have a license agreement (you are living in the same place as the landlord), the notice period may be shorter than for a tenancy agreement, for example 1 month.

You may be required to pay a security deposit which will be retained by the landlord until you have moved out, provided that there is no damage to the property and you have been given the correct notice to vacate the property.

35.2: Checks to make before signing a contract/ tenancy agreement

Your tenancy agreement is a legal, binding document so consider, for example:

1. How long does the agreement last?
2. Can it be extended?
3. How much is the deposit?
4. Is there an inventory of fixtures and fittings to check?
5. How much is the rent?
6. When must the rent be paid?
7. How must it be paid?
8. Will receipts be provided?
9. How often are rent reviews?
10. Does the rent include council tax?
11. What are the charges for utility (gas, electric and water) bills?
12. Are these included in the rent?
13. Who is responsible for paying for the TV license (a UK requirement if you have a TV)?
14. How long before do you have to serve notice to the landlord if you wish to leave?
15. How long before must the landlord serve notice on you?
16. What is the period of notice itself from either side?
17. When you leave, how quickly will your deposit be returned to you?
18. Under which circumstances will the landlord keep some, or all, of the deposit?

35.3: Accommodation tips

Make a list of anything that is damaged (for example, note any scratches, cracks, or stains) and give a copy of this to your landlord. You may want to take photographs as soon as you move into your room(s), to prove that any damage was not caused by you. If anything is missing or damaged when you leave, your landlord may try to keep part of your deposit to pay for this.

You may also wish to check whether the accommodation you are going to see is in a safe area before you go. Write or e-mail your local police and ask them about local crime spots and if there have been any police visits, disturbances or any anti-social behaviour orders in the area you are going to, and also if the property you are viewing has ever been burgled. Police information in London can be found at www.met.police.uk

35.4: Looking after your belongings

We advise that you consider the following:

- When moving into new accommodation, don't leave luggage or belongings outside or in the open boot (trunk) of a car or taxi;
- Use an ultraviolet pen to mark your valuables with your name and learner ID number - this will help the police identify you as the owner if they are stolen and recovered;
- Make sure your laptop, television, video and other valuables can't be seen through a window, and never leave cash or credit cards lying around;
- Make a list of your possessions, including make, model and serial numbers, for reference and ideally keep photographic records of valuables;
- If you are away from your home, try to get a friend to keep an eye on your property;
- If you have a bicycle, always lock it up when you're not using it, by connecting its frame and wheels to a fixed object with a good-quality 'D' lock (available from all good bike shops). Mark it with your

postcode, so the police can return it if it is stolen and recovered. Information about marking and registering your bike can be found at The London Cycling Campaign website: www.lcc.org.uk/index.asp. We regret there are no bicycle storage facilities at SLA;

- Try not to use a computer case when carrying a laptop - use a less obvious bag to carry it in and think carefully before using your laptop in crowded places. Always back up your work and keep it separate from your laptop;
- Also avoid displaying other expensive items, such as watches, jewelry, iPod/ mp3 player, earphones or mobile phones, in busy public places;
- Register your most valued possessions including your mobile phone, bicycles, and laptops, free of charge, with Immobilize Phone Crime (www.immobilise.com). If an item is stolen, call 08701 123 123. You will need to have your IMEI number (15 digit serial number) when reporting a stolen mobile phone – this can be found by dialing *#06# on most mobiles or by looking behind the phone battery. You should keep a note of your IMEI number in a safe place in case it is required. Never leave your mobile phone unattended.

36: Council Tax

Council Tax is a form of local taxation payable to the Council where you live to cover the cost of the services that they provide locally. It is applicable to every member of the public within the Council's boundaries, though learners may be able to claim exemption from their local Council.

To qualify for exemption, learners need to be enrolled in a full-time course of education at a prescribed educational establishment (including SLA); this must be for at least one academic year or calendar year. Learners are required to attend the course for periods of at least 24 weeks in the year and be required to study for at least 21 hours per week.

A letter is available from Student Affairs if required. Council tax enquiries in Woolwich can be made at the following:

- Telephone: 020 8921 4147;
- Online: www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk
- Address: Royal Borough of Greenwich, The Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington Street, London SE18 6HQ

37: Insurance

There are many reliable insurance providers from which to choose; general advice on insurance and a full list of insurance brokers can be obtained from the Association of British Insurers at www.abi.org.uk

SLA recommends that all overseas learners have health insurance to cover their stay in the UK, and that all learners are insured for your personal belongings to cover theft, loss and, if you wish, accidental damage.

Several companies specialize in learner insurance cover, and you can look on the internet for the deal that suits you best. Try the following sites:

- www.endsleigh.co.uk
- www.cover4learners.com

- www.eandl.co.uk/learner-insurance
- www.saxoninsurance.com

You may get a good deal from the bank you open an account with. For details ask at the bank, or see:

- www.hsbc.co.uk/1/2/personal/insurance/learner-insurance
- www.barclays.co.uk/insurance/learner-insurance/possessions
- www.natwest.com/personal/insurance/gl/learner-belongings-insurance
- www.natwest.com/personal/insurance/gl/contents-insurance.ashx

You can also search the internet for other learner insurance offers to see which offers best suit you.

38: Identity protection

Your identity and personal information are valuable. If criminals find out your personal details, they can use them to open bank accounts and get credit cards, loans and documents, such as passports, in your name.

The website www.identitytheft.org.uk can help you to protect yourself against this happening. It also advises you what to do if it does happen and suggests where to get further help.

39: Transport for London (TFL)

Transport for London (TFL) is the organization responsible for running the public transport system in London. There is an extensive public transport system mainly comprised of trains, buses and underground trains ('the tube'). You can find all you need to know about the service, including information about the types of ticket and travel card available, maps, prices and timetables, by visiting the TFL website. The website can be found at www.tfl.gov.uk

Perhaps the most popular type of travel card in London is the Oyster card because it offers the cheapest fares. You can pay to add credit to your Oyster card at most stations, many shops, or by using the TFL website.

The 18+ Learner Oyster photo card allows you to save 30% on Travel cards and Bus and Tram passes in London (valid for 7 days, 1 month or up to a year). To apply on line go to www.tfl.gov.uk & select the 'Tickets' tab. Then select the '18+ learner' from the 'Learners and children' menu, and then the 'Apply online' option, and follow the instructions.

You will need a digital passport size photo to upload, your 4 digit SLA identity number preceded with an 's' (eg. S1234), and a credit or debit card to pay the £10.00 fee. Please note that TFL checks the identity of each applicant with SLA before issuing the Oyster card. Once the application has been approved, it takes about a week to deliver the Oyster card to the address provided.

The TFL website also contains a very useful 'Journey Planner' that will tell you how to reach your destination. You simply type-in where you are travelling from, where you are travelling to, and when you wish to travel – and the 'Journey Planner' will give you all the options.

In central London there are bicycles available for hire; details are again available through the TFL website. In the UK it is not a requirement to wear a helmet when cycling on pavements though it is permitted when cycling in the road.

39.1: Using public transport

Here are some tips on using it safely:

- If travelling by bus, try not to wait at bus stops alone;
- When you are on the bus, sit downstairs if you are on a double-decker, where the driver and other passengers can see you. Arrange for others to meet you at the bus stop if you are returning late and have a long way to walk home;
- If you can, take a taxi rather than walk the streets with a road map and your luggage;
- If you travel by train or the tube don't sit in an empty carriage - try to sit near groups of people in a well-lit area;
- When you are on the train, store your luggage as close to your seat as possible or where you can easily see it. If you use a luggage rack, check your belongings regularly, especially when a train stops at a station;
- If you are travelling a long way by train, make sure someone knows which train you are travelling on and when you are due to arrive;
- Check the time of the last train, bus, tube or tram home to avoid being stranded at night. Think about texting a message about your travel arrangements to a friend;
- Always have some cash on you and a back-up plan if you are separated from the people with whom you are travelling;
- If you are lost or in need of assistance when travelling by train, find a member of staff or telephone the British Transport Police free on 0800 40 50 40;
- Do not open the doors until the vehicle has completely stopped;
- Try to avoid walking alone after getting off a train, bus, tube or tram. If you can, walk close to a group of people or arrange for someone to meet you;
- Never walk across or touch railway lines – it is very dangerous and you could be badly injured or even killed. Some are electric too;
- To remain safe and alert, don't listen to iPods or have long conversations on mobile phones while you are walking.

39.2: Using a taxi

There may be times when you need to take a taxi. If you don't feel safe walking home, use a taxi. However, you do need to be aware of some basic safety guidelines about using them. Here are some helpful tips:

- Never use an unlicensed taxi;
- Check the back of the taxi to ensure there is an official license plate displayed before you get in. If you are still not sure, ask to see the driver's identification;
- Be aware that some 'minicabs' that stop in the street may be cheaper, but are not licensed and are therefore not as safe as taxis or minicabs that you arrange by telephone. You must pre-book private hire taxis otherwise you are not insured to be in the vehicle;
- If the taxi does not have a meter, agree the fare with the driver before you get into the taxi in order to avoid misunderstandings when you get to your destination;

- Sit in the back of a taxi and directly behind the driver whenever possible;
- It is quite acceptable to chat with the driver, but do not give away any personal information;
- Have your cash ready and leave the cab before you pay the driver.

40: Driving in the UK

To drive in the UK you must be at least 17 years old and have a license that allows you to drive in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales). There are different arrangements in Northern Ireland.

UK licenses are issued by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). If you have a driving license that was issued in your home country, you must find out if you can use it to drive in Great Britain and for how long it is valid.

You must be insured to drive and you should always ensure that the car you are driving is correctly taxed (a current tax disc – a small circular paper certificate – should be displayed on the windscreen).

The Highway Code is a government publication that provides a summary of UK traffic law and has pictures of all the road signs in use in the UK (many of which are also used throughout the European Union). You can buy this at most good bookshops or read it online at:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/highwaycode/index.htm

Driving is on the left-hand side of the road and over take on the right. Seat belts must be worn at all times. It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone or send or read text messages while driving. You must not drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs and you must observe all speed limits. Also, remember that pedestrians have the right of way when on pedestrian crossings.

Here are a few more tips to help you drive safely in the UK:

- If you are going on a long journey, plan your route using main roads, and telephone ahead to let someone know roughly when to expect you;
- Before you set off, check your tires and fuel and oil levels. Tire weld is useful in case of a flat tire in a remote area as it will mend a punctured tire for long enough for you to reach a garage;
- Always take a good torch and check the batteries regularly;
- Handbags or briefcases are safer if placed on the floor or behind seats rather than on the passenger seat when travelling;
- Don't leave valuables in the car – if you have to, lock them in the boot or trunk so they are out of sight;
- If you are travelling in a car alone, lock all the doors and keep the windows closed while you are driving;
- Make sure you are a member of a breakdown organization (such as the AA or RAC – there are many from which to choose).

For overseas learners, 'driving in England, Scotland and Wales: a guide for international learners' – can be found at: www.ukcisa.org.uk/learner/info_sheets/driving.php

41: Personal safety

It should be safe to walk on the streets in the UK, although you should always be aware of your surroundings and use your common sense wherever you are. Consider the following:

- Wherever you choose to live, find suitable and safe routes to petrol stations, shops and public telephones. Try to find routes that are well lit and busy;
- Walk confidently on the pavement, facing oncoming traffic;
- When crossing the road, remember that vehicles drive on the left so they will be coming towards you from the right;
- If travelling after dark, always walk on well-lit streets. Avoid walking on your own - you are much safer with friends. Avoid putting yourself at risk by taking shortcuts, for example, through dark alleyways or parks;
- Don't carry large amounts of cash with you when you are out;
- Always keep your bag and coat or jacket with you, and don't leave them on a chair or out of sight;
- Make sure you carry a mobile phone with you or enough change or a telephone card so you can make a phone call or call a taxi, should you need one;
- Be alert and be brief when using a mobile phone - be discreet and try to conceal it;
- Don't wander along wearing your iPod/ mp3 player earphones;
- When using a public telephone, face outwards so that you can see what's going on around you;
- If you feel that you are being followed, cross the street (more than once if necessary), and if you are still unhappy, move as quickly as possible to a public area, such as a restaurant or bar, and telephone for help. It is not necessarily the best idea to use the first telephone that you see if it is in an isolated spot;
- Don't accept drinks from strangers or leave your drink unattended in public places as 'spiking' drinks with drugs or alcohol can occur;
- Think about buying a personal attack alarm and carrying it in your hand when walking at night, in case you need it quickly;
- Avoid confrontation – it's better and safer to walk away if you are being provoked or hassled;
- Be aware of others around you at cash point machines and try not to use cash machines at night or in poorly lit areas. If you must use one, go with a friend and leave as soon as you have your money;
- Always memorize your PIN (personal identification number) to access your money from a cash machine. Never write down your PIN or give it to anyone else;
- Carry your bag close to you with the clasp facing inwards or strap it over your shoulder. If someone grabs your bag, let it go. Your safety is more important;
- Have your keys ready well before you reach the door of your car or house;
- At home, always keep doors and windows closed and locked when you are out. Keep valuables out of sight and away from windows. Remember, many thefts are opportunistic rather than being planned in advance.

42: Emergency Services in the UK

The emergency services are the police, ambulance service, fire service and coastguard.

In an emergency you can dial 999 or 112 and ask for the appropriate service - calling these numbers is free of charge.

You should call 999 or 112 if:

- A crime is in progress;
- Someone suspected of a crime is nearby;
- There is danger to life;
- Violence is being used or threatened.

The person taking your call will ask you questions to try to assess the situation. Try to answer the questions as calmly and fully as possible.

You can also contact the police by dialing 101 to report less urgent crime and disorder, or to speak to your local officers; calls to this number cost 15p. For example, call 101 if:

- Your property has been stolen or damaged;
- You suspect illegal drug use or dealing in your local area;
- You need to report a minor traffic accident;
- You want to give the police information about crime in your area;
- You wish to speak to the police about a general enquiry.

The nearest local police station to SLA is Woolwich Police Station, 29 Market Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6QR. Please do not be afraid to call the police if you feel you are in danger. The police in the UK should be polite and friendly, are rarely armed, and are not connected to the armed forces or military.

The charity Crime stoppers operates a service using the free number 0800 555 111, which allows people to telephone anonymously with information about criminals or crimes. The information is then passed on to the police. Just tell them what you know, not who you are.

43: Healthcare

The National Health Service (NHS) is the UK's state health service providing treatment for UK residents through a wide range of health care services. Some services may be free to overseas learners, and some require payment.

43.1: Registering with a Doctor (also known as a General Practitioner, or GP)

All learners at SLA are expected to be registered with a doctor (Dr). Don't wait until you are ill! To find a doctor's surgery near to where you live so you can register, visit: www.nhs.uk

To help you register you can obtain the Doctor's letter from Student Affairs using the Student Request Form if required.

43.2: Learners on courses lasting six months or longer

If you are attending a course in the UK which will last for six months or more you will be entitled to NHS treatment from the beginning of your stay. To qualify for NHS treatment it is important that you register as a patient with a doctor.

A learner's spouse (husband or wife) or children under 16 (or under 19 if in full-time education) in the UK will usually be entitled to NHS treatment too. To receive free hospital treatment in England or Wales, family members (spouse and children) must be in the UK as the learner's dependents and not, for example, as visitors.

43.3: Learners on courses lasting less than six months

Normally, learners on courses lasting less than six months will only be entitled to limited NHS treatment. These learners are entitled to free emergency hospital treatment, but only treatment given in an NHS Accident and Emergency Department is free of charge. Once the patient is admitted on to a ward or given an outpatient appointment, charges will apply.

Doctors may agree to treat short-stay learners for free, but this will usually be limited to urgent treatment that cannot be delayed until the learner returns home.

Short-stay learners will have to pay for any other treatment as a private patient. Private health care can be extremely expensive without medical insurance; therefore it is very important to arrange adequate medical insurance before coming to the UK.

European Economic Area (EEA) learners and their dependents who are ordinarily resident in an EEA country should obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) in their country of residence before travelling to the UK.

Learners with EEA nationality but who normally reside outside the EEA will usually have to pay for health care in the UK. Therefore, such learners should take out private medical insurance.

43.4: What NHS services are provided free of charge?

If you are entitled to NHS treatment, the following services should be free of charge:

- Consulting a doctor and most other doctor related services (e.g. visiting a clinic);
- Emergency and non-emergency treatment in a hospital.

In addition, the following treatment is free to anyone regardless of length of stay in the UK:

- Some emergency treatment (but not follow-up treatment);
- Family planning services (available to all women regardless of marital status);
- Treatment of certain infectious diseases;
- Compulsory psychiatric treatment.

43.5: What NHS services might I need to pay for?

Even if you are entitled to free NHS treatment there are some services you might still be required to pay for:

- Medicines prescribed by your doctor - currently £7.85 per item but remember to check that the product you wish to buy doesn't cost more than £7.85 or you may end up paying too much;
- Some doctor related services such as travel vaccinations and obtaining a sickness certificate – ask your Doctor about costs;

- Dental treatment;
- Optical treatment.

For further details of NHS charges please visit: www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/Prescriptioncosts

43.6: Dental treatment

There is a charge for all dental treatment but the amount charged will depend on whether you are an NHS patient or a private patient. If you are a private patient you will be required to pay the full cost of any treatment you receive.

Patients need to be registered with a doctor in order to qualify for NHS dental treatment. You can find local dentists by visiting www.nhs.uk

Please note, NHS dental treatment can be very difficult to obtain as more and more dentists choose to treat private patients only. Overseas learners are strongly advised to obtain medical insurance that covers the cost of dental treatment as private treatment can be extremely expensive.

43.7: Optical treatment

Eye care is provided by high street opticians such as Boots, Dollond and Aitchison, Specsavers and Vision Express. There is also a wide choice of local, independent opticians.

There is normally a charge of about £20 for an NHS eye test. If the eye test shows you need glasses or contact lenses, the optician will give you a prescription. Prices of lenses and frames can vary considerably and it is worth shopping around and looking for special offers. Some opticians offer free eye tests if you buy your glasses or contact lenses from them.

NHS opticians can be found at:

www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/opticians/Pages/NHSopticians.aspx

43.8: Do I need medical insurance?

If you are not entitled to free NHS treatment, you should ensure you have adequate medical insurance to cover medical costs and the possible additional costs resulting from illness such as a flight home if you are from overseas.

Even if you are entitled to free NHS treatment whilst in the UK, you may consider taking out private medical insurance. Sometimes there are long waiting lists for non-emergency NHS services and private medical insurance could give you much quicker access to the treatment you need.

SLA recommends that all overseas learners have health insurance to cover their stay in the UK, and that all learners are insured for your personal belongings to cover theft, loss and, if you wish, accidental damage.

More information is given about insurance later in this handbook and a list of insurance brokers can be obtained from the Association of British Insurers at www.abi.org.uk

43.9: Common illnesses

It is quite usual for people in the UK to develop coughs, colds and sore throats at some point during the year. There is no 'cure' for common colds or flu but medicines such as paracetamol, aspirin and cough mixture are available to buy without a prescription from a doctor.

43.10: NHS Walk-in Centres (including Clover Health Centre)

NHS Walk-in Centres offer healthcare advice and treatment without having to make an appointment. There are no doctors but a team of experienced nurses can give treatment and advice. They can treat problems such as minor illness and injury, infections, stomach upsets, superficial cuts and bruises, sprains and strains and coughs and colds.

The Clover Health Centre is in Equitable House, 10 Woolwich New Road, Woolwich, London, SE18 6AB and learners are encouraged to visit there if necessary; it is open 8am-8pm every day.

43.11: NHS Direct

NHS Direct is a free 24-hour online and telephone service offering advice and information for non-emergency conditions (i.e. not life threatening). A telephone interpreting service is available. In England and Wales the telephone number is 111 (or try 0845 4647) or visit www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

43.12: Healthy eating

Eating the right food, and enough of it, is vital for keeping warm and healthy. A healthy diet is one which includes elements from all the main food groups (protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamins and minerals). You should try to eat something from each of the following groups every day:

- Bread, rice, pasta or cereals;
- Milk, cheese, yoghurt;
- Fresh fruit and vegetables;
- Meat, fish, lentils, nuts, beans.

There are many food stores in London where you can buy food from different parts of the world, so you should be able to find food that is familiar.

43.13: Sexual health

You can get free and confidential advice on contraception and sexual health from your doctor, an NHS Walk-in Centre, or the Family Planning Clinic. You can also find useful information on contraception and sexual health on the Family Planning Association website. This can be found at www.fpa.org.uk

If you are from overseas, British attitudes to sex may be different from those in your own country. It is often accepted that people who are involved in a relationship may have sex together. You are entirely free to live according to your personal standards (within the law) and should not feel pressured to adopt those of anyone else.

44: National Insurance

A National Insurance Number is an individual number given to everyone in the UK over the age of 16. You need to apply for a number to work in the UK and to be part of the UK tax system if not a UK national.

You need to find a job before applying for a number and then you need to make an appointment at your local Job Centre Plus office. This can be done by telephoning Job Seekers Direct on 0845 6060 234. Information is also found at:

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/Taxes/BeginnersGuideToTax/NationalInsurance/Introducti
ontoNationalInsurance/DG_190048](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/Taxes/BeginnersGuideToTax/NationalInsurance/Introducti
ontoNationalInsurance/DG_190048)

If you make an appointment, check what documents you will have to take with you. It may take several months to receive your number so you should ask for a letter confirming that you have applied and your employer can use a temporary number until then.

We can provide you with a letter to confirm that you are a learner at SLA to help you apply; the letter can be obtained from Student Affairs using the Student Request Form.

45: Laws in the UK

SLA requires all learners to comply with UK laws. Please note:

- You must not carry drugs with you of any kind (unless prescribed by a doctor), or use any illegal drugs, including cannabis, ecstasy, LSD or amphetamines;
- It is illegal to carry any sort of weapon including knives, self-defence CS gas sprays, guns or stun guns;
- You must be 18 or older to buy tobacco – and it is illegal for anyone to smoke in many places (e.g. public buildings, trains, tube trains etc.);
- You must be 18 or older to buy alcohol;
- If you own a television you must buy a license see www.tvlicensing.co.uk
- Never buy property that you think might be stolen, no matter how tempting a bargain it might seem.

Information about crime and justice can be found at:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/CrimeJusticeAndTheLaw/Thejudicialsystem/index.htm

If you need legal assistance, there are a number of organizations that can help you:

- Community Legal Service Direct offers access to free legal information and advice. Find out more at www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk or telephone 0845 345 4345;
- You can also contact the Citizens Advice Bureau at www.citizensadvice.org.uk – they provide free, confidential and independent advice in across the UK. Advice is available face to face and by telephone on issues such as legal difficulties, discrimination and housing.

46: Racial discrimination and harassment

The population of the UK is increasingly diverse and a great many religions and ethnic groups are represented here. Britain aims to be a tolerant society that believes in respecting the rights of minority groups. This belief is supported by law: the Race Relations Act is one of the most comprehensive laws against racial discrimination in the world and works towards the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunity between people of different racial groups.

If you are subjected to any form of racial discrimination or harassment, report it to SLA. We have a formal procedure to assist individuals who feel they have been discriminated against. You can also report it to the local branch of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The Commission will provide information and

advice to anyone who thinks he or she has suffered racial discrimination or harassment. You can contact the Equality and Human Rights Commission on their telephone helplines:

- England 0845 604 6610;
- Wales 0845 604 8810;
- Scotland 0845 604 5510.

Alternatively, their website can be found at: www.equalityhumanrights.com

47: Places of worship

There are many places of worship in the area, covering a variety of religions. Details can be found at www.finder.co.uk/woolwich/Places-Of-Worship

48: Course information

For further information about your specific course (for example, course content, structure, assessment, appeals and misconduct, resources and support), please see your course/ programme handbook which will be provided at induction.

49: Complaints procedure

South London Academy is committed to providing education and services of the highest quality. It aims to provide a supportive environment for all learners and to be responsive to concerns or complaints.

SLA recognizes that, in a complex organization, problems may arise that need to be addressed in order to ensure that high standards are developed and maintained. We regard feedback, both negative and positive, as a valuable resource to help us improve the quality of our provision and services.

This procedure is intended for teaching-related and service-related issues; if you wish to make an academic appeal regarding assessment, please see your course handbook for the correct procedure to follow.

The procedure has three stages as follows:

Stage 1 - You should first of all raise the matter with the person responsible for the issue giving rise to your complaint. Dealing with small problems or areas of concern as they arise will often prevent them becoming larger problems which are harder to resolve. Many apparent concerns result from misunderstandings which can often be resolved quickly and easily by talking through the matter;

Stage 2 - Every effort should be made by complainants to use the informal procedure before making a formal complaint. However, SLA recognizes that there may be problems that either have not been resolved, or are too serious to be dealt with informally. SLA is also aware that there may be occasions in which, for whatever reason, a complainant feels that it is impossible to raise an issue directly with the member of staff concerned. In any of these circumstances, the Academy's formal complaints procedure may be used. A formal complaint should be made using the complaints form available from Student Affairs;

Stage 3 - If the complaint has still not been satisfactorily resolved after Stage 2, you may appeal in writing to the Principal setting out the reasons for your disagreement with the Stage 2 decision. The Principal will only be concerned with two issues:

- Was Stage 2 conducted in accordance with this procedure?
- Was the final decision reasonable and in accordance with the facts of the case?

The Principal will then make a decision, and these will be communicated to the complainant.

Stage 4 - If the complaint has still not been satisfactorily resolved after Stage 3, you may appeal in writing to one of SLA's External partners depending on your programme or circumstances. For example it may be issue relating to a particular awarding body (City & Guilds, etc.). The contact will be provided to you in the stage 4 response.

SLA sees the use of its Complaints procedures as a positive, non-threatening means for change to the benefit of all. Where a complaint is upheld, SLA will take all reasonable steps to ensure similar situations will not occur in the future. A copy of the full procedure is available from the Student Affairs.

50: Useful contacts

The following helplines and websites offer impartial information and support by telephone and on the internet. Information and advice in most cases is free and confidential. Remember, these organizations are there to help you, so do not hesitate to contact them if you need assistance.

Accommodation

Contact South London Academy for Homestay, the learner residence or house sharing.

Useful websites include:

- www.accommodationforlearners.com
- www.euracom.co.uk
- www.globalien.com
- www.learner-accom.com
- www.studios92.com
- www.uklodging.com
- www.unite-learners.com/learner-accommodation-london
- www.homesforlearners.co.uk/south-east/learner-accommodation-london
- <http://www.londonlearnerpad.co.uk/Home>

International Learners House:

- Address: 229 Great Portland Street, London W1W 5PN;
- Telephone: 020 7631 8310 (for accommodation);
- Telephone: 020 7631 8300 (all other calls);
- Fax: 020 7631 8307;
- Email: accom@ish.org.uk

- Website: www.ish.org.uk

Alcoholics Anonymous

For information on alcoholism and problem drinking, and for those who want to stop drinking.

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

080 0917 7650

Association of British Insurers

Information about insurers can be found at:

www.abi.org.uk

020 7600 3333

Association of British Insurers
One America Square
17 Crosswall
London
EC3N 2LB

Banks

Local banks include:

- Barclays (107A Plumstead High Street, London SE18 1SE)
- Barclays (29 Lakedale Road, Plumstead, London SS18 1PP)
- Barclays (41 Woolwich New Road, Woolwich, London SE18 6ET)
- Halifax (50 Powis Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6LQ)
- HSBC (15 Wellington Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6PH)
- Lloyds TSB (19-21 Powis Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6HZ)
- Natwest (1-7 Powis Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6LE)
- Santander (41 Powis Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6JD)
- The Money Shop Pawnbroking (16 Beresford Square, London SE18 6AY)

British Council Information Centre

The British Council helps to share expertise and talent across the world, and provides information on a wide range of topics:

www.britishcouncil.org

+44 (0)161 957 7755

British Council Customer Service UK
Bridgewater House
58 Whitworth Street
Manchester
M1 6BB

British Insurance Brokers' Association

Provides information about insurance and insurance providers in the UK.

www.biba.org.uk

British Transport Police

Provides a policing service on the railways, London Underground (tube), the Docklands Light Railway (DLR), the Midland Metro tram system and the Croydon Tram link.

www.btp.police.uk

0800 40 50 40 or Text 61016

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

The CAB provides a usually free service that helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems by providing information and advice.

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

For Advice call 034 4411 1444
Customer Help line call 034 5404 0506
Textphone 18001 03454 04 05 06

Citizens Advice Consumer Service
Post Point 24
Town Hall
Walliscote Grove Road
Weston Super Mare
North Somerset
BS23 1UJ

Advice guide (CAB)

Request advice and information by visiting:

www.adviceguide.org.uk

Coach information (National Express Coaches)

Timetable and other information can be found at:

www.nationalexpress.com

0871 781 8178

Council Tax (Woolwich)

Information is available for the local area as follows:

020 8921 4147

Royal Borough of Greenwich
The Woolwich Centre
35 Wellington Street
London
SE18 6HQ

Crime stoppers

The charity Crime stoppers allows you to telephone anonymously with information about criminals or crimes. The information is then passed on to the police. Just tell them what you know, not who you are.

www.crimestoppers-uk.org

0800 555 111

Dentists (National Health Service)

If you need to find an NHS dentist, visit:

www.nhs.uk

Department for Transport

Advice on traffic law in the UK (from the UK government department).

www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/highwaycode/index.htm

Directgov

Website of the UK government with information on just about everything.

www.direct.gov.uk

Doctors (National Health Service)

If you need to find an NHS doctor, visit:

www.nhs.uk

Drink line

Advice on sensible drinking and alcohol misuse.

www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/26738981

0800 917 8282

Drink aware

Advice on sensible drinking and alcohol misuse.

www.drinkaware.co.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Offers support and advice in cases of racial discrimination or harassment.

www.equalityhumanrights.com

England 0845 604 6610

Scotland 0845 604 5510

Wales 0845 604 8810

Family Planning Association

If you need advice or guidance on contraception or any other related matter, visit:

www.fpa.org.uk

0845 122 8690

Gatwick Airport

Flight and other information can be found at:

www.gatwickairport.com

0870 000 2468

HIV/ Aids Helpline

If you need advice or guidance, visit:

www.avert.org/aids-help-uk

0800 567123

Heathrow Airport

Flight and other information can be found at:

www.heathrowairport.com

0870 000 0123

Identity protection

Practical advice on protecting yourself against identity theft.

www.identitytheft.org.uk

Immobilize Crime

To register your mobile phone, bicycle or laptop, and for advice on what to do if they are stolen.

www.immobilise.com

08701 123 123

Insurance providers

Insurers include:

- www.endsleigh.co.uk
- www.cover4learners.com
- www.eandl.co.uk/learner-insurance
- www.saxoninsurance.com
- www.hsbc.co.uk/1/2/personal/insurance/learner-insurance
- www.barclays.co.uk/insurance/learner-insurance/possessions
- www.natwest.com/personal/insurance/gl/learner-belongings-insurance
- www.natwest.com/personal/insurance/gl/contents-insurance.ashx

London Cycling Campaign

Information on cycling can be found at:

www.lcc.org.uk

Money

Information on money transfers can be found at:

www.westernunion.co.uk

0800 833 833 (Western Union)

www.moneygram.com

National Domestic Violence Helpline

Free telephone support for women experiencing domestic violence.

www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

0908 200 0247

National Drugs Helpline

A 24-hour, seven days a week, free, confidential service offering advice and information to individuals concerned about drugs.

www.urban75.com/Drugs/helpline.html

0800 77 66 00

National Lesbian and Gay Switchboard

Information, support and referral service for lesbians and gay men.

www.llgs.org.uk

020 7837 7324

National Union of Learners

The website for the National Union of Learners (NUS).

www.nus.org.uk

National Insurance

Information on National Insurance can be found at:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/Taxes/BeginnersGuideToTax/NationalInsurance/IntroductiontoNationalInsurance/DG_190048

National Health Service prescription charges

Information on prescription charges can be found at:

www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/Prescriptioncosts

NHS Direct (National Health Service)

NHS Direct offers confidential health advice and information

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

0845 4647

Opticians (National Health Service)

If you need to find an NHS optician, visit:

www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/opticians/Pages/NHSopticians.aspx

Police

The police force in London is called the Metropolitan Police.

www.met.police.uk

Emergency telephone 999 (or 112)

Non-emergency telephone 101

Woolwich Police Station, 29 Market Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6QR

Police registration

If you need to register with the police visit the:

Overseas Visitors' Records Office
Brandon House
Ground Floor
180 Borough High Street
London SE1 1LH

<http://content.met.police.uk/Site/overseasvisitorsrecordsoffice>

020 7230 1208

Places to stay (if travelling)

There are many economical places to stay if you want to travel around – try starting with:

www.yha.org.uk

www.travelodge.co.uk

www.premierinn.com

www.hoteldirect.co.uk

www.travelsupermarket.com/c/hotels/

Rape Crisis

Help for women and girls who have suffered rape, sexual abuse, attack or harassment.

www.rapecrisis.co.uk

0808 802 9999

Samaritans (24 hours)

The Samaritans provide confidential support to individuals in emotional distress or despair.

www.samaritans.org.uk

0845 790 9090

www.samaritans.org/branches/samaritans-lewisham-greenwich-and-southwark

020 8692 5228

Sexual Health Line

Information related to sexual health can be found at:

www.patient.co.uk/support/Sexual-Health-Line

0800 567 123

Stonewall

A political lobbying group working for the civil, political, economic social and cultural rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

www.stonewall.org.uk

020 7881 9440

Stop Smoking Support: NHS Smoke free Help Line

Help to stop smoking can be found at:

www.smokefree.nhs.uk

0800 022 4332

Learner Accommodation

A directory of learner accommodation and associated links.

www.learneraccommodation.org

Suzy Lamplugh Trust

A national charity offering advice on how to stay safe.

www.suzylamplugh.org

Telephone 020 8876 0305

Terrence Higgins Trust

The Terrence Higgins Trust delivers health promotion campaigns, national and local services to people with or affected by AIDS.

www.tht.org.uk

0845 1221 200

Television Licensing

Television licensing information is available at:

www.tvlicensing.co.uk

Train information

Timetable and other information can be found at:

www.nationalrail.co.uk

0871 781 8181

www.thetrainline.com

Transport for London

Timetable and other information can be found at:

www.tfl.gov.uk

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)

Immigration and visa information can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration

UK Narcotics Anonymous Helpline

Drug information can be found at:

www.ukna.org

0300 999 1212

UKCISA – The UK Council for International Student Affairs

Offers advice and comprehensive guidance notes on aspects of studying in the UK for international learners.

www.ukcisa.org.uk

020 7107 9922

uklearnerlife.com

Information about keeping yourself and your belongings safe.

www.uklearnerlife.com/Personal/Safety

Victim Support

An independent charity that helps people cope with the effects of crime. They provide free and confidential support and information to help individuals deal with their experiences.

www.victimsupport.org.uk

0845 30 30 900

Women's Aid

Offers support and a place of safety to abused women and children.

www.womensaid.org.uk

0808 2000 247

Worship

Places of worship can be found at:

www.finder.co.uk/woolwich/Places-Of-Worship

57: South London Academy contacts

Main telephone number 020 8305 8700
(In the UK)

Main telephone number 0044 (0) 20 8305 8700
(from overseas)

Address South London Academy

2nd Floor
115-123 Powis Street
London
SE18 6JE

General enquiries email info@southlondonacademy.org.uk
or admissions@southlondonacademy.org.uk

Website www.southlondonacademy.org.uk

Contacts - management and administration

Premises/Accounts/Operations Director Yadav Shrestha (phone ext. 301)
yshrestha@southlondonacademy.org.uk

IT Support Officer David Sobola (phone ext. 310)
dsobola@southlondonacademy.org.uk

Principal Mike Griffiths
mgriffiths@southlondonacademy.org.uk

Student Affairs, Welfare & Placement Coordinator (phone ext. 305)

Contacts – additional

Attendance matters info@southlondonacademy.org.uk

Accounts/Financial matters accounts@southlondonacademy.org.uk

IT matters itsupport@southlondonacademy.org.uk
(phone ext. 310)

Placement matters placement@southlondonacademy.org.uk

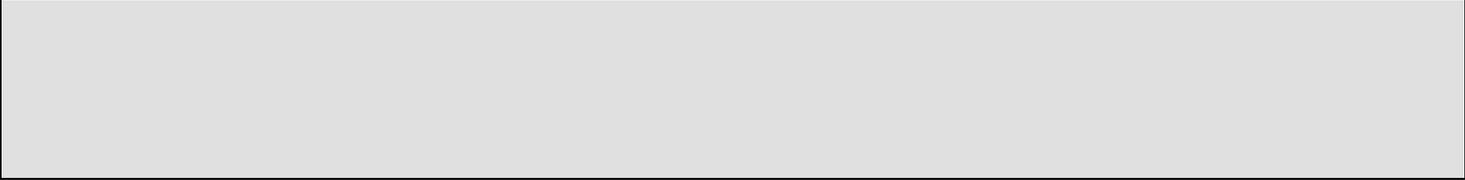
Student Affairs studentaffairs@southlondonacademy.org.uk

Student Representative Council src@southlondonacademy.org.uk

SLA Emergency Support Mobile:

The SLA Emergency Support Mobile number is set up for your own well-being, and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

It is for genuine emergency use only. Please do not jeopardize the health and safety of others by calling this number for non-emergency situations. Misuse of this service may result in exclusion from the Academy.



58: Company information

Company name: South London Academy

Place of registration: England and Wales

Company No: 09115164

Registered address: 2nd Floor, 115-123 Powis Street, London, SE18 6JE, United Kingdom.

59: Disclaimer

Whilst every care has been taken to ensure that the information contained in this handbook is correct at the time of publication, South London Academy accepts no liability for inaccuracies within this guide and moreover asserts that the publication of this handbook is not intended to, and does not, create any contractual or other legal relation between South London Academy and its accepted learners, their advisors/sponsors or any other individual or group. South London Academy reserves the right to modify the contents of this handbook without prior notice.