Advice for Student Officer Candidates

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Advice: International students

If you’re an international student, you can run in the Student Officer elections – and we would encourage you to do so! You’ll be able to work as a Student Officer under a Tier 4 visa, and KCLSU will help you to organise this (see Appendix 1 for further information).

Working as a Student Officer at KCLSU is a fantastic opportunity to launch your career, wherever you are from, and wherever you are going. Throughout the year you’ll gain invaluable skills and experiences that will help you to build your future career.

KCLSU can help you with sponsorship, and KCL can offer support and advice on career planning through the King’s Careers & Employability, and on visas through the Advice Service.

King’s College London Careers & Employability on why international students should run:

It’s for international students, not just UK-based ones
As an international student, you have a lot to offer KCLSU. King’s is an incredibly international community, and your cultural awareness and understanding of the challenges facing international students will be a huge benefit. Just coming to the UK to study shows that you have an international mind-set, and the confidence and bravery to move to a new country, to try something different, to take risks and to challenge yourself. Employers appreciate these attributes, and KCLSU are no different.

It doesn’t matter what area you want to get into next
You don’t need to be planning a career in politics to become a Student Officer at KCLSU. Previous Officers have gone on to work in the law, media, finance and a host of other sectors. Whatever you are planning next - or if you don’t yet have a plan – a year’s experience as a Student Officer is hugely rewarding and incredibly valuable on your CV.

It’ll help to launch your career
You’ll often hear employers speak about ‘transferable skills’ – skills which you’ve gained in one area of your life, which you can apply to another. You’ll gain countless transferable skills from a sabbatical post, which employers are going to love. Here are just a few:

- **Leadership** – you’ll be representing thousands of students and leading numerous teams.
- **Global thinking** – you’ll be at the vanguard of King’s increasing international focus. There’s never been a more exciting time to work at King’s if ‘international’ is on your agenda.
- **Communication** – you’ll be talking (and writing) to hundreds of people from all kinds of backgrounds in many different situations. You’ll develop the ability to do this which will benefit you throughout your professional life.
- **Influence and Networking** – you’ll be working with senior professional and academic staff at King’s and beyond, connecting with people who may be great contacts in your early career.

We often hear that you can’t be what you can’t see. As an Officer, you are a role model. You can have a big impact on other People of Colour who see you working as a representative and speaking on issues that affect our lives. Your visibility means that our issues are no longer “niche” or “side issues”. It forces people to challenge their ideas of the “average student”.

Rachel Williams, VP Welfare & Community 2016-17
Advice: Postgraduate students

Being a Student Officer offers valuable experiences for Postgraduate students – the opportunity to improve conditions for your peers, to sit on the highest College committees and influence University policy.

We are aware that most postgraduate years of study finish in September. If you have concerns about flexibility and finishing your studies, contact us to discuss them on elections@kclsu.org.

We recommend that you talk to your school about interrupting your studies and/or research, as they’ll be best placed to discuss your situation.

If you’re a Postgraduate Taught student, go to your Programme Administrator first – you can also go to your Head of Programme/Division/Department in the second instance, or Faculty/School/Institute PGT Lead as another resort.

If you’re a Postgraduate Research student, go to your Supervisor in the first instance, and your Head of Graduate Studies in the second instance.

I have always enjoyed working with the Student Officers. They bring a different perspective and can have a real influence on policy. I have also seen the way that the officers grow in stature and competence throughout their term as they acquire new skills, enjoy new experiences and face different challenges. Taking on this role can be transformative for the holder.
Vaughan Robinson, Head of Grad School

Advice: Disabled students

KCLSU is committed to promoting and developing equality of opportunity. If you have accessibility requirements, please come and chat to us about them – get in touch at elections@kclsu.org.

Advice: Students with dependents

If you are a parent or have caring responsibilities, KCLSU can offer flexible working hours if you are successful in your campaign. Please do come and chat with us about your requirements – email us at elections@kclsu.org.
Advice: Health students

If you are thinking about taking time out to work for KCLSU but feel you would not be suitable because you are on a vocational health course, then think again. It is possible for you to take a break to pursue other interests without compromising your career, in most cases. Usually, timing will be a key factor in your decision-making; taking breaks at the right time and under the right circumstances in imperative. You will also need to have confidence in your clinical skills and your ability to keep up with any professional development that may be required.

If you would like to discuss your plans to take time out to apply for a Student Officer role, then you can book to see one of the careers consultants at King’s Careers & Employability. Contact careers@kcl.ac.uk or phone 020 7848 7134.

We are aware that many Health students could be on placement during the summer, so please discuss with us if you have any concerns about this.

I have had the freedom to focus my time on whatever I am passionate about. I have worked with so many amazing students, achieving so many amazing things. That is definitely the best part, seeing what students are able to achieve when they come together.
Sophia Koumi, VP Education (Health) 2016-17

Whether you interrupt or do it at the end of your course, being a Student Officer provides so many valuable skills and experiences that you can use to your advantage in your health studies and careers! Doing this role allows you to work with students, senior university staff, union staff and, at times, members of the public. This allows you to communicate with many different people which is great to prepare for a life in healthcare.
Jack Haywood, VP Education (Health) 2016-17

Advice: Interruption

To find out guidance about interrupting and filling out the Change of circumstances form do visit this page:

https://www.kcl.ac.uk/campuslife/services/student-advice-support/how/Changes-in-your-personal-circumstances/Break

Interrupting can have consequences for your visa and your finances so do speak to the Advice & Guidance Team if you require further advice.

If you have not finished your course yet and have outstanding exams, do contact advice@kclsu.org for further support.

Do let your department know that you are interrupting your studies to take on the officer role for a year. It is good to keep them informed, especially if you are returning to your studies after a year in post.

They can advise you on how to manage any outstanding exams/assignments you might have and how to prepare to go back to your studies.
Appendix 1: Visa requirements

King’s College London Advice & Guidance Team has the following advice concerning visa requirements:

A Tier 4 visa permits work as a Sabbatical Officer. If you are elected to a full time sabbatical post and you have a current Tier 4 visa, you can undertake the sabbatical post using this visa. You’ll then need to extend your Tier 4 visa in order to complete your course. If your sabbatical post takes place after the end of your course, you will need to extend your Tier 4 visa in order to undertake the post. Do note the level of funds (£11385+) you will need to demonstrate in order to support your Tier 4 visa application.

*How do I extend my visa for the sabbatical post?*

You will need to request a CAS from King’s, who will continue to act as your sponsor while you’re undertaking your sabbatical, via Student Services Online.

You can apply for this visa from within the UK. More information on how to extend your visa from within the UK is available [here](#).

*Do I need any academic documents?*

You should not need to provide any academic documents (such as transcripts or certificates). Your CAS will confirm that you meet all UKVI’s academic and English language requirements.

*What financial documents will I need to provide?*

Although you will be being paid for your sabbatical post, the Tier 4 rules do not permit the use of future earnings for maintenance requirements. You will need to meet their financial requirements in full before you can make an application:

- The amount of funds you will need will depend on whether you are applying for a visa to continue your programme after your sabbatical (At least £11385) or to extend your visa specifically for the sabbatical (£2530). Funds need to be held in a bank account for 28 days without dropping before you can apply. The account can be in your name or a parents’ name/s.

If it’s in a parent’s name you will also need to provide:

- Your original birth certificate and a letter from them confirming the funds are available for your use.

For more details of how to provide financial evidence, see our Advice Guide on Bank Statements for a Tier 4 visa application.

Alongside the visa application and biometric registration fees, you will also need to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge, which will give you access to the NHS. This is £300 per year, and you pay this at the same time as you make your application.

*Will King’s help me to apply?*

International Student Advisers can check your application and documents before you apply. They can advise by email, phone and in person. See [here](#) for more details on how to make initial contact with the team.

*After your sabbatical term*

A Tier 4 visa issued for a sabbatical post should last for the length of the employment term, plus an additional 4 months. If you have finished your studies you may be able to apply to extend your visa in another category for further work or study.

Please note that we anticipate a new immigration system from 1st January 2021 which will likely affect all non-UK/Irish nationals applying for visas to come to or remain in the UK to study. As this new immigration system is likely to be in place by the end of your sabbatical it is your responsibility to ensure that you meet any new requirements to remain in the UK should you need to. For further information and advice please contact the Advice & Guidance team.
Please visit this website for further information: https://www.kcl.ac.uk/campuslife/services/student-advice-support/how/brexit-eea-nat/eea-students.

Further information

UKCISA (guidance for sabbatical officers)

UKVI Tier 4 guidance

King's Advice & Guidance Team