Greetings from Gina, Chair of the MPA Student Association!

Hello, congratulations and welcome to the LSE MPA!

My name is Gina and I am the Chair of the MPA Student Association (MPASA) for 2017-2018. I moved to London from New York City last summer and cannot believe how quickly time has flown by! It seems like just yesterday that I arrived on campus for our pre-sessional courses, dived into derivatives with my new classmates, and was shown where the George is. (FYI, the George is the postgrad pub on campus.)

I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to meet with Kerrie, my second-year “buddy”, prior to the start of the programme as she was interning at the UN in NYC. She gave me a number of incredibly helpful tips, many of which I shared with my cohort along the way and would love to share with all of you.

Here are some I found particularly useful!

- **Your first two weeks — orientation/maths bootcamp.** Your first two weeks will essentially consist of maths. A lot of it. The faculty here provide support, and every year they increase the support they offer. So even if you don’t have a background in maths, like me, that’s OK! You have an entire year to figure it out and we are all here to help you.
  
  - “Naked Statistics” is highly recommended as a good introduction to the programme, particularly re: econometrics.
  - Khan Academy has been an incredible resource for reviewing calculus.

- **Getting a bank account in London.** Setting one up may take a week or two, so make sure you have alternative means of payment methods. (Per my buddy) Natwest bank is on campus! I got a Natwest student account and not only was it incredibly simple, but also free — there are no maintenance fees, ATM fees, online or mobile banking fees, etc.
  
  - To open an account, you will need your passport and a letter from LSE stating your current and permanent address. You can get this letter from the student services centre. Make sure to have your current UK address changed on “LSE for you” before going to student services — do not change your permanent address. Your permanent address should remain your foreign address, if you’re moving from overseas.
  - Consider requesting a contactless debit card as this is incredibly useful living in London!
  - Natwest also offers possessions insurance for your laptop, phone, etc.
  - **Transferring money:** “Transferwise” seems to be the most popular method for transferring money in your home currency to GBP. It is very transparent and cheaper than what most banks seem to offer.

- **LSE accounts.** Here is a quick breakdown:
  
  - **LSE for You** is your administrative hub.
  - **Moodle** is your academic hub.
  - **Careerhub** is your “career hub” — this is where you can find out about and register for a number of great events going on at LSE.

Obviously, there are a number of other recommendations to share but I think these are a good starting point for your start of the programme. I’m looking forward to meeting all of you in September!
See all of you very soon!
Cheers, Gina

Gina Hwang is the Chair of the MPA Student Association. She was born and raised in New York City. Prior to the MPA, she worked at a nonprofit startup in NYC for nearly six years, managing programs and operations to help post-9/11 U.S. military veterans in their transitions by providing mentoring and networking opportunities with Fortune 500 executives.