

ASU London: Behind the scenes

ASU News reporter Scott Bordow shares what it's like to be on the ground at the new independent institution, and what students can expect

By Lisa Robbins, ASU News
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The [opening of ASU London](#), an independent, U.K.-degree-awarding higher education provider founded by Arizona State University, kicks off this week — and our reporter Scott Bordow is on the ground reporting on the launch.

At the new institution in the heart of the city, at the Clerkenwell campus of City St. George's, University of London, students can complete a three-year bachelor's degree and then pursue an accelerated one-year master's degree at ASU.

In addition to writing about the official festivities, Bordow — who is also a self-proclaimed Londonophile — will be on the lookout for some tips, ideas and locations that are uniquely London. (Plus, we'll highlight some other behind-the-scenes events as we go.)

Cheers!

Day 4 — Saturday

After spending about 90 minutes at the Sparky's Touchdown Tailgate on Saturday, I can say without equivocation that it was a huge success.

Boxpark Wembley, a gastropub just outside Wembley Stadium, was the ideal location. It could fit 2,000 people, there were plenty of food and drink options, and room for the ASU marching band to entertain fans with the fight song.

Credit to the ASU Alumni Association for putting on the tailgate. It was a hit.

Day 3 — Friday

An AI-powered coffee maker. An oversized chess set. Microwave ovens equipped for dietary restrictions.

Board games, food and foosball.

Take a walk inside the Tait Building, part of the nearly 300-year-old Clerkenwell campus of City St. George's, University of London, where ASU London is located, and it's clear that students' needs are being met in every way.

Need a little caffeine to start the day, or keep you going at the end of the day? Just beyond the main entrance is the kiosk for STARBOT, England's first robot barista. I don't drink coffee, but my boss, Chris Fiscus, ordered an espresso from STARBOT and gave it a thumbs up. And trust me, the man knows coffee.

Take a walk on the second floor and you'll come across the oversized chess set. A few feet further, and there's the Union Café & Shop, which features food, refreshments, foosball and board games to provide students with a little diversion from their daily studies.

And how impressive is this, given ASU London's international student population: A row of microwave ovens, two of which are designated for halal and kosher food only.

As I walked the halls and thought about the students who will be studying here for three years and enjoying all London has to offer, I thought, "Oh, to be 18 again."

Just missed it by a half-decade or so.

Day 2 — Thursday

You never know what you'll find on the streets of London.

As I was walking to the Earl's Court Tube station — London's version of the subway system — I came across this blue police box.

After some research I found out that these police boxes were installed across the U.K. in the early 1920s so police could contact one another and the public could contact police.

Over the years — and with the advent of technology — the police boxes all but disappeared. Fewer than 15 remain, including this one near the entrance of the Tube station. (*Editor's note: [Sources](#) say it was installed in 1996 as part of a planned resurgence of police boxes for London that never quite took off, and it is no longer operational.*)

Fans of the popular sci-fi series "Doctor Who" will also recognize it as the shape of the Doctor's time-traveling ship called the TARDIS, which stands for Time and Relative Dimension in Space.

Unfortunately, I didn't see anyone time-traveling when I was there.

Plus, ASU London global design engineering student Hamza Rasidagic has been taking in all the famous London sites. Hi, Big Ben!

Day 1 — Wednesday

About a half-mile from the site of ASU London is [Terroni](#), an Italian market that has been in business since 1878. It has everything you would want in an Italian market, from meats and cheeses to wine, chocolates, pasta and gelato.

Some history: Terroni is the first Italian market ever established in London. To give you another idea of how old it is, Queen Victoria was still on the throne.

Plus, the ASU Football team got in some practice at [The Lensbury](#) in Teddington. The Sun Devils will face the University of Kansas Jayhawks on Saturday in the inaugural [Union Jack Classic](#).

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



The ASU London Franklin Building in the Clerkenwell area of London on Sept. 14. Photo by Samantha Chow/Arizona State University

Text image(s)



Sparky and the ASU Marching Band make their way to London's first Sparky's Touchdown Tailgate. Photo by Scott Bordow



Sun Devil fans turned Boxpark Wembley into a sea of maroon and gold during Sparky's Touchdown Tailgate held just before the Union Jack Classic. Photos by Scott Bordow



The Clerkenwell campus of City St. George's, University of London, may be 300 years old, but students will find modern conveniences and entertainment inside the Tait Building, where ASU London is located. Photo by Scott Bordow



The Union Café & Shop (left) features food, refreshments, games and more for when students need a break — or they can order coffee from STARBOT, England's first robot barista. Photo by Scott Bordow



Even the microwaves represent an international student body, with dedicated units for kosher and halal meals. Photo by Scott Bordow



To most people, it's just a police box; to "Doctor Who" fans, it's the TARDIS. Photo by Scott Bordow/ASU



A cheese selection that even "Wallace & Gromit" could be proud of. Photo by Scott Bordow



A pasta lover's paradise. Photo by Scott Bordow



Photo courtesy of Sun Devil Athletics