

Semen 0:00

My name is Semen. I'm originally from Ukraine and I'm a photographer. Documentary photography is my main practice, which I have nailed here in London UAL. And I had a quite interesting... not interesting but sentimental, for me, story how I get to know about UAL. I just had this friend, which I made in a summer camp. So, we knew each other just for like two weeks or something. He was quite confident artist at the time, even though we were just beginners. He was a photographer. And because he was one year older, he went to uni earlier than me. And I saw him travel somewhere else from his home country. And then it appeared that he is in London in UAL, London College of Communication. When I saw works he's done during this period whilst studying here. I was shocked. And that was actually one of my main motives why to study here. I was super impressed by the level of works he gained here. It was super creative, innovative, in compared to what he's done before. So, I saw opportunity in there. And when the time came to make a decision where I'm going to study ...there is no competition in Ukraine in art colleges ... so I just came straight up here. Yeah, I didn't make any application, to any other college, any other place in around Europe. Straight away here.

Academic Support 1:34

What are the things that made you nervous? I mean, was there anything that made you nervous about coming to UAL any exciting sort of moments about studying at UAL?

Semen 1:44

I didn't feel nervous, specifically, on the first day. When I got the date of enrollment, it was weird for me, because the time was like 10am, when we usually get used to this academical schedule for like 8am or 9am. And I'm like, It's weird that it's 10am. I still came earlier like at around eight, just in case maybe I'll be a bit earlier and more prepared. And I didn't have any expectations. So, I couldn't be ... well, I could be surprised but I wasn't scared of anything. I just came here and I was just gaining this energy from place, from people around, which was completely new for me. I haven't been in London at all before. I came literally the day before the enrollment starts and the study, so it was a fresh start.

Academic Support 2:37

What's London like ... a social life. Were you nervous about that?

Semen 2:41

I was prepared. I got email which says you should be there, at this time. And I'm like, okay, I live around the corner in a student home. I can do that. Luckily, on the first day, it was amazing weather. So London welcome me quite well. So, it's weird because we usually remember all the bad stories, you know, but when it was everything good, there is no story to tell it was just joyful. Oh, the only thing I did to prepare myself, well except those schedules and stuff. Before travelling here, like few weeks in prior, I've started going through Instagram explorer page, going through a location, LCC, and trying to find some people who might be interesting, or, well obviously people who might speak in the same language with me. So, that was a kind of, that's a nice tip for for all of you are looking for friends ...just go explore, find a location and try to see works of people.

Academic Support 3:47

How did diversity and inclusivity to play when it came to UAL? Give me some examples of yeah, the diversity and inclusivity city of UAL.

Semen 3:56

I can be grateful to this place and London and UAL because I'm from post Soviet place, I mean country. And at that time, I didn't even know the word diversity, to be honest. Like, for me, there was no term like that. So, I get to know about it in here, I used to be and I am still very liberal and inclusive and have no boundaries, with any human or non human being. But, I just learned here, to be honest, about those terms, about the culture.

Academic Support 4:32

What have you learned then?

Semen 4:33

I saw the bigger scale of problem, I believe, of problems of minorities, what they are dealing with, and how, how it might be actually ... I saw the bigger scale of the picture of what people dealing with, what problems they have, especially minorities. But I also see a very ... very nice opportunities, which community, let's say in UK, gives them, to have support from government, to have support from finding people around here. Because luckily, it's a lot of people around here, you know, so it's quite easy to find some people who think likewise. Yeah.

Semen 5:24

I still need to learn about time management. We had lots of lectures, just by myself, I read a lot of books. I've listened to a lot of podcasts about that. But it's all about practice. So, I have something to gain in my future throughout the life, I believe.

Academic Support 5:44

How would you master it or what have you sort of gained to manage your time better?

Semen 5:50

Well, improving time management is quite easy, in theory, but quite hard in practice. You just need to get rid of all things that distract you and have a list of things which you need to prioritise. And then just follow those rules and do not fall into distractions, and just keep you on your path, which will lead you to development, or whatever aim you have in your mind.

Academic Support 6:19

How would you say you deal with stressful situations, whether that be on your course, or social events or exhibitional events?

Semen 6:27

I'm very lucky to have....this is my main point about the benefits of UAL. Yeah, number one thing in UAL, it gives you, first of all, a community in general, around the colleges, around your own college, around the library or canteen, whatever there is hundreds of people around you. So you never feel lonely. Well, you can, if you try hard and find the empty studio, if you need to. What I'm so glad, is having course leaders or just tutors. I feel like that's the key in studying UAL. Because studying at UAL, in general, is quite self education. I mean, it's oriented on your own passion. Yeah, usually no one will push you, if you don't want to do that. So, you better decide by your own, what you want to do, what is your priorities or where you want to put accent in your whole life development. But having people like teachers, or course leaders, here with you every week, every few days, and just having opportunity to talk to them... find support. Because what I like, in most of the tutors, usually will not put their own perspective onto your work. But they will try to understand which situation you stand for. And try to support or find the solution for a problem.

Semen 8:01

So, dealing with stressful situations. When you stress, you usually have anxieties and fear in your mind. But what I've learned is, forget about them. And if you find person who you trust, about art or about life, you just better go to them. And I feel like tutors are the one who might be this person because they more experienced and they are interesting personalities in general, quite diverse, which also helps to a lot of people, to find understanding of their problems. I used to be quite introverted. And, I was trying to understand why...Maybe because it's not my like home country? However, I never put it as a threat. But it just happened like that. I didn't used to have a lot of friends before. I can't really answer this question. I was trying to handle them by myself, or, like just very close friends around here, or just parents, or family on the phone. Yeah, I couldn't, I can't really give a lot of advice about that, because I was trying to handle it by myself. Now, I'm glad because I became more communicative. I found a few very interesting people on my course, who now we collaborate in a lot ... which also is a very important point. Try to collaborate with your friends, or ... because it makes friendship even stronger and more interesting. Sometimes there are some obstacles, like in any collaboration.. I didn't have it recently. Thanks, God, because as I said, I found those people who are... they fit quite well into both friendship and collaboration aspects. But when you dealing with problems in collaboration, my solution to this problem is ... step back. That's what I do because I don't like when it starts messy, especially if it's the collaboration when it's more than like two people ... three, four, and plus, whatever. And when it starts just to be a mess and a lot of people trying to give their own opinion. I just tried to step back and that's kind of my nature. And I'm trying to observe and try to listen to them, find who's ...not right or wrong on... but who I agree with or not ...and we all have roles. So, if you've chosen, if you've given this role, which is most likely to be something you've already done and you had experience and have knowledge about it, you definitely going to have something to tell to people. But just wait, while they're going to ask you. And then you can show your power just in acting rather than talking because usually obstacles happen on the pre-production stage, when everything is just discussing rather than making. When time comes to making...well, in my, in my case, I'm photographer. So for me, it's better to show by doing and just come to studio or whatever place we're doing the shoot, just basically acting.

Academic Support 11:27

One more question here. What do you wish you had known about learning and studying, Right from the beginning?

Semen 11:34

I have two points. One, for me, personally, was preparing to writing essays. I didn't have this kind of practice in my previous educational system. So it was quite new. But luckily, I'm glad that for all international students, it's necessary just to study the foundation course, which actually gave me the base and idea of what is writing essays and academic writing in general. And the second one is refers to time management. I would like to know how to be more responsible and more passionate and more proactive in your learning process, because I would like to know about.. or train myself earlier ... to this kind of environment. I'm glad I can learn it here. But, if you ask this question, I would, I would like to prepare myself before somewhere else and then just get the most from this place. Because you have lots of opportunities. If you have this energy and passion to do stuff. For example, you do practical things in workshop blog, from print into print finishing, binding or whatever, to media block where you can shoot the whole movie or just a fashion editorial. Than the giant system of libraries around the college's which can give you a huge knowledge about any topic you want most of the time. Yeah.

Academic Support 13:13

Thank you very much Semen. Thanks for all the feedback