STUDY ABROAD IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND | SCOTLAND | WALES | N. IRELAND

Please use this booklet in conjunction with the DU Study Abroad Handbook
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Introduction

This handbook will provide you with a general overview of issues involved in traveling to the United Kingdom (UK). We thank the US State Department and UK Border Agency for sharing with us the UK safety and travel information in this handbook. Please use this guide in conjunction with the DU Study Abroad Handbook.

We hope this information will assist you and your family in preparing for your time abroad. It is important that you review all the information, as well as the information sent by the UK university, before you leave the US and that you take these materials with you to the UK.

Studying abroad is an exciting opportunity. Nothing during your college years will likely change you more. You will learn about another country and another culture. You will also learn to look at your own country from a different perspective and most important, you will learn more about yourself. So, the OIE encourages you to invest yourself fully into this experience.

How much you gain from this opportunity will depend on your preparedness, flexibility and responsibility. Review the general pre-departure information the OIE has provided to you. Complete the administrative and academic matters that need to be taken care of before you leave. Research the country and city you will be going to. Review some of the suggested readings in the Study Abroad Handbook about what it means to go abroad. Be respectful of other cultures; things are not better, they are not worse; they are just different – learn to accept, not expect. Remember, you are there to complete an academic program successfully, just as if you were at DU. Good time management and goal setting are keys to handling a challenging academic program and becoming familiar with life outside the classroom.

Most of all, we want you to have a great experience and to make the most out of this opportunity. And when you return, be ready to share your stories with others. Your personal experience will be the best source of inspiration for others.

Safe Travels,
The OIE
Immigration

The immigration information for students traveling to the UK can be found in DU Passport. However, we have provided a link to the immigration information for ease of access.
The British Academic System

Academic Culture

There are major differences between the British and US academic systems. Where the US system is much more interactive and offers students multiple opportunities to show their knowledge gained, the British system puts a great deal more emphasis on individual learning and research done outside the classroom. It is the student’s responsibility to understand what is needed to be successful within this system.

The typical undergraduate program lasts three years (except for universities in Scotland, some technical degrees, or those which require additional certification like nursing, medicine, education, law) and includes much more academic specialization than is usual in American colleges and universities. British students generally enter university to exclusively study their major, as there is not a “general studies” requirement as at most US four-year institutions. Additionally, the course requirements for those three years are more rigidly planned than at American institutions—there are few, if any, “elective” courses and even Year 1 students have a stronger background in their field than what is typically expected in the US. This means students are taking the same courses with the same classmates throughout their time at the university. Professors will also often reference other courses that they know degree-seeking students have already taken. This may take some time to recognize and will require flexibility and being unafraid to ask questions if you feel lost in the conversation.

With this in mind, you will need to be more intentional in planning out your coursework to ensure you are at the level of expertise for which the course is intended. Likewise, you should be prepared for some differences between the British and the US academic systems and be aware that you will experience a period of adjustment.

Teaching Style

In the UK, a student’s academic schedule fluctuates between lectures, tutorials (small group sessions), laboratory work, seminars, and library study. You may find that you have fewer class hours than in the US but you are expected to do a lot more private study and spend a lot more time in the library. This may seem more like graduate work so expect long studying hours, especially in the sciences.

Lectures

The core material of the subject is nearly always given in lectures. In popular subjects, a hundred or more students may attend a lecture. In less popular subjects the lecture may have only a small number of students present. In a lecture there is little, if any, interaction between student and lecturer. The material is usually presented in the form of a monologue from the lecturer, perhaps supported by slides and videos.

Tutorials & Labs

Your opportunity for discussion will occur during the tutorial, which has a smaller number of students, and where the tutor and the students engage in a dialogue relating to the content of the course. Whereas you are not expected to speak in lectures, you are expected to speak in tutorials. Your participation is important. Science, psychology and technology subjects, also have lab sessions. Language subjects usually require time in the language lab.
Independent Study
The British system relies heavily on students keeping track of their own knowledge gain and understanding what information they need to know for the course. Students have been raised to self-educate and professors view this ability as the whole point of being at university. They will expect the same mindset from you as a short-term student in their class. Your independent research in the library or elsewhere is the primary place where learning takes place in their education system. This can be confusing for US students, who may not have a clear idea of what information they are expected to know. View this as a great opportunity to take ownership over your education and don’t be afraid to ask questions if you’re unsure of what is expected. Many local students will organize their own study groups to keep on track and hold each other accountable—this can be a great opportunity to learn how to be successful in this system as well as get to know your classmates. Likewise, professors can help clarify any questions, but they are unlikely to seek you out—you need to approach them—and will not be as accessible as US students are typically used to.

Course Selection and Registration
For most British institutions, classes are either divided into Year 1, 2, and 3 lists or Levels 4, 5, and 6. These correspond with each other (Year 1 would be Level 4 etc) and are important as you look at courses.

Year 1/Level 4: DU Sophomore/Junior Level
These courses, though Year 1, will still presume some background in the subject. You should look at these courses if considering elective credit or an area of study in which you do not have an extensive background. Even credits towards a major or minor can be found at this level depending on your background and expertise. If you do not have a strong background, be prepared to work hard to form the same understanding of the subject as Year 1 students.

Year 2/Level 5: DU Junior/Senior Level
These courses assume a high level of prior knowledge. Often, these have important pre-requisites that you should make sure are present on your transcript before selecting the course.

Year 3/Level 6: DU Senior/Graduate Level
These are “Senior Year” courses and assume a strong background in the subject. Keep in mind Year 3 students have studied only this topic for the last 2 years, so you should have substantial background before considering these courses.

Generally, we recommend that students stick with Year 1 and Year 2 courses, making sure that they meet all pre-requisites ahead of time. Year 3 courses can be considered by students with substantial background in the subject, typically those studying abroad their senior year and looking for a course within their major.

We assume courses will be upper division in the UK, unless the course’s title is “Introduction to _______ (a very broad academic discipline)” and it is a Year 1 course. Always confirm a course will be upper-division with your OIE advisor if your academic advisor’s approval is contingent upon it being upper level.

As part of your host university application, you were asked to select the courses you would like to take. The host institution processes these requests by speaking with each relevant department, who
then consider your transcript and decide whether you are qualified for the course. This decision lies with the department, not with the OIE or with the host university’s international office. Make sure you have selected courses open to international students that you are qualified for and have a handful of pre-approved back-up courses in mind.

Final registration does not take place until you arrive in country, so keep in mind last minute course cancellations or changes may still take place. Make sure you have vetted some additional pre-approved courses in case you need to register for a different class than you anticipated.

**Basic Academic Terminology**

As you discovered while filling out your study abroad application, the academic terminology used in the UK differs from that used in the US. Below are some general terms used in the UK. To find out about other British terminology used by your overseas university, refer to your University-specific guide:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module</td>
<td>course / class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>module directory</td>
<td>course catalog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>course</td>
<td>entire degree / major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>timetable</td>
<td>class schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tutors, academics, lecturers</td>
<td>professors, instructors, teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uni</td>
<td>university / college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>college</td>
<td>high school OR university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>membership system that ALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>students participate in (York &amp;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lancaster campuses)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment (Grading)**

For your class grade, you may be expected to concentrate your academic efforts in library research and writing. It is not uncommon to have a large percentage of your grade based upon only one or two exams. The tutorials may require you to prepare material, present a paper, read articles or participate in group discussions.

Exams can last up to three hours in length. Some may be “open book” exams. In other cases, you may be given a topic or questions beforehand. In most, however, the exam will be closed book. In the UK, the final exam may count for a larger proportion of your grade than in the US (up to 100% of your grade). Your exam or paper should be your very best work and you should set a specific study plan for yourself throughout the semester. Below are some helpful tips:

- The quality of your essay will be compared with others in your class. Grades will be awarded based on how yours ranks relative to the others. Students whose answers demonstrate that they did a lot of research outside of class tend to earn the highest grades.
- Make sure you site sources in your paper/exam and bring in outside sources NOT discussed in class.
• Exam questions from previous terms are often available so that you can get a sense of typical questions.
• Plan on studying 3–4 hours for every hour spent in class.
• Use the learning outcomes of the class to determine what you should focus on and what outside research you need to find.
• Request a reading list from the professor (if not already provided) and search these sources for recurring themes and references.
• Supplement lecture topics with in–depth readings on the same theme.
• Schedule a time to meet with professors early in the term to show them your study plan. They may have additional suggestions for you.
• DO NOT PRESUME A CLASS IS EASY BECAUSE YOU HAVE NO HOMEWORK! Remember the professor assumes you will be assigning yourself homework and that will be reflected in the exam.

Scheduling Exams
You must complete all coursework and exams BEFORE returning to the US. In many British institutions, exams for Fall term classes are given in early January. For DU students, this means you will either need to schedule an earlier exam in December or, if a professor prefers, to arrange to have your exams proctored on DU campus in January. Your OIE advisor can serve as your proctor during normal business hours or provide you proctor resources, but you are responsible for making all arrangements. Ask your host university’s international office for help in this process.

If your final assessment is a paper, you must submit it to the professor in December before leaving the UK. Under no circumstances can you simply email a professor your exam or paper—this is against DU policy.

You cannot plan on remaining in the UK until January or return to the UK for an exam. This can violate your immigration status and would lead to missing a portion of DU Winter Quarter.

Make sure to save a copy of any work and proof of submission in case a professor loses a paper or exam.

Grade Transfer
The British education system does not suffer from the same grade inflation that has become a problem in the US. Most UK professors are accustomed to awarding “C” level grades to the average hard-working student, reserving “A” grades for rare and extraordinary students. Returned students have equated “B+” level work with “C+” level work in the UK. Also, note that the grades awarded by percentage are very different; for example, a 70 percent in most British/Irish universities is considered to be the equivalent of an “A+”!

To figure out how your UK grades translate to DU grades, please refer to Appendix B. This information was provided by each institution. However, please note these are subject to change and are updated yearly.

Course Load & Credits
Your course load and credits will vary depending on your program. You must enroll for at least the minimum number of credits to remain a full–time student at your host university and at DU. Dropping
below this number will put you in violation of your visa status and may result in your deportation. Refer to the Study Abroad Policies on our website for information on the maximum number of credits you can transfer.

You may find that your program offers courses that are worth as many as 16 DU credits. Having these many credits in one area may cause problems for making significant progress on your graduation requirements while abroad. Some majors limit the amount of credit that you can take within your major while abroad. We strongly recommend that you speak with your major academic advisor prior to your study abroad about any credit restriction that may exist on abroad courses or credit maximums in your major.

**Typical Course Load by Program (per term)**

- **Bangor University**: 60 Bangor credits
- **City University of London**: 4 classes
- **Goldsmiths**: 16 Goldsmiths credits
- **U of Glasgow**: 60 Glasgow credits
- **Glasgow School of Art**: 60 GSA credits
- **Queen’s U Belfast**: 60 QUB credits per term
- **Queen Mary**: 60 Queen Mary credits per term
- **Lancaster**: 12 Lancaster credits per term
- **Westminster**: 60 Westminster credits per term
- **York**: 40 York credits per term

**Program Support**

British universities are public institutions. They do not compete with each other for business in the same way that American universities do. High levels of service and support for students is not a major selling point for them, especially not when compared to US private institutions such as DU. You should be prepared to be persistent, but polite and patient whenever you need assistance.

You do have access to the international office at your host university, which is your main contact on campus for everything from class registration to housing to advise on the nearest grocery store. These offices have international advisors available to help answer your questions as you learn to navigate the British system and university life. They will provide you with resources both over the summer and when you arrive (including a 24-hour emergency number if they have one) and organize your mandatory orientation session—which can last anywhere from one day to one week.

While this office is here to help answer any question you have, they will not check-up on you regularly. Some students have been frustrated with what they perceive as a lack of individual attention from these offices and the lack of clear communication. This frustration is often due to a cultural misunderstanding and ungrounded expectations about the level of service at public institutions abroad. The international office staff is there if you need them and will assume that you will contact them if you need help.

Take the initiative and make an appointment at their office if you need information. Most easy-to-answer questions will be laid-out in written material, which they will send to your email over the summer and give to you during your orientation—read these materials thoroughly and keep them in a safe and accessible place. Before asking questions, check to see if the answer is already contained in the material.

For your reference and convenience, our partners’ contact information is located in Appendix A. Once you are accepted to your program, please begin corresponding with them whenever you have questions about the program, your host university, your host city, etc.
Learning Differences and Accommodations

If you have special needs regarding assessment, such as reading assistance, or note taking assistance, please inform your DU Study Abroad Advisor and DU’s Disabilities Services Program.

Disability services are available in the UK; however, you must give your documentation to the British university’s disabilities services office, so it may determine for which accommodations you are eligible in the UK. If you plan to request accommodation for a disability, you must do so now because waiting until after your program starts to disclose may result in you not receiving the accommodations you requested.
Living in the UK

UK Housing
At your British university, you will most likely live in a university residence hall with domestic or other international students. In most cases, this will be a co-ed residence hall with a small, private bedroom and shared facilities (bathroom, living area, kitchen etc.) with the other students on your floor. However, confirm your housing options with your host university and OIE advisor as these may vary.

Make sure to submit your housing application in time. Your host university will send you instructions on this process—typically via email after you have been accepted—so it is very important that you read this information thoroughly and meet all deadlines you are given.

Please read your accommodation contracts before signing them, being sure to double-check that the dates are correct. Some students have unknowingly signed year-long contracts and were billed for breaking their contract early when they returned to the US after only one semester.

As a participant on a DU Partner Program, you must live in DU-arranged student housing during your program.

Moving In & Moving Out
Your host university/housing provider should provide you with a specific window of time to move in and receive your keys.

- Plan your arrival around this time and have a phone number for a housing contact in case nobody is at the accommodation office when you arrive or if you arrive late (e.g., if your flight is delayed)
- Move-in information, including the details related to getting your keys, is usually emailed to you over the summer. Contact your university and/or housing provider if you have not received it

It is wise to have the name and contact information of a local hostel/hotel, just in case something unanticipated happens and you’re not able to get into your housing the night of your arrival.

Make sure you are aware of your move-out date and procedures and plan accordingly for the end of the term.

Housing Damage/Security Deposit
You will likely be required to pay a refundable damage deposit directly to your program abroad in order to secure your accommodation, which is usually around £250-300. Before paying the deposit, please check with the OIE or host university that it is refundable. Because this deposit is fully refundable, assuming you do not damage your housing, it is not covered by DU. If you are unable to pay your deposit upfront, please speak with the OIE.

If the cost of damages to your room exceeds your damage deposit, the OIE reserves the right to bill you for the outstanding amount. Your abroad transcript will be held until the bill has been settled.

Rent Payments
To secure some university accommodations, a “pre-payment” (i.e., a down payment on your rent) may be required (e.g., York and Lancaster). However, if the fee is a non-refundable fee relating to housing rent, the OIE will pay for this on your behalf. Check with your OIE advisor if you are unsure.

MEALS
Most British universities do not provide meal plans for their students. For this reason, you will be responsible for your own meals and will not be charged a DU meal plan for your term abroad. If your host university does offer meal plan options, these are entirely optional, and you would need to pay your host institution directly for that cost.

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS AND PLANNING
Remember that most things in the UK are smaller, older, and more expensive than in the US. Please set realistic expectations about your accommodation in the UK. You can usually see pictures of the rooms online, or you can ask a recently returned DU student for a description.

Many programs and housing providers do not provide you with linens and basic kitchenware. Check with your accommodation provider to find out what is included, if that information is not provided upfront. Most housing options have websites with answers to the most common questions. You should build this into your start-up costs when you are designing your budget. If there is a “starter kit” available for purchase, this cost is not covered by Cherrington Global Scholars benefits.

Laundry facilities are typically more expensive in the UK than US students are accustomed to. It can cost around £5 to do one load of laundry, so budget accordingly.

BEHAVIOR
You need to respect quiet hours, guest policies, and other rules of your housing site. Your mature behavior ensures that DU can continue housing its study abroad students in those halls.

Have respect for the accommodations management team. If you do not agree with the management about certain issues, please let the OIE know the details of the disagreement so it may intercede.

TIP: If you do not agree with the stated charges for certain services provided by the residence hall, do not use those services. Please do not use those services and then refuse to pay saying the cost is too high.

Fitness Center Membership
The British government heavily subsidizes university education for its citizens. This means that some on-campus facilities, such as the fitness center, charge for student usage. Therefore, when budgeting for study abroad, consider whether you plan to use the fitness center. You can generally find usage rates on the overseas university’s website by searching for “sport” or “fitness.”

Internet
As with the fitness center, you may have to pay for internet usage at your program location. Some universities have unlimited internet usage when you are in the university computer lab; some universities give you up to a certain amount of downloads on your account for free.
If there is internet available in your housing, you will most likely pay for your internet usage. You can contact your accommodations provider to understand typical costs of internet for one term. Because many other DU study abroad students will be in homestay or other accommodation situations without internet access, DU decided it would not be fair to foot the internet bill for some students, but not others.

TIP: While email is a great way to keep in touch with family and friends back here, too much time spent on IM or email will prevent you from having a full study abroad experience.

Meeting Locals
A major goal of study abroad is to develop cross-cultural understanding. In addition to achieving academic success, you should strive to meet locals (Brits, English, Scots, Welsh, N. Irish) and get to know their culture. Successful strategies for meeting the locals include the following:

1. Make an effort. Because the universities host new study abroad students each semester (some of whom promise to keep in touch with the locals but never do), British students may not immediately try to befriend you. Likewise, Europeans generally take longer to form friendships rather than just acquaintances. As the “outsider” you must show that you want to meet the locals and get to know their culture. Be friendly and genuine.

2. Join an organization. Each of the universities has a student union or student guild which oversees clubs and societies on campus. They may also provide general support such as tutoring or helping connect students to resources/activities on campus. The university’s sport center should also have a listing of social sport clubs which you can join.

3. Stick around. While you may be tempted to head out every weekend to travel around the country, doing so will greatly impede your chances of making friendships with local students. Constantly talking about your travel, particularly about expensive excursions, will also turn off the local students, who typically will not have as much spending money as an American study abroad student.

4. Be respectful. Compare and contrast gets old fast. Talking non-stop about your personal belongings, including cars and other expensive items in the US, will merely reinforce stereotypes about Americans and prevent you from getting to know local students.

5. Know your politics. Most likely you will be asked by locals about your political stance. Questions about your political views generally will be well-intentioned and made by people genuinely interested in hearing your perspective. Be careful not to get offended or defensive when these questions arise. Also, try not to compare and contrast governments. Your best move is to remain open-minded in political discussions.

6. Know the local culture/history. The UK is made up of four distinct regions: Wales, Scotland, England and Northern Ireland. Identifying someone as “British” rather than “Irish,” “Welsh,” or “Scottish” can have deep political or historical connotations, and individuals often have a strong preference in
how they identify. Do some research about the local area and listen to how people identify themselves before making assumptions. Don’t be afraid to ask respectful questions.

Keep in mind that you are only there for a short time so you want to make the most of your time in the UK.
Health & Safety

Health Insurance
You are responsible for ensuring that you have sufficient health insurance coverage while abroad. You should contact your insurance provider to understand their coverage abroad and, if you are interested, explore travel insurance options.

The National Health Service (NHS) is the UK’s state health service which provides treatment to UK residents through a wide range of healthcare services. However, non-UK or EU residents should anticipate having to pay for all health services. These charges can be quite high—in some cases higher than in the US—so it is important that you understand what is covered by your insurance and what travel insurance options exist if you are interested in more coverage.

We require that you maintain your US insurance policy while you are abroad. It is important for you to maintain coverage in the case you require any short or longer-term care abroad, need to continue care at home, travel outside the UK, or come home mid-term for any reason. DU’s health insurance is valid overseas and can provide additional coverage while abroad. If you typically waive DU health insurance, we recommend that you contact your current health policy provider to find out what type of coverage it offers while abroad. Make sure you understand how to process any claims and what you may need to pay upfront.

Vaccinations
No vaccinations are required for travel to the UK, though you should check with your doctor for any recommendations. If you plan to visit other countries while you are abroad, check with one of the following to find out what vaccinations, if any, may be required:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, http://www.cdc.gov/
- International SOS: https://www.internationalsos.com/.

Emergency Number
The standard emergency phone number in the UK is 999. Consider putting this number in your phone now and memorizing it; you may not be able to look it up if you are in an emergency situation.

U.S. Embassy & Consulate General in the UK
Americans living abroad are encouraged to register with their nearest embassy or consulate through the US State Department’s website. By doing so, you will receive updated information on travel and security within the country to which you are heading. You also make it easier for the US embassy (and your family) to locate you in case of emergency or disaster. To register, go to: https://travelregistration.state.gov/

Crime
Crime in the UK is comparatively low and has generally decreased in the last decade. However, serious crime (i.e. assault, robbery, burglary, gun-enabled crimes, and rape) in some London boroughs has increased. As in any major city, US citizens are urged to be cautious and aware of
their surroundings. The most prevalent crime is pick pocketing, “snatch and grab” of purses, computers, cell phones, or other valuables, and theft or attempted theft from cars, restaurants, and hostels. To help protect against theft, do not leave passports or other valuable documents unattended. Be mindful of your purse or wallet and make sure you know where your valuables are at all times, especially in crowded tourist sites and on public transportation. Be mindful of any scams targeted at tourists and review the State Department website above for examples. Violent crime against tourists is unusual.

The loss or theft abroad of a US passport should be reported immediately to the local police and the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are the victim of a crime while overseas, in addition to reporting to local police, please contact the nearest US Embassy or Consulate for assistance. The Embassy/Consulate staff can, for example, assist you to find appropriate medical care, to contact family members or friends and explain how funds could be transferred. Although the investigation and prosecution of the crime is solely the responsibility of local authorities, consular officers can help you to understand the local criminal justice process and to find an attorney if needed.

To help prevent loss of your passport, you should carry only a copy of your passport at all times and leave the original in a secure location (the UK does not require visitors to carry their original documents at all times). It is also recommended that you leave a copy of your passport with a trusted friend or family member in your home country. Remember, if you are travelling internationally, you will need to travel with your original passport and documents.

**Medical Facilities**

Quality medical care is widely available, but waiting lists exist for certain types of treatment. Serious medical problems requiring hospitalization and/or medical evacuation to the United States can cost thousands of dollars. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for health services.

**Natural Disasters**

The UK is not prone to regular natural disasters; however severe storms and flooding can occur in certain areas. The US State Departments offers the following resource to help you plan in the case of an emergency overseas: [https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/travelers-with-special-considerations/students.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/travelers-with-special-considerations/students.html). You should also read through FEMA’s Disaster Response Tips: [https://www.ready.gov/be-informed](https://www.ready.gov/be-informed).

**Traffic Safety and Road Conditions**

All traffic travels on the left in the UK; roads are generally excellent but often narrow and only two lanes. In urban areas, roads can be very congested. Cars turning left must yield to oncoming cars turning in the same direction. This is especially important to remember on two-lane roads. Proceed carefully through intersections and be wary of drivers who may run yellow and red lights. Drivers should use caution to avoid animals when driving in rural areas. **Pedestrians are advised to look carefully in all directions before crossing a street or roadway, and to use crosswalks. Traffic always yields to the right and pedestrians do not have the right of way except at crosswalks...and usually not even then!**

Drivers yield to all traffic crossing or approaching from the right, and the speed limit is 70mph (roughly 100km) on highways. Multi-lane motorways and expressways form the approaches to urban areas. Distances are posted in kilometers (km).
Drinking and driving laws are strictly enforced in the UK and often result in prison sentences.

The University of Denver—along with our partner universities in the UK—discourages students from driving because it can be difficult and dangerous.

**Pubs & Alcohol**

Please reference the OIE Study Abroad Handbook for policies around alcohol abroad.

**Criminal Penalties**

While in a foreign country, a US citizen is subject to that country’s laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and do not always afford the protections available to the individual under US law. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating British laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking of illegal drugs in the UK are severe and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines. Some materials that are legal in the US are illegal to carry in the UK. Please refer to this UK Customs Guide detailing which items visitors are prohibited from bringing into the UK. Vessels used to import or convey prohibited drugs are liable to be seized.
Communication

How to Call Home
First things first – call home as soon as you can after arrival because your family is anxious to hear from you. Give your family your abroad phone number, email address, and mailing address so they know how to reach you in the event of an emergency.

To make a direct call to the US using a phone that provides a direct dialing option, dial:

\[ \text{00 + 1 + area code + phone number} \]

To help you call home or to help your family call you, please refer to the following link for detailed dialing instructions: [www.countrycallingcodes.com/](http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/).

Calling Cards
Pre-paid calling cards can be purchased both in the US and the UK. Generally, calling rates with cards from the US are slightly lower, though it depends on the card. Do some research to see which cards offer the best rates per minute. Cards can be purchased almost anywhere: at the airport, newspaper shops, and markets. Be careful of using your US cell phone without understanding roaming or international charges.

Time Differences
Whatever calling method you choose, consider the time difference before you dial. Generally, all locations in the UK are 7 hours ahead of Denver. However, be mindful of the time change in the Spring and Fall. While the UK does observe daylight savings time, the exact date of the change may differ from the US.


Mobile Phones
Many students purchase a cheap pay-as-you-go phone while in the UK. Keep in mind that it may be cheaper to ‘rent’ a mobile phone rather than buy one. Ask any former study abroad students who may still have their British cell phone if they are interested in selling it to you.

Email
Your British university may provide you with a local email account. Please make sure that you continue to check your DU email regularly (or forward it), as this is how the Office of International Education and other DU departments will most likely maintain communication with you. Keep in mind, however, that you may or may not have internet access in your housing, and you will likely have to pay for internet use both on- and off-campus. Check your housing and host university’s websites to find out about internet access where you’ll be studying.
Money

British Currency
The British currency is the “pound sterling,” officially known as the Great British Pound (GBP). The pound (£) is made up of 100 pence (p), divided exactly as the US dollar divides into 100 cents. Notes come in denominations of £5, £10, £20, £50 and differ in color and size. Coins come in £1 and £2 and 50p, 20p, 10p, 5p, 2p, and 1p and differ in color and size. Start to familiarize yourself with the currency, both notes and coins, as well as exchange rates. Check out https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/ to figure out conversion rates.

We suggest you carry a small amount of local currency before you leave, roughly £200 British pounds, for the first few days, and especially if you plan to arrive on a weekend. You can exchange money at a US bank or airport before departure or at a British airport upon arrival.

Cost of Living
Cost of living in the UK is generally higher than in the US, and the British pound is stronger than the US dollar. Remember that, as part of your immigration process, you will be required to show proof of funding to support yourself without illegal work in the UK. Please refer to the immigration checklist in DU Passport for more information. Be sure to account for any private travel or additional optional expenses. Many host universities will also have cost of living calculators on their websites or in their Visiting Student Handbooks to help you determine a feasible budget during your time abroad. Program returnees are also a good resource for suggestions.

Remember to account for what is not included in your program. Some expenses that typically are your individual responsibility include an unlimited local transportation pass and a recreation center pass. Internet service is not always included either.

Bank Account in the UK
It is not always possible for short term students to open a bank account in the UK, though some banks will allow it. Typically, opening an account will require an application form, your passport, proof that you are a full-time student, and proof of address in the UK. A bank account can allow you to keep your money in a safe place and avoid some ATM fees. If you are interested in the option, ask the international office at your host university for further information and advice.

If you open a bank account in the UK, your family can transfer money from a bank in the US to your bank in the UK. Ask your bank in the US and the receiving bank about the service charges that may apply to this transfer.

ATM & Credit Cards
Make sure you know how to contact your US bank from overseas. Find out if they offer a 24-hour customer service help line and what their emergency phone number is for calls from outside of the US (1-800 numbers do not work outside of the US). If your bankcard is lost or stolen, you should notify your bank immediately. It’s recommended you leave a copy of the cards (both front and back) with a trusted friend or family member in the US, in case you lose the card abroad.
Most credit cards, such as MasterCard, Visa or American Express, can be used in the UK, as well as worldwide. ATMs are widely available. International credit cards and ATM cards will work as long as they have a four-digit PIN encoded. Check with your bank before leaving home.

If your credit card is lost or stolen, you must contact the financial institution that issued your card immediately and report it lost or stolen. You should keep a copy of your financial institution’s name, its customer service phone number and your card account number in a convenient place -- separate from your card.

We recommend that you keep a copy of your passport, credit card numbers, insurance contact numbers, and airline tickets in a separate place from the originals. You should also leave a set of copies at home with your family.

**Traveler's Checks, Cashier's Checks, Money Orders, Personal Checks**

We **do not** recommend taking cashier checks, money orders or personal checks. Although banks will accept your checks, they will not give you cash for them until they have cleared through the whole banking network, which usually takes 6–8 weeks or longer.
General Information

Electricity
Electricity in the UK is 240 volts. In the US it is 110 volts. This means that if you plug your 110-volt hair dryer directly into a British plug it will burn out. Transformers are therefore required. Make sure, however, that the transformer you bring is either configured for the three pin British plug or that you purchase a plug adaptor to use with the transformer. If you cannot get one of these in the US, consider buying one upon arrival to the UK. Because some hairdryers and curling irons will get dangerously hot, even when using transformers, consider purchasing these items upon arrival.

Most laptops have transformers built into the power cable (the black or white box in your charger cable), leaving you to purchase only the plug adaptor. However, make sure to check that it can handle 240 volts; if it cannot, you will need to purchase a transformer. Regardless, you should purchase a British surge protector before charging your computer in Europe. Electrical currents are not always constant and will occasionally exceed 240 volts. Each year we have at least one student whose laptop is ruined because they did not buy a surge protector.

If you buy appliances in the UK, you will almost certainly have trouble running them when you get back to the US. Consider selling or giving them away before you return home.

Weather
The UK uses Celsius (not Fahrenheit) as their system of measurement for weather. To help you remember approximate temperatures in Celsius, consider that:

- Water freezes at 0° Celsius: 32° Fahrenheit
- Water boils at 100° Celsius: 212° Fahrenheit
- Normal body temperature: 37° Celsius/98.6° Fahrenheit

Weather in the UK is generally cool, though it can get quite warm in the summer and very cold in the winter. Pack according to the seasonal conditions of your host city. This means bringing warm clothing, including hats, gloves, winter coat and scarves. Your warmest sweaters and trousers will also be necessary. Fleece is a practical accessory as is an umbrella. Even within your housing, you may find the temperature colder than you’re accustomed to in the US. A good sleeping bag and a pair of thermal underwear will help combat the cold. Libraries are popular havens in colder weather because they are generally well heated.

For further information about the weather conditions, check out www.weather.com. If you refer to UK weather sources, the following temperature conversions will help you:

- Farenheit to Celsius: Subtract 32 then multiply by 5/9
- Celsius to Farenheit: Multiply by 9/5 then add 32

British Slang
You’d be surprised how different English can sound in the UK! Google “British Slang” to get an idea of some common phrases you’ll likely hear.

MORE INFO
- Visit Britain
- National Rail
- US DoT: United Kingdom
Appendices

Appendix A: Important Contacts

**Bangor University**
International Exchanges Office
Bangor University
Neuadd Rathbone (Top Floor)
Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2DF
Email: exchanges-incoming@bangor.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1248 388269

**City, University of London**
International Office
City University London
Northampton Square
EC1V 0HB
Tel: +44 (0)20 7040 0108
Email: study-abroad@city.ac.uk

**University of Glasgow**
Study Abroad & Exchange
University of Glasgow
The Fraser Building
65 Hillhead Street
Glasgow, G12 8QQ
Tel: +44 141 330 6516
Email: rio-abroad@glasgow.ac.uk

**Glasgow School of Art**
Study Abroad & Exchanges
Tel: +44(0)141 353 4464
Email: l.rostowfske@gsa.ac.uk

**Goldsmiths, University of London**
Student Recruitment & International Office
Goldsmiths, University of London
Lewisham Way, New Cross
London, SE14 6NW
Tel: +44 (0) 207 919 7702
Email: studyabroad@gold.ac.uk

**Lancaster University**
International Office
C Floor, University House
Lancaster University
Lancaster, U.K.
LA1 4YW
Tel: +44 (0)1524 594530
E-mail: studyabroad@lancaster.ac.uk

**Queen's University Belfast**
QUB Global Opportunities team
Queen’s University Belfast
BELFAST BT7 1NN
Northern Ireland, UK
Tel: +44–28–9097 5255
Email: studyabroad@qub.ac.uk

**Queen Mary, University of London**
Study Abroad Office
Queen Mary, Univ. of London
Room CB02, Queens’ Building
Tel: +44 (0)20 7882 5556
Email: study-abroad@qmul.ac.uk

**University of Westminster**
Education Abroad Team
First Floor – Student Affairs
101 New Cavendish Street
London W1W 6XH
T: +44 (0) 20 7911 5166
Email: educationabroad@westminster.ac.uk

**University of York**
Student Recruitment & Admissions: International Team
The Stables
University of York
Heslington
York YO10 5DD
Tel: +44 (0)1904 323534 / +44 (0)1904 322082
Email: visiting-students@york.ac.uk

Appendix B: Credit and Grade Conversions
For grade conversion tables, please see the Grade and Credits: Translation Scales: