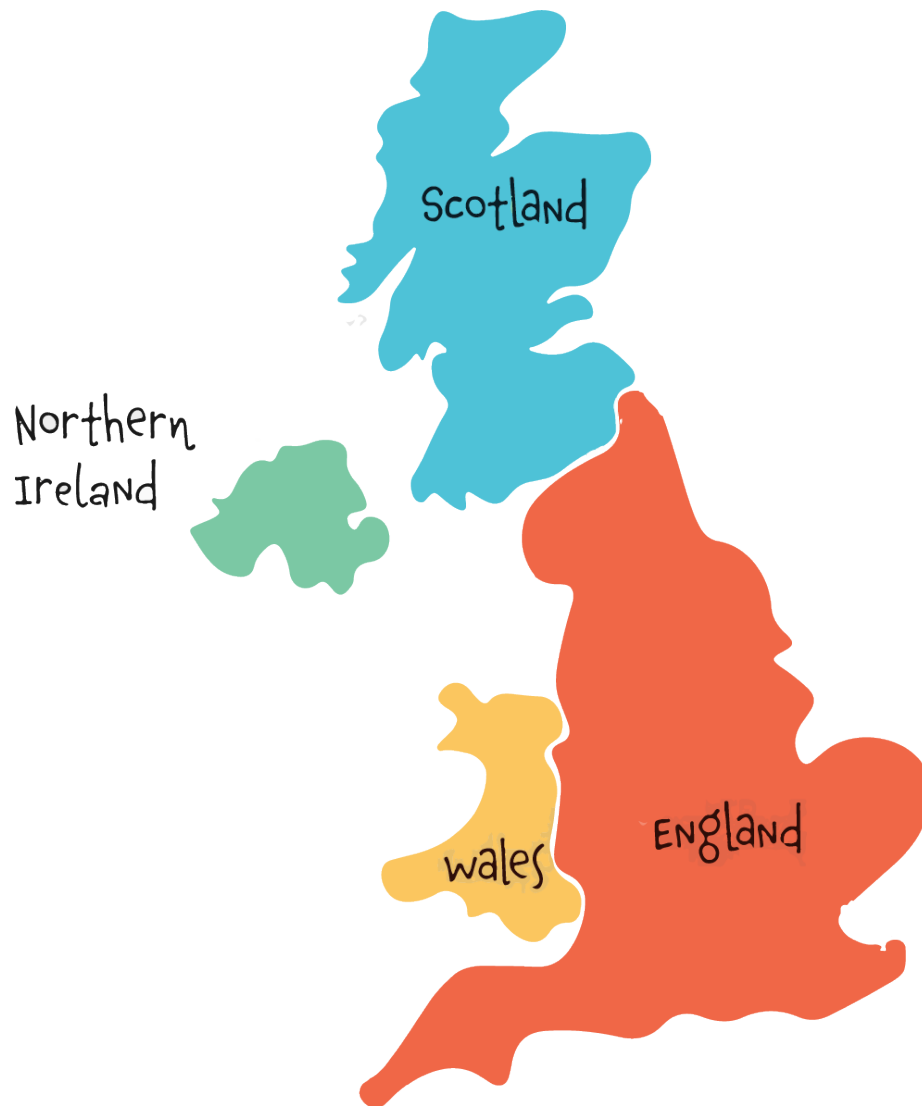




DU *Abroad*

THE UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND | SCOTLAND | WALES | NORTHERN IRELAND



Use this guide in conjunction with the DU Study Abroad Handbook

Office of International Education
University of Denver
2200 S Josephine St.
Denver, CO 80208-8600, USA

Main Phone: 303.871.4912
Emergencies: 303.871.3000
Website: du.edu/abroad

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Immigration

The immigration information for students traveling to the UK can be found in DU Passport. Please see [UK immigration information](#) for more details.

Remember that, as part of your immigration process, you will be required to show proof that you have enough funds to support yourself without illegal work in the UK. This proof typically needs to exceed US \$5000.

British Academics

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's your responsibility to understand what's needed to be successful within this system.

You'll need to be intentional when choosing your coursework to ensure your level of expertise is appropriate. Likewise, you should be prepared for differences and a period of adjustment.

University Experience

Compared to the US, the typical British undergraduate program...

- Lasts three years – except for universities in Scotland, some technical degrees, or those which require additional certification like nursing, medicine, education, and law.
- Has much more academic specialization. British university students often study exclusively in their major and don't have any "general studies" requirements.
- Has more rigid course requirement planning—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 often reference previous courses that they know degree-seeking students have taken. You must be flexible and unafraid to ask questions if you feel lost in the conversation.

Teaching Style

Your schedule will include lectures, tutorials (small group sessions), laboratory work, seminars, and library study.

Lectures

The core material of the subject is nearly always given in lectures.

- In popular subjects, 100+ students may attend a lecture.
- In less popular subjects the lecture may have only a small number of students present.

You're not expected to speak in British lectures. They have little, if any, student-teacher interaction. The material is usually presented in the form of a monologue from the lecturer, sometimes supported by slides and videos.

Tutorials

Tutorials are your opportunity for discussion. The tutor and a smaller group of students engage in dialogue about the course content. You are expected to actively participate.

Labs

Science, psychology and technology classes also have lab sessions. Language subjects usually require time in the language lab.

Outside the Classroom: Self-directed Study

You'll likely have fewer class hours than in the US. However, you're expected to do a lot more private study and spend a lot more time in the library. This may seem more like graduate work.

Be prepared for independence. 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

- The bulk of your learning will take place during your independent library research and reading
- UK students are raised to self-educate; professors view this ability as the whole point of being at university
- Professors will expect the same mindset from you as a short-term student in their class.
- Expect long studying hours, especially in the sciences.

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. Don't be afraid to ask questions if you're unsure what's expected.

- Many local students organize study groups to keep on track and hold each other accountable. Consider joining one of these groups to get to know your classmates and learn how to be successful in this system.
- Professors can help clarify any questions. They are unlikely to seek you out, so you need to approach them. They will not be as accessible as US students are typically used to.

Class Levels

Pay attention as you look at courses. Most British institutions divide classes into Years 1–3 or Levels 4–6. We recommend...

- Make sure you meet all pre-requisites before going abroad
- Stick with Year 1 & 2 courses
- Only consider Year 3 courses if you have substantial background in the topic (ex. senior taking a major class)

Year	Level	DU Equivalent	Notes
1	4	Sophomore Junior	<p>These courses are not entry level; they presume some background in the subject. 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.</p> <p>Consider these classes for elective credit or for topics where you don't have an extensive background. You can also find</p>

			major/minor credits at this level, depending on your background and expertise.
2	5	Junior Senior	These courses assume a high level of prior knowledge. Often, there are important pre-requisites.
3	6	Senior Graduate	These "Senior Year" courses assume a strong background in the subject. British students at this level have studied this topic <u>exclusively</u> for two years. You must have substantial background before considering these courses.

We assume all UK courses are upper division except for Year 1 classes with titles like "Introduction to X" where X is a very broad academic discipline. 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.

Registration

As part of your UK university application, you'll complete a "pre-registration" where you list your class choices and some backup options.

- Choose courses that are open to international students and that you're qualified for.
- Have a handful of pre-approved backup courses in mind.
- Your host institution will work with relevant departments, who review your transcript and decide whether you are qualified for the course. The department makes the ultimate decision on this – neither the OIE nor the host university's international office have a say.

Final registration does not take place until you arrive in country.

- Be prepared for scheduling conflicts, full classes, last-minute course cancellations, or changes.
- Have multiple pre-approved courses in mind as backups, in case you need to register for a different class than you anticipated.

Academic Terminology

Academic terminology used in the UK differs from that used in the US. Below are some general terms used in the UK.

United Kingdom	United States
module	course / class
module directory	course catalog
course	entire degree / major
timetable	class schedule
tutors, academics, lecturers	professors, instructors, teachers
uni	university / college

college	high school OR university membership system that ALL students participate in (York & Lancaster campuses)
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Assessment (Grading)

It is not uncommon to have a large percentage of your grade based upon only one or two exams. Your final exam or project may count for up to 100% of your grade. The tutorials may require you to prepare material, present a paper, read articles or participate in group discussions. And you may be expected to concentrate your academic efforts in library research and writing to earn a high letter grade.

Exams can last up to three hours. There may be "open book" exams, or you may be given a topic/questions beforehand. In most cases, the exam will be closed book.

Your exam/paper should be your very best work; set a specific study plan for yourself for the semester. Here 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 cite 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.

Exam Timing

You must complete all coursework and exams BEFORE returning to the US.

- Many British institutions hold fall semester exams in January. That means you'll need to make alternative arrangements. For example, it can be an earlier exam in December, an alternative project, or (rarely) having your exams proctored in Denver in January.
- You are responsible for making all arrangements. Ask your host university's international office for help in this process.
- DO NOT plan on remaining in the UK until January or returning to the UK for an exam. This can violate your immigration status and mean 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.

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.*

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 Cs to average hard-working students and reserving As for rare and extraordinary students. Note that the grades awarded by percentage are very different; for example, a 70 percent in most British universities is the equivalent of an A in the US!

To figure out how your UK grades translate to DU grades, see the [Grade & Credit Translation Scales](#).

Course Load & Credits

Your course load and credits will vary depending on your program. You must maintain full-time student status at both your host university and at DU.

Typical Course Load by Program (per term)

- **Bangor University:** 60 Bangor credits
- **City University of London:** 4 classes
- **Goldsmiths:** 4 classes
- **Glasgow:** 60 Glasgow credits
- **Glasgow School of Art:** 60 GSA credits
- **ISA-Reading:** 25 UR credits
- **Queen's U Belfast:** 60 QUB credits per term
- **Queen Mary:** 60 QMUL credits per term
- **Lancaster:** 12 LU credits per term
- **Westminster:** 60 UW credits per term
- **York:** 40 York credits per term

Some UK courses are worth up to 16 DU credits. Some departments limit the amount of abroad credits that you can count toward your major or minor. Talk to your faculty/major advisor about whether having this many credits in one area will cause delays in your graduation plan and ask about any credit restrictions on abroad courses.

Learning Differences and Accommodations

If you are eligible for academic accommodations through the DU Disability Services Program (DSP), we recommend you talk to your host university and OIE advisor immediately. Get started now. There are multiple steps to set up accommodations, incl. sharing documentation. Waiting until after your program starts to disclose may result in you not receiving the accommodations you need.

Disability services are available in the UK but may look different than you're used to. For example, by law, the maximum extra time they can grant for tests is 1.5 time (not double time).

UK Living

Program Support

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

You have access to the international office at your host university. They will be your main contact on campus and...

- Share resources before and after you arrive (including a 24-hour emergency number if they have one)
- Host a mandatory on-site orientation—which can last anywhere from one day to one week
- Answer questions you have about registration, housing, etc.

The international office 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 unrealistic expectations about the level of service at public institutions abroad.
- They assume that everything is going well if they don't hear from you.
- They expect you to contact them if you need help. Take the initiative and make an appointment at their office if you need help or information.
- Before asking questions, check to see if the answer is already contained in their materials. Most easy-to-answer questions will be on their website, in emails, or in materials handed out during orientation—read these materials thoroughly and keep them in a safe and accessible place.

Once you are accepted to your program, please work directly with your host university whenever you have questions about the program, your host university, your host city, etc. They will give you the quickest, most up-to-date answers.

UK Housing

Most students will live in a university residence hall with local or other international students. Usually, these are co-ed buildings with small, private bedrooms. Students on one floor share a living area, kitchen, bathrooms, etc. Check your program brochure for details about your specific program.

Applying for Housing

Submit your housing application on time! Your host university will send an email with instructions after you have been accepted. Read it carefully and meet all deadlines.

Read your accommodation contract before signing. Double-check the dates. 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.

Moving In & Moving Out

In summer, your host university or housing provider will send move-in information, including what time to move in and how to get your keys. Contact your university and/or housing provider if you have not received it.

- Plan to arrive in the time window they provide.
- Have the name & contact info for the housing office in case nobody is there or your arrival is delayed
- Have the name & contact info for a local hostel/hotel, in case you're not able to get into your housing the night of your arrival (e.g., your flight is delayed)

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

Housing Damage Deposit

Most UK programs require a damage deposit of around £250-300.

- If the deposit is **fully refundable**:
 - You must pay the requested amount directly to your program to secure your accommodation
 - This is not considered part of the DU Housing Fee, as it's fully refundable to you, assuming you return your keys, don't damage your housing, etc.
 - Talk to your OIE advisor if you're unable to pay your deposit upfront
- If the deposit is **not fully refundable**:
 - Verify with your OIE advisor that you don't need to pay the requested amount

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

Some UK accommodations require a "pre-payment" (i.e., a down payment on your rent) to secure your spot. Since this fee is non-refundable and counts against the amount of rent due, the OIE will pay for this on your behalf. Check with your OIE advisor if you are unsure.

Meals

The ISA: University of Reading program has a meal plan. Students on this program will be billed for the DU Meal Plan.

All other DU Partner Programs in the UK do not provide meal plans for their students. You are responsible for your own meals. You will not be billed for a DU Meal Plan. If your program does offer an optional meal plan and you decide to opt in, you must pay your host institution directly for that cost.

Realistic Expectations & 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.

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.

Additional Costs

Many on-campus facilities and services charge for student usage. Some examples to budget for include:

- **Internet Use**: Internet is not always included in your tuition fees. Check your housing and host university's websites to learn about internet access and find data rates (if applicable). If internet is available in your housing, you will most likely pay for usage.
- **Fitness Center Access**: Search the UK university's website for "sport" or "fitness" to learn more.
- **Laundry**: 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.
- **Other Services**: If you do not agree with the stated charges for a certain residence hall service, do not use that service. You may not use the service and then refuse to pay because the cost is too high.

Meeting Locals

Successful strategies for meeting the locals (Brits, English, Scots, Welsh, N. Irish) include...

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 university has a student union or student guild that oversees campus clubs and societies. 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 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.

Health & Safety

Medical Facilities

Quality medical care is widely available, but waiting lists exist for certain types of treatment (e.g., a cold or flu).

Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for health services. Medical care can be quite expensive—in some cases higher than in the US—so make sure you understand you're your insurance covers. Look into additional coverage if you are concerned.

UK National Health Insurance (NHS)

This governmental health service provides a wide range of healthcare services to UK residents.

- **Non-UK citizens:** Expect to pay for all health services, incl. those offered by NHS
- **EU citizens:** Expect to pay for all health services **after** Brexit goes into effect
- **Students on Tier 4 visas:** You may have access to the NHS. See [UK immigration](#) for details.

Vaccinations

No vaccinations are required for travel to the UK, though you should check with your doctor for any recommendations.

Customs Restrictions

Some substances that are legal in the US are illegal to bring to the UK, including certain medications. See the [UK Customs Guide](#) detailing which items visitors are prohibited from bringing into the UK.

Emergency Number

The emergency phone number is **999** in the UK.

Crime

Crime in the UK is comparatively low. And violent crime against tourists is unusual. The most common risks are related to opportunistic street crime like pickpocketing, bag-snatching and mugging. Most demonstrations are non-violent, though clashes occur occasionally and can cause travel disruption, particularly during major rallies in city centers.

Be cautious and aware of your surroundings, like you would be in Denver. Pay attention to your belongings, especially in crowded tourist sites and on public transportation. Be mindful of any scams targeted at tourists.

Levels of violent crime are higher in major cities, though such activities tend to be concentrated in lower-income areas visitors are unlikely to frequent. Instances of knife crime in recent years

have increased in major cities, including the capital London. However, such incidents are generally targeted and occur on the outskirts of cities or in residential neighborhoods.

London continues to be a significant potential target for Islamist extremist groups and lone individuals inspired by radical Islamist ideology. Attacks could focus on major public transport facilities, government buildings and prominent tourist and commercial centers.

Contact [International SOS](#) for more details.

Natural Disasters

The UK is not prone to regular natural disasters but severe storms and flooding can occur in certain areas. Look at International SOS.

Traffic Safety

All traffic travels on the left in the UK. Traffic always yields to the right.

Pedestrians do not have the right of way except at crosswalks...and usually not even then! Be wary of drivers who may run yellow and red lights. Use crosswalks. And look carefully in all directions before crossing a street or roadway.

DU and its UK partners strongly discourage students from driving.

Communication

Time Differences

Most locations in the UK are 7 hours ahead of Denver. The UK observes daylight savings time, but the exact date of the change may differ from the US.

Calling Home

To call the US from the UK, dial **00 + 1 + area code + phone number**.

Mobile Phones

While in the UK, many students purchase pay-as-you-go SIM cards. If you're interested in this, make sure your phone is unlocked before going abroad. Giffgaff and Vodafone are popular providers. Returnees often have tips on where to find the best deals.

Email

You'll likely get an email address from your UK university. Make sure that you check both this and your DU account (or have them forward to an address you do check), as both universities will send you important communications throughout your time abroad.

Money

British Currency

UK uses the "pound sterling," officially known as the Great British Pound (GBP).

- There are 100 pence (p) to a pound (£)
- Notes come in denominations of £5, £10, £20, £50
- Coins come in £1 and £2 and 50p, 20p, 10p, 5p, 2p, and 1p

Bank Accounts

Most students do not open bank accounts. Rather, they use ATMs and credit cards.

ATM & Credit Cards

Most major credit cards (MasterCard, Visa, AmEx) are accepted. ATMs are widely available. International credit cards and debit cards will work *as long as they have a four-digit PIN*. Check with your bank before leaving home.

General Information

Electricity

The three-pin British plug is incompatible with US-style plugs (both 2- and 3-pin styles). You'll need an adapter to use US electronics.

You'll also need a voltage transformer. Electricity in the UK is 240 volts. (In the US it is 110 volts.)

- Some heating elements (hairdryers, curling irons, etc.) get dangerously hot, even with 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). Make sure yours can handle 240 volts.

Purchase a British surge protector before charging your computer in Europe. Electrical currents are not always constant and will occasionally exceed 240 volts. Past students have had laptops 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) for temperature. 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.

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](#)

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
t: +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: visiting-students@glasgow.ac.uk

University of Reading

Erasmus & Study Abroad Office
Edith Morley Building
Whiteknights Campus
Reading, RG6 6AA
UR Email: studyabroad@reading.ac.uk
UR Tel: + 44 (0) 118 378 7220 / 8323
ISA Email: isa@studiesabroad.com
ISA Tel: +1 512-480-8522

Glasgow School of Art

Study Abroad & Exchanges
Tel: +44(0)141 353 4464
Email: v.johnson@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