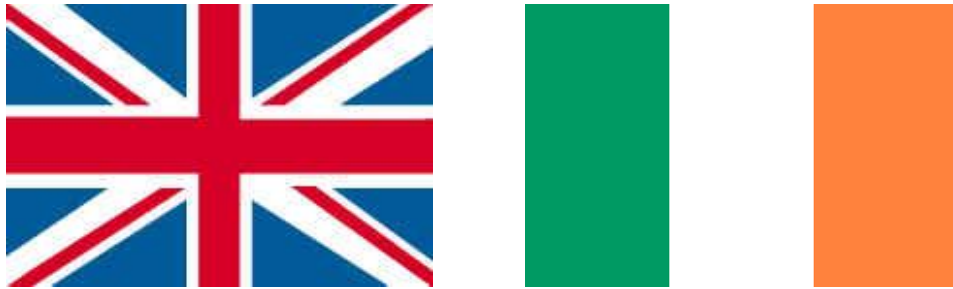


DU Study Abroad Guide to the United Kingdom and Ireland

2011-2012



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

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# DU Study Abroad Guide to the United Kingdom and Ireland

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# Introduction

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Congratulations on your acceptance to a study abroad program in the United Kingdom (UK) or Ireland! If you take ownership over this experience, I am confident that it will be rewarding and even life-changing, giving you the opportunity to live and learn in a new culture and practice many new life skills (such as booking your own plane ticket, investigating travel visa regulations, managing your budget in foreign currency, asking your parents to allow you to take the lead in working out the logistics for your study abroad, using written materials to find answers to very practical questions, etc.).

We have designed this booklet to answer many questions that students in the past have had when studying abroad in this region of the world; however, it contains little information about any particular program. Program-specific information will be provided by the host university and is usually sent to students during the months prior to start of the term abroad (for fall students, the bulk of information is not sent until the summer months).

Please read these booklets thoroughly and direct any questions to your host program contact (listed in the appendix of this booklet), Reed Beall ([Reed.Beall@du.edu](mailto:Reed.Beall@du.edu); 303.871.4912), or the appropriate authority (such as your academic advisors, the Consulate, your host universities' housing office) to be answering your question.

## **The Challenge of DU Study Abroad in the English-Speaking World**

You have chosen to study abroad directly at a British or Irish university, and this comes with a unique set of challenges to overcome.

First of all, while these are Anglophone countries, you will be fully immersed in the host institution. Under this direct enrollment model, you will have no American institution coordinating logistics and excursions for you, and you will be studying at a large public institution with far less one-on-one contact between students and university staff or faculty. This means that you need to be prepared to do most of the logistical work and learn to find your own answers using primarily written materials. At DU our mentality is that we need to bring information to our students; in Europe, however, they assume that you will find the proper written materials whenever you have questions, and ask when you don't understand something. You will, therefore, need to be a self-advocate and proactive in getting what you need.

Secondly, the British/Irish education system is *VERY* different from the US, and especially from DU. Your host university's faculty and administration will be going about their everyday business of educating their own students in their own way; and as such, they will treat you as a local student. To be successful, you need to be prepared to be flexible and learn to live and study like a local. As a visiting/exchange student at your host university, you're only a visitor, tagging along with local students' coursework for a semester or academic year. You must adjust to their system, and not demand that they adjust to yours. Like all students directly enrolling in universities abroad, you will often find yourself frustrated as you bump your way around and figure out the British/Irish education system. This process will be stressful. When you have questions, reread the materials your host university has given you (the vast majority of questions that arise are answered in print); and if you are confused, you will need to speak up, make an appointment with a staff member in the international office, and take their advice to heart.

Although full-immersion programs like these can be stressful, they are among the most personally and academically rewarding program structures. The more ownership you take over the preparations and logistics for study abroad, the more you will get out of the experience. Do not allow family and friends to do the work for you. Based on your application, we and our partners abroad are confident that you can (and will) meet this

challenge successfully! *Approach your study abroad as an opportunity to demonstrate and develop your maturity, self-sufficiency, and independence!*

Your primary mission is not to see as much of Europe as possible; it is to make the UK or Ireland your home for a semester or year and to experience a new way to live and learn. So prepare to be challenged, to take ownership over your study abroad, and to make it an experience that will benefit you for the rest of your life!

## Part One: Logistics

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### Getting to the UK and Ireland: Flights and Timing

If you will be studying abroad as a Cherrington Global Scholar, please refer to the flight booking instructions that were attached to your acceptance e-mail from our office; these instructions are also posted on our website at the following address: [http://www.du.edu/intl/abroad/pdf\\_docs/cherringtontravelbooking.pdf](http://www.du.edu/intl/abroad/pdf_docs/cherringtontravelbooking.pdf).

For many of you, this may be your first international flight or flight without your family. Please do not allow your parents to book your flight for you. Take the first step in taking ownership over this process, and learn how to make your own travel arrangements. Please caution your parents from flying over with you. The optimal time for parents to visit is during the middle of the program, not the beginning or end.

Here are some tips to keep in mind when booking your flight:

- Confirm with your program that the arrival and departure dates for the program are finalized before booking your ticket. Some programs post tentative dates on the web or only post the start of the academic term, rather than the day you need to arrive in order to move into your housing and be present for orientation. Most programs post the last day of exams as the last day of the program, which means the departure date is the following day. Don't confuse the first and last days of the academic term with your arrival dates for moving in and out of your accommodation.
- Generally arrive one or two days before the first day of your orientation. Most programs will offer a recommended day to arrive. Attending the on-site orientation is mandatory. Arriving too early can cause one to become bored, lonely, or anxious (remember the student housing will be vacant); therefore, arrive in good time, but not too early.
- If your flight is not direct, remember to book the ticket so that you have ample time (such as 4 hours or so) between flights to make your connection. Better to wait around for several hours because your connecting flight was on-time, than to miss it!
- If your flight is not direct, make sure that your connecting flight leaves from the same airport that your first flight arrived at. Sometimes students mistakenly fly into Heathrow and have a connecting flight out of Gatwick - something you want to make sure you avoid!
- It is advisable to book your ticket to arrive on-site in the morning or early afternoon. Avoid arriving in the late afternoon, evening, or night. Arriving at night affords little time to get oriented. If possible, also avoid arriving on a Sunday (unless your program specifically recommends arriving on that day). Most businesses are closed on Sunday, and public transport runs less frequently, making it more difficult to find your way.
- Some programs may have an airport pick up service, which will require that you arrive within a particular timeframe to take advantage of it, so keep this in mind before booking your ticket.

# UK Immigration & Customs

## Resources and Disclaimers

For an overview of immigration for study abroad students, begin by reading this document: [http://www.britishcouncil.org/ukbas\\_guide\\_to\\_student\\_visas-3.pdf](http://www.britishcouncil.org/ukbas_guide_to_student_visas-3.pdf).

Immigration policy changes rapidly, and you are responsible for your own legal entry and stay in the UK.

Your ultimate resource for immigration advice and information should be the consulate that has visa-issuing jurisdiction for residents in your home state. While there are more than 10 British Consulates in the US (including one in Denver), only the Embassy in New York has the power to issue visas for those living in the US.

Your second-best resource is the international office at your host university in the UK. Most have a designated staff member who works with student immigration issues regularly and professionally. Your host program will offer you advice in their acceptance letters or in their orientation materials, but you are also free to email them to ask for advice regarding your own personal circumstances.

***As a third-best resource, our office is available for immigration guidance. Keep in mind that information from our office on this topic is not official legal advice, but rather a resource for finding information. With this disclaimer in mind, the following is up-to-date information as of 5/10/2011.***

**Appendix D contains further visa information for the UK, courtesy of Perry International (a third party visa service).**

## **Need a visa? “Student Visitor,” “Study Visitor Visa,” or “Student Tier 4 Visa”**

To understand what immigration rules apply to you, you need to first determine whether you will enter the UK as a Student Visitor or whether you will need a Student Visitor Visa or Student Tier 4 Visa.

### **Student Visitors (no visa required!)**

Students who have a US passport, whose study abroad program is less than 6 months, and who do not wish to work part-time (or take part in anything resembling work or professional training such as an unpaid internship) have the option to enter the UK as a “Student Visitor.” Non-US citizens may be eligible to enter the UK as a Student Visitor, if their passport comes from a “non-Visa nation”; see Appendix D for more on determining Student Visitor eligibility.

The vast majority of DU students studying abroad in the UK will enter as Student Visitors. Student Visitors do *not* need to apply for a visa nor do they need to apply in advance. Rather, they will present documentation to the immigration officer at the airport once they have arrived in the UK. The necessary documentation is described in the following section.

US students who will be studying for longer than 6 months in the UK are ineligible to use the Student Visitor Route of entry and must apply for a “General Student Visa (Tier 4).” Additionally, US students who will be studying in the UK for less than 6 months, but wish to take part in an internship or volunteer work such as service learning, *must* apply for the Student Tier 4 Visa.

### **Student Visitor Visas (application required!)**

Student Visitor Visas will be the primary route of entry for visa-nationals, such as Chinese international students studying abroad in the UK. A Student Visitor Visa must be applied for in advance of travel to the UK. For more information on Student Visitor Visas, see Appendix D.

*Non-US citizens need to work with DU's Office of International Student and Scholar Services to make sure that they remain in status in the US while studying abroad and will be able to return to the US without difficulty.*

*Non-US, visa-national students* are required to pay an application fee for the Student Visitor Visa; the application fee is eligible for reimbursement *for Cherrington Global Scholars*. To be reimbursed, you will need to submit your receipt to the international house.

#### **Student Tier 4 Visa (application required!)**

Those who will be studying for more than 6 months in the UK will need to apply for the General Student Visa (Tier 4). Those who will be participating in an internship program or will be doing volunteer work—including service learning—will need to apply for the Student Tier 4 Visa, regardless of the duration of their stay in the UK. See the below and Appendix D for more instructions.

### **Policy on Cherrington Reimbursement for Visa Application Fees**

The DU Study Abroad Office will reimburse *Cherrington Global Scholars* students who *must* pay a fee to enter the UK legally (i.e., students studying for longer than 6 months or non-US students who must pay the Student Visitor Visa Application Fee). To be reimbursed, turn in your receipt at the International House's front desk (you can mail or e-mail it, but please do not fax it). US students who have opted to do an internship or simply want the option to work—but are staying less than 6 months—are not eligible for reimbursement for the visa application fee since work/internships are optional endeavors.

### **Immigration for Student Visitors**

*The following information is for the Student Visitor only, NOT the Student Visitor Visa.* User-friendly information on the Student Visitor route of entry is posted on the British Council's website: [http://www.britishcouncil.org/ukbas\\_guide\\_to\\_student\\_visas-3.pdf](http://www.britishcouncil.org/ukbas_guide_to_student_visas-3.pdf). Further information on the Student Visitor route can be found on the UK Border Agency's website: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk/student-visitors/>

Student Visitors are not allowed to work in the UK; therefore, when you are passing through immigration, *make no use of the word "work" or anything of similar meaning!* Refer to nothing other than your 3-4 month academic study abroad program.

To enter as a Student Visitor, you will need to show the immigration officer the following documentation:

1. **Your valid passport (it's recommended to be valid for 1 year beyond your date of entry)**
2. **Acceptance letter or immigration letter** from your host university in the UK on *their* university's letterhead stating that you have been accepted into their study abroad program. This can also be a printed acceptance e-mail from *your host university in the UK, but it should still be on their letterhead.*
3. A **letter of support** from the DU Study Abroad Office. This *letter of support* states that you're a study abroad student, you're in good standing with the university financially, you have adequate health insurance, you have a place to stay during your studies, and that you will return to the US after your program is complete to finish your bachelor's degree.

Show the immigration officer items 1-3 on the list above, and have items 4-9 organized in a folder and ready to show -- *but only present items 4-9 upon request.*

4. Your **return flight itinerary** – Use this to demonstrate that you will leave the UK once your study abroad program is complete and before the 6 months have expired.

5. **Proof of funding** – This documentation is to demonstrate that you can afford your study abroad without working illegally. This proof should be a recent bank statement from your personal account (and not your parents’) that shows you have enough money for the duration of your program. While there is no strict amount that they are looking for, you may use the guidelines for visa applications: for programs in London, at least £800/month is recommended and for programs outside of London (including Harrow), £600/month is recommended. If you do not have this much in your bank account and you are questioned about this, you can point out that DU has pre-paid your tuition and rent (as stated in your letter of support, item #3) and that you only need to pay for food and living expenses, i.e., “maintenance fees.” A guideline for “maintenance fees” is £535/month for London-based programs and is £400/month for non-London-based programs.
6. Your **address in the UK** – preferably on letterhead or a printed e-mail from the British housing provider.
7. **Proof of health insurance** – your health insurance membership card.
8. Your **DU student ID** – to verify that you are indeed a student at DU.
9. *If you will be bringing **prescription drugs** with you, see the “Health and Wellness” Section of the DU Study Abroad Handbook for more information.*

***You may need to go through this process each time that you re-enter the UK. This means that if you leave the UK to visit France, for example, you will need to have items 1-9 with you to show the immigration officer upon re-entry. In other words, items 1-9 are functionally your visa and you will need them every time you travel internationally; however, you may get a special stamp the first time you enter as a Student Visitor, which you can point out to the immigration officer if questioned upon re-entry.*** So remember to keep the above documents with you in a safe place. It’s also a good idea to keep photocopies and electronic copies of these documents, just in case the originals were to get lost or destroyed.

### **Visualizing Immigrations and Customs**

Going through immigration and customs can be an intimidating process. The best way to deal with any anxiety is to visualize what it will look like, what to expect, and what to do if things don’t go as planned. To get a good idea of this, ask the study abroad alumni what it was like when they passed through immigration.

### **Applying for the Tier 4 General Student Visa**

If you will be studying in the UK for longer than 6 months, will be doing an internship, or want the option to work part-time or extend your visa, you will need to get a “Tier 4 General Student Visa.” Make sure you have read this document to get an overview: [http://www.britishcouncil.org/ukbasguide\\_tostudentvisas-3.pdf](http://www.britishcouncil.org/ukbasguide_tostudentvisas-3.pdf). You should immediately begin familiarizing yourself with visa application requirements at the [www.ukvisas.gov.uk](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk) website and begin collecting the documentation that you will need for your application. A checklist of what you’ll need is posted here: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/ukbasstudentvisachecklist-2.pdf>. See Appendix D for more information.

The timing of your visa application is important. ***Don’t apply too early and don’t apply too late!*** You are not eligible to apply for the visa until you are within 3 months of your departure. *Send in your visa application too early, and they will not process your application nor return the application fee.* Send it in too late, and it will not be returned to you in time to start your study abroad program. Keep in mind that it typically takes 6-8 weeks (sometimes longer) to complete the visa application process from start to finish. **You should apply the moment that you are eligible!**

Begin by filling out the online application on the <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/applyonline/> website. The online portion of the application is only the first step and doesn’t require all of the supporting documentation to complete – so you’ll be able to start even if you’re still in the process of gathering some of the documents. The online application involves entering your personal information, program information, and paying the application fee using a credit card. Eligible Cherrington Scholars can forward this receipt to [reed.beall@du.edu](mailto:reed.beall@du.edu) for reimbursement. Through the online application process, you will also be cued to make an appointment at the

nearest biometric facility (there are many across the US) where you will have your picture taken and your fingerprints scanned. You will receive a confirmation e-mail which will give you a checklist of the items to include with your visa application; *all of these items must be included or your application will be denied*. Once you have completed your biometrics appointment, you will mail—using a trackable mailing service—your *actual* passport (not just a copy) and the visa application with all of the supporting documentation (ordered as instructed) to the British Embassy in New York.

One of the most important supporting documents that you will need to list on your visa application is your **CAS number**. The CAS number is your online file created by your host university in the UK, which can be viewed by the UK Border Agency whenever they are confirming that you have indeed been accepted by a study abroad program at one of their universities. If your host university in the UK does not offer to supply you with a CAS number, you need to request one from them. **Your Tier 4 visa application will be denied if it does not have a CAS number.**

Another important supporting item for your visa application is financial documentation. Your CAS record will show that DU pays your tuition (for DU programs only!); however, it will not show that your housing and living expenses, called “maintenance fees,” are paid for. To get your visa, you will need to show that you can cover your maintenance fees. The maintenance fees for programs in London are £800/month and for programs outside of London (including Harrow) are £600/month. So, if you’re going to be living in London for 3 months, then you will have to prove that you have the equivalent of £2,400. Maintenance fees include rent. I will provide a letter stating how much your rent is and that DU is paying for it, and you will only have to demonstrate that you have the difference between the total amount maintenance fees and your rent. So, in our example, you need to show £2,400. Your rent is £2,000. With our letter, you only need to show that you have access to £400. You will receive an email from me when this letter is ready (I cannot write it until I know exactly how much your rent is). If you do not need this letter from (because you can show you the maintenance fees without my letter showing the amount of rent covered by DU), then you can proceed with your visa application with only the CAS number. Valid documentation that shows your ability to pay maintenance fees include a bank statement, showing that you have enough sitting in your bank account for 1 month to pay the maintenance fees. More detail will be linked in the confirmation email that you receive after doing your online application.

The UK Border Agency has provided Appendix 8 for Tier 4 General Student applications: <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/resources/en/docs/1903073/PBSappendix8generalstudent>. It is a self-assessment form, which you may include with your visa application materials to demonstrate that you have the points necessary to qualify for the visa. It is unclear to us whether the UK Border Agency is requiring Appendix 8 at this point in time, but carefully read your confirmation e-mails from completing your online application for the most up-to-date checklist of supporting documents.

## Immigration & Customs: Ireland

### Resources and Disclaimers

Do you need a visa to go to Ireland for your study abroad? What do you need to do to comply with immigration policy while you’re in Ireland?

Answering these questions is a great opportunity for you to practice taking ownership over the logistics of your study abroad experience in Ireland. It is especially important that you take responsibility over this aspect of any of your travels abroad because you are the one who is passing through immigration. Immigration policies change frequently and determine whether or not you’re able to enter the country; therefore, you should learn the current policies and procedures and then check periodically to make sure that they have not changed.

Our office cannot give you official immigration advice; however, we can point you in the right direction. Your ultimate source should be the consulate of Ireland in the US that has jurisdiction for granting visas over your region of the US. For example, Colorado residents will use the Irish consulate in San Francisco (<http://www.consulateofirelandsanfrancisco.org/>) while Illinois residents will use the consulate in Chicago ([www.irishconsulate.org](http://www.irishconsulate.org)). They are the ultimate source because—should you need a visa—they would be the ones responsible for issuing that visa to you.

Your second best source for immigration information is the International Office at your host university. They have staff members who monitor Ireland’s policies for incoming study abroad students, and they will work hard to make sure that you have the most up-to-date and accurate immigration information. You should receive immigration information from them after you have been accepted to the program.

*Disclaimers aside, the following is meant to give you an idea of how the immigration process has worked in past years (including last fall); while it is likely that you will experience the same or a similar process, it could change.*

### **Passport and Immigration Control**

Generally speaking, US passport holders do not need a visa to enter Ireland to study abroad, but will need to get a residence permit within 30 days of arriving there. No advance application prior to your departure is necessary; you will apply for your residence permit once you get to Ireland.

### **Immigration via Dublin’s or Shannon’s International Airport**

At the port of entry, all non-EU students will have their passports computer swiped and date stamped by the Immigration Officer, endorsing a requirement for you to register with the immigration office in Dublin within 30 days. You will receive instructions on how to do this during your on-site orientation. To give you an idea of what this process looks like, see the “Immigration Registration at the Police Station” section.

Refer to pre-departure information supplied to you directly from your study abroad program for further information.

### **Immigration via Cork’s International Airport**

If you will be studying abroad in Cork, it is recommended that you fly into Cork’s International Airport. There are currently no flights directly from the US to Cork; therefore, most study abroad students studying abroad at UC Cork will fly to one of London’s airports and then get a connecting flight to Cork.

The reason that it is recommended that you fly into Cork’s International Airport is that it is possible to get your residence permit immediately upon exiting the plane. When you get to the immigration officer who is inspecting non-European Union citizens’ passports, show your valid US passport along with your original acceptance letter from UC Cork and a letter of support from the DU Study Abroad Office. The immigration officer *might* be able to issue your residence permit stamp on the spot.

If you do not receive this stamp upon arrival in Cork or if you arrive in Ireland via Dublin’s airport, you will have 30 days to register at the immigration office in Cork. For more instructions, see below.

Refer to pre-departure information supplied to you directly from your study abroad program for further information.

## Immigration Registration at the Police Station

All international students are **required to register with Immigration within one month of arrival in Ireland**. Please note that registration at the Immigration Office is not the same as obtaining a visa. A visa is not currently required for US students' initial entry into Ireland. Explicit instructions will be provided in your on-site orientation provided by your Irish host university.

You will be issued an Immigration Card (sometimes called a "Green Card"), which is a stamp that will be put in your passport by an immigration officer.

To register with immigration, you will need to bring the following to the appropriate office:

- **Completed Immigration Form** – This form will be available to you at your orientation and from your Irish University's International Education Office.
- **Passport** – Make sure it will be valid for at least six months beyond your departure from Ireland.
- **Proof of Student Status** – To prove this, it is best to use your student ID card from your Irish host university. There is usually a several week-long process to get your ID card; therefore, get started on this right away since you only have 30 days to register with immigration.
- **Evidence of Financial Support** – There are typically two ways to fulfil this requirement. You can either:
  - Get an Irish Bank Account and bring your account statement showing a reasonable amount of money for your living expenses during the term
  - I will write a "Letter of Support" confirming that you are in good financial standing with DU. This letter will be created in the term prior to your study abroad term. You will be notified by Reed Beall ([Reed.Beall@du.edu](mailto:Reed.Beall@du.edu)) via e-mail when it is ready for pick-up.
- **Evidence of Permanent Residence** – The "Letter of Support" from our office should satisfy this requirement.
- **Immigration Card Fee of €150** – There will be a €150 charge (2010 rate) for all Immigration Cards/Residence Permits issued by the Garda National Immigration Bureau. Payment will be by bank giro, issued at the Garda (police) Station only, or by credit card. This fee is refundable for Cherrington Scholars. For reimbursement, submit the receipt to the International House by mail or upon your return.

Please remember that you are a guest in Ireland and that the issuing of your residence permit is at the discretion of the Irish government and immigration officers; in other words, you are not entitled to your residence permit, and they are not technically obligated to give it to you. Therefore, remember to be polite and be certain that every single aspect of your application is in order and complete before appearing at the immigration office.

Refer to pre-departure information supplied to you directly from your study abroad program for further information.

## Getting from the Airport to Your Program Site

You will receive instructions from your host university on how to get from the airport to your accommodation. If this is not given to you or posted online, request this information from your program provider. Some programs may have an airport pick up service, which will require that you arrive within a particular timeframe, so keep this in mind before booking your ticket. Keep in mind that a taxi-ride from the airport to your housing could be extremely expensive (and is not reimbursable through the Cherrington program), especially in London and Dublin.

Several universities offer an optional airport pick-up service which is done by local student volunteers; if this service is provided, it is recommended, and don't forget to sign up early (space is usually limited). Also, don't forget to get the telephone numbers of whoever is meeting you at the airport so that you can contact them if you have trouble finding them in the airport or if your flight is delayed.

Your program or housing provider should give a specific time in which you're able to move in and receive your keys. You should plan your arrival with this time in mind. If this information is not given to you, please contact your program and/or housing provider to inquire. Remember to have a telephone number to call in case you arrive on site and there is no one at your accommodation office to let you in, or in case flight delays mean that you will be arriving afterhours. Typically our partnering universities will mail you these instructions in the summer. *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.*

If you will be studying at Exeter, Lancaster, or York, you will probably use the British railway system in order to get to your program site. Remember that *our office will reimburse for the expense of the rail ticket to/from to your host city from/to the airport's city, provided that you save your receipts, return them to our office, and are a Cherrington Global Scholar.*

## Orientations and Welcome Weeks

Most programs will recommend a specific day(s) to arrive, which will be shortly before the orientation and/or welcome week commences. If you have a free day between your arrival and the beginning of orientation, former students recommend using this day to introduce yourself to other international students and invite them to join you on a guided tour of your host city. The content and extent of your orientation varies among programs. Your orientation may only be one day and include optional social activities later in the week, or it might be an entire week of meetings each day. Acceptance materials that your host university will send you will describe their orientation in more detail. In general, the orientations tend to be shorter rather than longer and culminate with registering for classes. You will get as much out of the orientation as you put in. Write down all of the questions you want to ask and make sure you get the answers, and participate in all of the optional social activities. *Please note that your attendance of the full on-site orientation program is absolutely required!*

## International Education Offices

While abroad you will be working with the international office at your host university. These offices are equipped with advisors much like ours who will answer your questions, provide you with resources and an orientation upon arrival, and ensure that your transcripts are processed and sent to DU. Although the international office at your host university may have a 24-hour emergency phone number—which may be provided in your acceptance materials—they will not check-up on you regularly; nevertheless, they are your primary, port-of-call contact. If you have questions, concerns, or need advice, you need to take the initiative to make an appointment to speak with them. Most easy-to-answer questions will be laid-out in written material, which they will send to your permanent address 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 your written material.

Some students in the past have been frustrated with the lack of individualized attention from their host institution's international office, complaining about poor 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*. Therefore, if you do not contact them, they assume that you have everything you need. Our partners abroad have no way of helping you if they do not know that you are in need of assistance. You will find the communication and support to be satisfactory if you read the

materials that they give you closely and seek staff out when you have questions. Feel free to ask them a variety of queries, even advice on the cheapest grocery stores or what local sites to visit. The message here is: when you have questions or need help, *let our partners know. You need to go to them – they will not come to you!*

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.

## Part Two: Academics – DU Meets the UK/Ireland Universities

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### Registering for Class and Planning Your Academic Schedule

You probably have learned some of the differences in terminology in the British/Irish system. Here are some basic terms that you need to know:

US Terminology	British/Irish Terminology
Classes or courses	Modules
Majors	Courses
Professors, Instructors, Teachers	Tutors, academics, lecturers, instructors, or professors

For the purposes of this booklet, we will keep to the American terminology.

Remember that because the British and Irish universities do not set their academic timetables and course offerings until shortly before the beginning of the term, you probably will not finalize your registration until you are at your orientation in the UK or Ireland. The best way to cope with the uncertainty of what classes will actually be offered at your host university is to select many classes that would satisfy DU degree requirements and have them all pre-approved by your advisors at DU; this way you will have many back-up plans when you register on-site. You can use the previous years' catalogue as a guide because it's likely that your host university will offer similar classes again, especially at lower levels. You should already be familiar with where to find the course listings since it was required to list some classes as part of your application; but if you have questions about this, e-mail your host university international office contact.

One way to maximize your level of immersion with local students and experience the British or Irish education system like a local is to take as many modules as possible from one department all at the same level, for example, taking 2000-level English modules. The reason for this is that local second-year English majors will be taking only 2000-level English modules; therefore, you're likely to have a lot of the same people in all of your courses, giving you ample opportunity to get to know your peers and experience their education system. Always remember, however, to discuss what credits you plan to earn abroad with your academic advisors at DU.

The best way to get your first choice classes is to make sure that your host university is aware of your most current preferences. Many of our partnering universities do offer pre-registration. Therefore, if your preferences change from what you listed on your application, please e-mail your host university's international office and let them know about this change.

# Getting Classes Approved for DU Degree Requirements

Remember that all the courses you take abroad will be considered general electives, unless you get a signature from the appropriate academic advisor. Directions on how to get courses approved and a listing of which advisor to contact for the various degree requirements is posted on our website at: [http://www.du.edu/intl/abroad/course\\_approvals.html](http://www.du.edu/intl/abroad/course_approvals.html).

## Course Levels and Equivalencies

In general, we translate the course level equivalencies in the following way:

100/1000 level (4 at Westminster) – UK/Ireland First Year – DU Sophomore/Junior Level  
200/2000 level (5 at Westminster) – UK/Ireland Second Year – DU Junior/Senior Level  
300/3000 level (6 at Westminster) – UK/Ireland Third Year – DU Senior/Graduate Level

We assume courses will be upper division in the UK/Ireland, unless the course's title is "Introduction to \_\_\_\_\_ (fill the blank with a very broad academic discipline such as psychology, sociology, or philosophy)" and it is a first year course. Always confirm a course will be upper-division with your study abroad advisor if your academic advisor's approval is contingent upon it being upper level.

## Credit Loads and Limits

Before reading this section, please be sure to read the "Credit" section in the "Study Abroad Policies" (Section 2) of your handbook. The amount of credit that you will earn for each course varies not only among the locations in the UK and Ireland, but also among the courses within a particular university. In Appendix E, I have included a chart that describes how to calculate the amount of DU credit that you will receive.

You may find that your program offers courses that are worth as many as 16 DU credits! Having this 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. I 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.

You must remain "full-time" in the terms of your host university. What is defined as full-time at DU does not matter abroad. Your legal residence in the UK or Ireland is only valid so long as you are a full-time student at your host university. If you compromise this, you invalidate your legal immigration status and are vulnerable to deportation.

Students doing the "Early Start" program in Cork typically earn over the equivalent of 27 DU credits. These students will be registered at DU for a summer study abroad credits and the credit/grades will be displayed there (rather than with their fall term courses).

## Grades

The British/Irish education system does not suffer from the same grade inflation that has become a problem in the US. Most UK and Ireland 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/Ireland. *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+"!* I have listed grading equivalencies in Appendix B of this guide.

# You Must Finish ALL Coursework Before You Leave!

Many of you will need to arrange your exams and/or final paper due dates with your professors before a specified deadline set by the international office at your host university. You may not be taking your exam with the local students because their assessment will be given after the winter holiday.

Your professors may be unfamiliar with the procedure for international students. Your host university's international office will provide you with information at orientation, but keep in mind the following:

- *You must finish all coursework before leaving the UK or Ireland, despite what your professor says! If they give you the option to e-mail it to them over the holidays or even in January, do NOT take them up on this offer. It goes against DU's policy!*
- It's not uncommon that a professor will misplace your work which you turned in for a grade. Save all of your coursework and material and bring it home with you. *If possible, save proof that you turned in your final assignment or exam on-time* so that you can prove you did the exam or assignment in case your work is lost.

## The UK/Ireland Academic System

### Being Successful in the UK/Ireland Academic System

The American and British/Irish education systems are very different; in fact, most study abroad students experience culture shock most vividly on campus. In the following paragraphs, I will try give you a better idea of what you might expect to experience.

Understand that British and Irish universities aim to produce specialists while most American undergraduate degrees are built to produce well-rounded students. To get into college, British/Irish students take placement exams on a particular academic subject at the end of the equivalent of their high school. They typically take these exams in 2-4 academic subjects that interest them (you might imagine these to be like AP exams) and they will receive a score in each area. Of these topics in which they took the exams (for example, physics, math, and chemistry), students would use their highest score (say it's physics) to apply to universities to study that subject (e.g., physics) exclusively for 3 years (Scotland's 4-year degrees are an exception) to get an undergraduate degree.

There are several consequences of this that may shock American students, for example:

- These degrees are rather rigidly mapped out and have first and second year students often taking the same sets of courses; in other words, there are far fewer major electives. *Therefore, even if you cannot see the course catalogue for next academic year, they're sure to offer the same sets of lower level courses every year, especially if they are required courses for a particular degree.*
- British and Irish students have no general education requirements outside of their majors. They only study their topic. *Because local students will be focusing exclusively on their majors at your host university, it is recommended that you do the same and at the same level if this is possible (remember to check with your major advisor first!) in order to genuinely experience what the local higher education is like.* Because local students tend to take the same courses in the same term as they work through their degree requirements, they tend to see each other in class a lot. The professors will often make references to other courses that these students will be enrolled in at the same time.
- Every class you take in the UK or Ireland will be full of majors in that topic, and they will come to the course with a solid background knowledge and familiarity with the terminology. *Therefore, if you're going to take a class in a subject that you know nothing about, be prepared to work hard and stick to the first year courses.*

Remember also that British and Irish 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.

Another key to understanding the British/Irish education system is to understand that *the local students have been raised to self-educate*. Professors view learning how to educate yourself independently as part of the whole point of being at a university; therefore, they will push their students to not be overly reliant on their instructors, and they will expect you to be in the same mind set. Your independent research in the library or elsewhere—and not so much in the classroom—is the primary place where learning takes place in their education system. *To get the most out of your study abroad at a British or Irish university, you should see this as an opportunity to take ownership over your education and practice self-education more independently.*

As a consequence of this central difference in the education systems, you will probably notice some of the following about academic life in your British or Irish university:

- A lack of structure or sense of what's expected of you to earn a good grade
- Classes meet less frequently and attendance might not be taken at all or considered as part of your grade
- Local students take the lectures less seriously. Lectures are seen as a supplement to your private studies, not as the central piece
- There are fewer assessments (e.g., quizzes, papers, exams, presentations), but they are weighed more heavily. Many courses may only require one exam or paper that's worth 100% of your grade!
- You are not given many specific reading assignments nor is there a particular text that the class will focus upon
- Classes are usually not discussion-based and your participation in class may not be considered as part of your grade
- Professors are less approachable and less available
- More time is spent in the library

Your final assessment—whether it's a test or paper—should be your very best work. If you're asked to write a paper, make sure it is one of the best papers that you have ever written and start working on it right away. If it's an exam, begin preparing for the test immediately! Below are some study tips to help you prepare.

Get a good sense of what the exam is and who will be grading it before you start studying. Here's what the typical traditional exam will look like:

- An essay exam comprised of 2-5 general questions that will afford you the opportunity to relate much of what you've learned over the entire term
- You'll be given about 2 hours to write your answers
- The graders are often NOT the same person who is teaching the class
- 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 (in other words, they pulled in relevant material that was not discussed in class) tend to earn the highest grades
- Exam questions from previous terms are often available so that you can get a sense of typical questions

Once you know what assessment (paper and/or test) you are preparing for, then you can get started in creating your own learning plan. Determine how much time you have to study per class during the week and map out *when* exactly (e.g., Mondays-Wednesdays from 3-5:30pm – Study for Physics I class) you are going to

study. A good rule of thumb for your private study schedule in the UK or Ireland may be around 3-4 hours of preparation for each hour that you spend in the classroom.

Next, determine what you are going to study; in other words, ask yourself, “What should one know, having taken this course?” There are several ways you can go about answering this question, and we recommend making use of all of them, e.g. looking at the learning outcomes of the course you’re enrolled in, looking at syllabi from other universities that are posted online, or talking to local students who’ve already taken the course.

For the most thorough approach, use the reading list provided by the professor on the first day of class (sometimes you’ll need to request this). It will contain the most important texts on the subject and these will be available on reserve in the library. Go to the library and look through many of the readings, paying particular attention to the chapter titles, section headings, etc. Look for reoccurring themes. For example, imagine that you are taking a basic psychology course. After looking through several books on the topic, you notice that all include a chapter on Sigmund Freud—you’ve found a reoccurring theme! Write this down as something you need to study for the exam. Continue this process until you’ve identified what seems to be all of the major concepts and important written works that you’ll need to learn. Remember also to exclude those topics that are only seldom mentioned in the literature; those are probably too specific and not really something you need to cover at this point.

After you’ve identified what you think you need to know, then figure out how you’re going to learn about each topic. Write down the readings that you’ll need to do. Remember to take into consideration what topics will be covered in the lecture; since these will be covered by your professor, you may read less about them. On the other hand, you may want to supplement the lectures with more in-depth readings, knowing that the lecture topics are probably the most important ones for the course. Write out specifically what you plan to study, when, and how. Basically, you are writing your own syllabus! Make it something that you will be able to stick to realistically.

Schedule a time to meet with the professor early on in the term in order to get feedback on your personalized study plan. It may turn out that you’ve missed some major concepts in your plan or have included ones that are unnecessary; the professor can help point these out. Amend your schedule accordingly, and then stick to your plan! Set deadlines for yourself and meet them.

Once you’ve completed your reading regimen and you have learned to talk about the subjects at hand in a fluid, coherent, and interesting way, then you’re ready for the exam! At the end of each of your private study sessions, you might set aside a few minutes to practice writing about the subject that you’ve read about. Write down some important facts, details, concepts, etc., to commit to memory. Remember that in the British/Irish system, your ability to remember and recite the material can be as important as learning it in the first place.

When it comes to the exam day, here are some ways to make your essays stand out in the British/Irish system:

- Remember your sources and state them in your essay. This may involve remembering the title, author, and publishing year of the book you read.
- Explicitly mention things that you learned about that were NOT discussed in the lecture. This proves your knowledge exceeds what was mentioned in class and that you’ve been learning independently. It’s okay to relate things you learned in other classes, as long as it’s related.
- Show critical thinking skills (i.e., the ability to suspend your preconceived notions in order to investigate an issue from many different angles, and then form an opinion that is coherent and well-supported by what you feel to be persuasive, given the best available evidence).

If you want personal academic help and advice, the student union will often have support services like tutors and writing workshops free of charge. Utilizing local tutorial services will familiarize you with the British/Irish system, save you the stress of trying to learn it the hard way, and is another opportunity to get to know a local!

It is important to remember that the British/Irish academic systems are among the most respected in the world. Because no one checks on your progress throughout the term (as is the case at DU), it may feel as though you are in a non-rigorous academic environment; however, remember that they have extremely high standards for the work that you produce at the end of the term. Many DU students do not realize how rigorous the academic environment was until they receive their grades at the end of term. Do not be fooled by the casual attitude that your professors and local classmates may appear to have towards their studies. Take your work very seriously and do not procrastinate on preparing for your assessments.

## Part Three: Life at the British/Irish University

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### Student Unions

Undoubtedly, getting plugged into your university's student union as early as possible is one of the best ways to get the most out of your study abroad experience. Every good British and Irish student will be a member of 3-4 clubs (like intramural sports) and/or societies (groups that meet regularly in the name of a wide range of topics from religious groups, LGBTIQA, academic societies, politics, hobbies, etc).

Student unions are the hubs of student life. At most US universities, no umbrella organization oversees both activities and student services. But in the UK/Ireland, unions – run by students, for students - provide a one-stop shop for all needs: from giving advice on accommodation or finances, to organizing sports and arts clubs, to running student pubs and planning city clubbing nights. At the union, students can get practical advice on such topics as finances, academic concerns, accommodation, job searches, and immigration. Unions also provide resources on mental health issues, safe sex, and alcohol awareness. Large unions act as drop-in advice centers and often employ full-time staff, while smaller unions rely on volunteers and, at the very least, have information resources. Unions also oversee all student groups. At the union, students can sign up for societies devoted to radio, painting, religion, volunteerism, and more. Sports clubs are a popular way to get fit and make friends in a low-key setting. Providing entertainment is a core function of students' unions, most of which run in-house pubs and cafes. Larger unions sometimes have their own dance clubs, cinemas, and performance spaces for student and professional groups. In addition to on-campus entertainment, unions often host events – like pub and club nights – in the local town. And for first-year students, union organizers are the ones that run Freshers' Week, a series of activities – from parties to club and society sign-ups – meant as a fun welcome to university life. Unions have a democratic tradition. Each union is governed by elected officers and will hold general meetings where students can vote on issues. As the voice of the student body, unions speak on behalf of students to university administrators on academic and welfare topics, and also lobby to the local or national government on larger issues of importance to students. Many of these campaigns are run in conjunction with the National Union of Students, an umbrella organization with which most individual unions are affiliated.

The student union is your primary way to get involved and integrated into your host university's culture. You will probably find the student union to be bizarre at first, but miss it terribly by the time you leave. I strongly recommend e-mailing the leaders of some student groups that interest you before arriving. I have put a list of web addresses for the student unions below for your convenience:

City: <http://www.city.ac.uk/studentcentre/studentsunion/>

Exeter: <http://www.exeterguild.org/>

Glasgow: <http://www.theguu.com/> and <http://www.qmu.org.uk/>

Goldsmiths: <http://goldsmithsstudents.org/>  
Kings College: <http://www.kclsu.org/>  
Queen Mary: <http://www.qmsu.org/>  
Lancaster: <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/socs/index.php>  
Ulster: <http://www.uusu.org/>  
Westminster: <http://www.uwsu.com/>  
York: <http://www.yusu.org/>  
UC Cork: <http://www.ucc.ie/en/CurrentStudents/ClubsSocietiesandSports/>  
UC Dublin: [http://www.ucd.ie/stu\\_life.htm](http://www.ucd.ie/stu_life.htm)

Remember that the best way to find out more about the many student groups and intramural sports at your host university is “Freshers’ Week,” which takes place just prior to the first day of class (and festivities often continue into the first week of the term). Many study abroad students are tempted to travel internationally and miss most of Freshers’ Week. Don’t do this! Freshers’ Week is an once-in-a-lifetime experience and is often a major highlight event for study abroad students – don’t miss out!

## Pubs and Alcohol

Pubs are a significant part of British and Irish culture and social life. They are the principal meeting place to relax with friends. It is important to understand that since the legal drinking age in both the UK and Ireland is 18 (and even younger in other parts of Europe), most of your non-American classmates have had legal access to alcohol for longer than you and may hold very different attitudes towards alcohol, resulting in behavior that may be more responsible and mature. If you engage in binge drinking or drunkenness (a horrible way to make a first impression!), your non-American friends will probably see you as immature and childish. Of the few US students who have been victimized while studying abroad, nearly all of them have been attacked while they were stumbling home alone from the bars drunk. Not only is this behavior childish—it is dangerous! We highly recommend practicing responsibility in the pubs in the UK, Ireland, and Europe as a whole.

## Accommodation

Your accommodation will most likely be a single bedroom, but you will share a kitchen, bathroom, and common areas with the rest of the students on your floor. Since you will only be in Europe a brief amount of time, I recommend that you make a special effort to become acquainted with your flat-mates early on. Because the Europeans generally take longer to form friendships, it is a good idea to get started right away.

You will probably be required to pay a refundable damage deposit in order to secure your accommodation, which is usually around € or £ 250-300, in order to secure your room. Because this deposit is refundable, the Cherrington program will **not** pay this for you. If you are unable to pay your deposit upfront, please speak with the DU Study Abroad Office. To secure some university accommodations, a “Pre-payment” (i.e., a down payment on your rent) may be required (especially at Glasgow, York, and Lancaster); if the fee is a non-refundable fee relating to housing rent or electricity/gas, the DU Study Abroad will pay for this on your behalf. Contact the DU Study Abroad Office if you need more information in this area.

If the cost of damages to your room exceeds your damage deposit, the DU Study Abroad Office reserves the right to bill you for the outstanding amount (needless to say, you will also lose your deposit). Your abroad transcript will be held until the bill has been settled.

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 (especially at Exeter) and were billed for breaking their contract early when they returned to the US after only one semester.

*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. You should build this into your start-up costs when you are designing your budget.*

Remember that most things in the UK are smaller, older, and more expensive than in the US. Your accommodation will not look like Nelson or Nagel! 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.

You may not be provided with bed sheets, pillow cases, dishes, etc. Sometimes you have the option to purchase a 'Starter Kit' which includes bedding, linens and towels. These Starter Kits are convenient and reasonably priced; for this reason, they're recommended, but are not covered under the Cherrington program. Therefore, you should budget some money for 'start up costs' for buying those items that everyone needs to make a new place feel like home. Once you have your housing assignment, you can contact the front office or building manager to get details on what is provided. Most housing options have websites with answers to the most common questions.

The campus gym will probably not be free, and a membership may be expensive, e.g., € or £ 150 to join. Internet may or may not be included with your accommodation, so be prepared to pay for internet, which could cost up to € or £ 200 per semester. Laundry facilities can also be expensive, around € or £ 5 to do one load of laundry.

## **Budgeting**

Both the UK and Ireland are expensive places for Americans to live, particularly in central London. You should be planning accordingly. Get a summer job and save every penny. A good goal to have in mind for food, living expenses, entertainment, and everything else is \$600-\$800/month for Ireland, \$800-\$1000/month for the UK, and \$1000-\$1300/month for London (make sure to also watch the exchange rates). Your host program will be able to provide a sample budget. The program's returnees are another good resource.

Remember to figure out what is and is not included in your program. Some expenses that may not be covered by your study abroad program that you're used to having at DU include an unlimited local transportation pass and a recreation center pass. Internet service is not always included either.

## **What to Pack**

A good rule for packing for study abroad in general is to bring have as many things as you think you'll need and twice as much money. Focus on bringing items that you won't want to buy there and will want to bring home (e.g., a coat, jeans, shoes, a set of nice clothing in case you find yourself needing it for a formal occasion). Remember, the weather in the UK and Ireland can be quite erratic, and you'll want to bring clothing that can be easily layered and is appropriate for many different kinds of weather. Some things to make sure you bring with you include:

- Comfortable shoes. Kelly, our peer advisor, warns "Ladies, you won't need as many heels as you think!" Walking will be your primary mode of transportation, and you will be doing a lot of it. Since many roads are cobblestone or full of holes, flat boots and shoes are the best choice for many in the UK and Ireland. You also won't be needing sandals – likely it will be far too cold to wear them.
- A winter coat. November and December can be very cold, and you'll want your winter coat after just a few weeks of being there. Snow before the holidays in the southern parts of the UK and Ireland is somewhat rare, but it does happen (like in 2009 and 2010) and you will definitely need warm clothes!
- Gloves, a scarf, and a winter hat. Yes, it does get that cold. You won't regret it.

- An umbrella (or two), a raincoat, and, if you're really ambitious, rain boots. Consider getting a small umbrella to keep in your purse or backpack – you really never know when it's going to start pouring outside, and you don't want to get stuck without one.

## Transportation

As you might expect, the public transportation in Europe is remarkable. Like the locals, you will be reliant upon it. Realistically, you should expect to have more of your time and money spent commuting, especially in large cities, than at home in Denver. This is a part of everyday European life so do your best to enjoy it—you will probably miss it when you come home.

**Remember that traffic will be moving in the opposite direction in the UK and Ireland.** An American study abroad student in London was struck by a bus and killed several years ago when she walked out into the street while looking the wrong way!

## Homesickness, Mental Health, and Culture Shock

US students in the UK and Ireland often experience a high level of culture shock because they expect it to be so similar to the US. Although the UK and Ireland are both English-speaking, there are still many large differences that you will encounter. For example, you will notice a very different mentality regarding customer service, convenience, and consumerism. Stores in the UK and Ireland are open less frequently and are usually less helpful to their customers. If you are expecting the US with just a funny accent, then you are in for a real surprise!

Another common source of struggle for DU students in the UK and Ireland is the weather. With approximately 300 days of sunshine in Colorado, it can be very difficult adjusting to the typical gray, rainy weather of the UK/Ireland. Remember that you'll be just as far north as Canada.

The student union offers free counseling services. If you are seeing a counselor here, you should see one abroad too. Culture shock and homesickness tend to exacerbate (not resolve) depression, anxiety, and many other emotional concerns and physiological disorders. Even if you're not accustomed to meeting with a counselor, you may consider meeting with one while you're abroad. Even if you just want to talk through and process how you're adjusting to your new surroundings, counseling is a luxury that is very expensive in the US, but may be free through your host university's student union!

## Electrical Appliances

If you plan to bring any electrical appliances with you from the US (e.g. hairdryers, curling irons, etc.), make sure that you bring a transformer *and* an adaptor. The electrical current in Britain is 240 volts, while it is only 110 volts in the US. This means that American appliances are made to handle about half the amount of electricity that UK sockets

provide! So, you need not only an adaptor to change the shape of the plug, but you also need a transformer to lower the voltage for American appliances. One good option is to simply purchase lower cost appliances once you arrive in Britain. British **adaptors** look like the picture on the right—3 prongs: 2 horizontal, 1 vertical.



Laptop computers nowadays usually have a transformer built into the power cable; they look like a little black box (or a white box, if you have a Mac) like the picture on the left. The range of voltages that the transformer can handle will be listed on it. Check to make sure yours can handle 240 volts. If it cannot, then you

need to buy a transformer. If it does cover the higher range of voltage, **remember to buy a British surge protector before plugging in 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 gets fried because they did not buy a surge protector. **When charging any appliance with a battery—such as a laptop computer, digital camera battery, or cell phone—unplug the item once it has a full charge; if you are not careful about this, you will ruin your battery, which is especially expensive to replace for laptop computers.** By the way, this is also true in the US, but because we have a lower voltage, the effect is less noticeable; it's very noticeable in Europe.

Another good option is to look for appliances that are “dual voltage” before you go abroad. Many of these can be found at stores like Target or Walgreens, or online at Amazon.com. Many travel-sized appliances are dual voltage (to accommodate people travelling outside of the US). The appliance will likely say on the box whether it is dual voltage or not. If you choose to buy dual voltage appliances, you will be able to use them with just an adaptor plug (because our plugs are shaped differently than in the UK, as seen above). No transformer will be necessary. You will also be able to use these appliances without any trouble when you arrive back home in the US. If you wait to buy appliances in the UK, you will only be able to use them for the duration of your stay, as they will be formatted for the British voltage and plugs.

## Conversions: Distance and Weather

Don't forget that the UK and Ireland use the metric system and Celsius (not Fahrenheit) as their systems of measurement. There aren't any really easy conversions to remember, so it's helpful to look these up before you get there – otherwise you'll probably have no idea what the local students are talking about – especially when referring to the weather.

In the US, we use Fahrenheit. We would say that 70-80 degrees is very nice, 100 degrees is hot, and 30 degrees is cold. In the UK and Ireland, they use Celsius. For them, 25 degrees is very nice, while 40 is extremely hot, and 0 is cold. It might be helpful to remember that 0 is freezing and 100 is boiling – therefore there are less degrees in-between these points, meaning small changes in the scale are reflective of big changes in temperature. Here are some helpful points of reference for the Celsius scale:

**Celsius:**            -10: very cold            0: cold            20: room temperature            30: very warm

In the US, we use miles. In the UK/Ireland, they use kilometers. The conversion is 1 mile = 1.61 km. This is hard to remember, so you can usually use 1 mile = 1.5 km as a better point of reference. Always remember that whatever distance THEY say, you can take that it's LESS in miles. If someone says its only 5 km away, they mean that it's about 3 miles away.

## Appendix A – Important Contacts

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## Appendix B – Grade Scales

University of Westminster* <sup>1</sup>	
Percentages	DU Equivalent
66+	A
64-65	A-
60-63	B+
54-59	B
50-53	B-
46-49	C+
44-45	C
40-43	C-
38-39	D+
36-37	D
35	D-
0-34	F

Queen Mary, Univ. of London*	
Percentages	DU Equivalent
70+	A
66-69	A-
63-65	B+
60-62	B
55-59	B-
50-54	C+
45-49	C
40-44	C-
0-39	F

Goldsmiths, Univ. of London*	
Percentages	DU Equivalent
70-100 (A, A+, A++)	A
65-69 (B++)	A-
60-64 (B+)	B+
50-59 (B, B-)	B
41-49 (C+, C, C-)	B-
40 (Pass)	C
0-39 (D, D-)	F

City University London*	
Percentages	DU Equivalent
75-100	A+
70-74	A
65-69	A-
60-64	B+
55-59	B
50-54	B-
46-49	C+
40-45	C
35-39	C-
0-35	F

University of Exeter, Ulster*	
Percentages	DU Equivalent
70+	A+
66-69	A
64-65	A-
60-63	B+
54-59	B
50-53	B-
46-49	C+
44-45	C
40-43	C-
38-39	D+
36-37	D
0-35	F

University of Glasgow*	
Grade Code	DU Equivalent
A1-A5	A
B1-B3	A-
C1	B+
C2	B
C3	B-
D1	C+
D2	C
D3	C-
E1	D+
E2	D
E3	D-
F1-F3, G1-G2, H	F

University of York*	
Percentages	DU Equivalent
70+	A
64-69	A-
60-63	B+
54-59	B
50-53	B-
46-49	C+
44-45	C
40-43	C-
38-39	D+
36-37	D
35	D-
0-34	F

Lancaster University*	
Percentages	DU Equivalent
70+	A
65-69	A-
60-64	B+
55-59	B
50-54	B-
40-49	C
35-39	D
0-34	F

Kings College London*	
Percentages	DU Equivalent
70+	A
65-69	A-
60-64	B+
55-59	B
50-54	B-
45-49	C+
41-44	C
40	C-
0-39	F

University College Cork	
UCC Grade	DU Equivalent
100-70%	A
69-65%	A-
64-60%	B+
59-55%	B
54-50%	B-
49-45%	C+
44-40%	C
39-35%	C-
34-30%	D+
29-0%	F

University College Dublin	
Grade	DU Equivalent
A+ or A (100-74%)	A
A-, B+, or B (73-65%)	A-
B- (64-60%)	B+
C+ (60-58%)	B
C (57-55%)	B-
C- (54-50%)	C+
D+ or D (49-45%)	C
D- (44-40%)	C-
E+ or E (39-35%)	D+
E- (30-34%)	D
F+ or F (29-25%)	D-
F-, G+, G or G- (24-0%)	F

\*Minor adjustments may occur

## Appendix C – Credit Scales

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### City University London\*

Full-time = 4 classes per term = 24 DU credits = 6 DU credits per class on average

### Exeter\*

Full-time = 60 Exeter credits per term = multiply by “0.4” for DU credits = 24 DU credits = 6 DU credits per class on average

### Goldsmiths\*

Full-time = 16 Goldsmiths credits = multiply by “1.5” for DU credits = 24 DU credits = 6 DU credits per class on average

### Glasgow\*

Full-time = 60 Glasgow credits per term = multiply by “0.4” for DU credits = 24 DU credits  
= 8 DU credits per class on average

### Kings College London\*

Full-time = 60 Exeter credits per term = multiply by “0.4” for DU credits = 24 DU credits = 6 DU credits per class on average

### Queen Mary \*

Full-time = 4 Queen Mary credits per term = 24 DU credits = 6 DU credits per class on average

### Lancaster \*

Full-time = 24 Lancaster credits per term = 18 DU credits = 6 DU credits per class on average

### Westminster \*

Full-time = 60 Westminster credits per term = multiply by “0.4” for DU credits = 24 DU credits = 6 DU credits per class on average

### York\*

Full-time = 40 York credits per term = 12 DU credits = multiply by “0.4” for DU credits = credit amounts per class vary from 4, 8, and 12 per class.

### Ulster\*

Full-time = 60 Ulster credits per term = 22.5 DU credits = 7.5 credits per class on average

### UCC and UCD\*

Full time = 25-30 ECTS credits per term = 20-24 DU credits = multiply by “.08” for DU credits = 4 credits per class on average

\*Remember that you must remain “full-time” as defined by your host university in order to adhere to immigration regulations.

\**Minor changes in credit values may occur.*

# Appendix D – Tier 4 UK General Student Visa Application Supplement (courtesy of Perry International)

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## Step 1 - Identify if a Visa Will Be Required.

Do you have a passport yet? If not, getting a passport is the first step.

**European citizens:** are you a member of the European Economic Area? Check <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/infos/inf18eeaswissnationals#22862675>. Students with passports from these countries do not require a visa to enter the UK for any reason. Having a letter of acceptance or documentation on attending school in the UK could be helpful, but should not be required.

**All other Non-U.S. citizens:** are you a national of a country that always requires a visa to enter the UK? Check <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/doineedvisa/visadatvnationals>. Students with passports from these countries will need a visa and you can move on to step 2, determining which visa is needed.

**U.S. citizens:** students whose nationality is not on either of these lists are called Non-Visa nationals. **This includes U.S. passport holders** and requires additional information to determine if a visa is required. *If any kind of work is planned in the UK, including a paid job, an internship, or unpaid volunteer work, a visa MUST be applied for.* Those staying over 180 days MUST apply for a visa. You will need to apply for the **PBS Tier 4 Student Visa**.

Non-Visa nationals (including US citizens) who are **not** working, interning or volunteering AND are staying less than 180 days can enter the UK as a **Student Visitor**. An acceptance letter and proof of financial support may be requested by the immigration officer in the UK upon arrival.

## Step 2 - Determine Which Visa Will Be Required

Some confusion can develop due to the fact that both Visa Nationals and Non-Visa Nationals can fall into the Student Visitor category. The difference is that Visa Nationals, those that always require a visa, require a **Student Visitor Visa**. Non-Visa nationals (including U.S. citizens) can enter the UK as **Student Visitors**, without a visa, but with the proper documentation.

If your nationality is on the list of Visa Nationals, and you are NOT working, interning or volunteering, and you are staying in the UK for less than 180 days, you can apply for the **Student Visitor Visa**.

If your nationality is not part of the European Economic Area, and you are attending school for more than 180 days, you will require a **PBS Tier 4 Student Visa**. (Students with passports from the EEA do not require a visa for any reason).

If your nationality is not part of the European Economic Area, and you will be working, interning or volunteering while attending school, you will require a **PBS Tier 4 Student Visa**.

## Step 3 - Begin to Assemble Supporting Documents Required for the Visa.

A UK visa may be issued up to 3 months prior to the start date of the program in the UK. Some of the documents below must be issued within 28 days of the submitting the application to the Consulate. You will need to be sure that you are not getting your documents in too early, or too late.

1. Be sure your passport is *signed*, valid for the duration of the stay in the UK, and has at least 1 blank VISA page.
2. Obtain 1 passport quality photo. Be sure it meets the guidelines found at <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/resources/en/docs/12160810/Photoguide>.

**For Non-U.S. passport holders:** be sure you have proof of legal status in the United States. Either a valid visa with **original** I-94 or I-20, or an **original** Alien Registration Card. Also include a copy of the documentation. If you will be returning to the U.S., you will also need to be sure that your documentation remains valid beyond your return date to the U.S. You can NOT plan to renew a U.S. visa while you are abroad. The U.K. requires proof that you can enter your destination country after your stay in the UK.

**For PBS Tier 4 Student Visas:** first you must obtain a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) number from your university in the UK. A CAS is an electronic reference number. A paper document is not required. **The CAS # must be written on the top of your application after it is completed.**

The original documents that your host university used to obtain the CAS must also be included. These will be listed in the CAS and your host university must advise what they have included. Usually this includes original transcripts, and *these are the most common documents that are missing from applications.*

You must also show evidence of enough money to cover your tuition fees and living costs. Living costs are calculated at £800 per month for study in the Inner London Boroughs, <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/inf29pbsstudent#15332374>, and £600 per month for studying elsewhere. DU will provide a letter stating that all tuition and rent is guaranteed. Otherwise, the documents that are acceptable as evidence must meet very specific guidelines, <https://perryvisa.com/visaApps/United%20Kingdom%20Financial%20Requirements.pdf>.

**For Student Visitor Visas:** you must obtain a letter of acceptance from your UK educational institution on their official headed paper providing the name, duration, and cost of the course. A CAS is not required for a Student Visitor Visa.

You must also obtain information about finances such as bank statements showing what has been paid in and out of an account for up to the previous six months, and should name you as the account holder. There is no specific amount that must be met for a Student Visitor Visa. There are additional details for other acceptable financial documents at <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/resources/en/docs/1903073/supportingdocsvisituk>.

#### **Step 4 - Begin Completing the UK Visa Application**

The visa application must be completed online via a U.K. Government Website. <http://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/ApplyNow.aspx?Apply+Now=Apply+Now>. The UK visa fee will need to be paid as part of the online application with a credit or debit card and an appointment to get a biometric fingerprint scan from a U. S. Citizenship and Immigration office (any location) will need to be setup as part of the application.

Select the correct *“Purpose for the Application”*. If you are applying for a PBS Tier 4 Student Visa, then select that. Then, under *“Type of Application”* you will most likely select **(General) Student**. The biggest question concerning this part is the difference between **(General) Student** and **General Sponsored Student**. A sponsored student in this case is one that has an official financial or government sponsorship and is not paying anything to anyone for studies. Most DU students fall under the **(General) Student** category.

If you are applying for the Student Visitor Visa, select **Special Visitor**. Then under *“Type of Application”* select **Student Visitor up to 6 months**.

Enter your name *exactly* as it appears in your passport. If you do not go by any other names (such as Bill instead of William), do not enter anything under *“other names”*. Leave it blank.

Select how you are going to submit the application. If you are mailing your application to the Consulate, you can select *“by Mail”* and you will have a \$12 fee added to the cost for return delivery via Express Mail. If you plan to setup an appointment at the consulate directly or plan to have a third party service assist with your application, you should select *“For Travel Agent Use only.”*

**Questions about refusal of visa or denied entry:** questions regarding refusal of a visa or denied entry to the UK must be answered very carefully. Sometimes an application was rejected due to incomplete documentation, and a student is applying for a second time. In this case the student needs to be sure and check **yes** they were refused a visa. There are cases where students did not realize this was the case answered NO, and were banned from entering the UK, sometimes for up to 10 years.

There is a guide with some frequently asked questions about the application at <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/applyonline/onlineapplicationfaqs#20738284>.

### **Step 5 - Attend Biometric Appointment and Prepare to Submit Application**

You will receive a receipt when you appear for your Biometrics Appointment. **That receipt must be included with the documents being submitted.**

Determine how quickly you will need your visa and passport. *Standard processing times can vary greatly depending on the time of year and how busy the consulate is.* The UK gives some information on current expectations for standard processing at <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/processingtimes>.

The UK does offer additional options for faster processing. You can set up an appointment to go **in person** to the UK consulate in New York. This is called Premium Services and costs an additional \$100, but usually allows you to get your visa in 1 day. There is also a Priority Service in which the UK consulate will try and process your visa within 3 days. This costs an additional \$150, but does not require you to appear in person.

To pay one of the UK rush fees, go to <https://www.visainfoservices.com> . Select United Kingdom, then select United States. In the menu on the left select Purchase Products or Services and then select either the Priority or Premium service and pay for that service. **A receipt will be sent via email that needs to be printed and included with the rest of the documentation.**

### **Step 6 - Send in Application**