

UW Global Launch in London Academic Year 2026-2027 Handbook

The UW Global Launch in London program is a collaboration between the London-based Foundation for International Education (**FIE**) and International Academic Programs (**IAP**) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In this Program Handbook, you can find helpful information and advice available at the time of posting. Changes may occur before your departure or while you are abroad, and you will receive notification of these changes at your wisc.edu email.

Communications

Official email notifications from International Academic Programs (IAP) are sent to students at their wisc.edu email address. **Set up your wisc.edu email account** and begin checking it regularly.

[Admitted Freshman check list with additional instructions.](#)

UW-Madison Department of Information Technology (DoIT) provides [tech support for wisc.edu email](#).

You will also receive a series of emails from FIE. **Add fire.org.uk** to your Safe Senders list and check your spam/junk folder. [FIE messages to expect](#)

Program Contacts

Questions about your program abroad (housing, course credit, health and safety, billing, etc.) should be directed to IAP.

UW-Madison International Academic Programs (IAP) Team

Also found in the Contacts tile of [your MyStudyAbroad portal](#). Tel: 608-265-6329

- [Carmen Pitz](#), Assistant Director for Study Abroad Advising
 - Program logistics, predeparture preparation, life abroad, health & safety
- [Joanna Poinsette](#), Assistant Director for Study Abroad Enrollment
 - Application & acceptance process, MyStudyAbroad forms, grade and credit information
- [Judy Humphrey](#), Financial Manager
 - Billing and scholarship disbursement

Have questions for your IAP team?

Email us with your questions. We can also set up an advising appointment to answer your questions. Email us to request an advising time and we will arrange a date/time to meet via Zoom. In the academic year, you will use Starfish to schedule appointments with us.

[What is Starfish and how to use it](#)

Want to know who else is in your cohort?

Contact information for fellow program participants is in [your MyStudyAbroad portal](#) > Contacts

Primary contact in London: [Minaree Jayasena](#), Student Life Coordinator, and the FIE Student Life Team are there to help you with every aspect of the program experience while in London.

FIE Emergency Contact Info

FIE 24/7 Emergency Line : **+44 (0)20 7808 0131**

Last updated 14 January 2026

IAP Emergency Contact Info

In an emergency, call the main IAP number **+1 (608) 265-6329** between 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday (Central Time). After-hours/ on weekends, call IAP 24/7 Emergency Line at **+1 (608) 516-9440**.

For police, fire and/or ambulance response in an emergency, dial **999**. To report a crime that is not an emergency, dial **101**.

Your mailing address will be:

Attn: *YOUR NAME*
Metrogate
3-7 Queens Gate Terrace
London
SW7 5PE
UK

Embassy Registration

All program participants who are U.S. citizens must **register for the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#)** before departure. This will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap.

[United States Embassy](#) in the UK, 33 Nine Elms Lane, London, SW11 7US, +44 (0)20 7499 9000

Program Dates

DO NOT make any travel plans for outside of London until after you arrive and receive confirmed dates

Fall 2026

August 25	Anticipated flight departure – you will receive a suggested flight plan
August 26	Arrival date in London
August 26-30	Orientation and Welcome Event
August 31	Bank Holiday – no classes
September 1	Classes Begin
October 16-18	Fall Excursion to Edinburgh (anticipated dates)
October 19-23	Fall Break
December 13	Departure from housing by 12pm noon

**** Students cannot stay in housing during winter break ****

Spring 2027

January 6	Arrival date in London
January 6 – 10	Orientation activities, Welcome Event with UW in London
January 11	Classes Begin
March 1-5	Spring Break
April 25	Departure from housing by 12pm noon

A Note for Students to share with Parents and Families

We expect students to:

- Be active participants in their experience during the entire process (pre-departure, on-site, and return).
- Read all emails and materials provided by FIE and IAP.
- Complete tasks and meet deadlines.
- Discuss questions they have about the program with staff and past participants.
- Create a communication plan with their parents/families/friends.
- Inform their parents and family of their decisions and share information received.

Students should take the lead in contacting IAP with questions.

IAP will share information with students directly via wisc.edu email and in the MyStudyAbroad portal. UW-Madison and IAP recognize that parents & family members are important partners in a student's success. We encourage students to share resources and explore them with their parents/families.

[IAP Resource for Parents and Families](#)

IAP philosophy for working with parents/families is that we:

- recognize that **parents and families** often play a significant role of mentor/coach during the process;
- expect **students** to be active, informed participants who will communicate directly with their family members to keep them informed before, during, and after their experience; and
- encourage **family members** to communicate openly with their student. Ask questions, highlight concerns, and share feedback with the student directly. This process will help empower students to utilize skills that will help them while abroad and in the future.

[UW-Madison Parent and Family Program](#)

Goals for parents and families:

- Parents and family members recognize their important role as mentors and coaches. They help their student **progressively take on more responsibility** for academics, out-of-classroom experiences, and other aspects of their lives.
- Parents and family members have an **open dialogue** with their student about ways to promote personal health and balance, including coping with stress, alcohol/drugs, nutrition, sleep, exercise, and relationships. They **empower their student** to identify problems, develop a plan, and work toward solutions independently.
- Parents and family members understand that there are limitations regarding access to student information as outlined in the [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) and the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act \(HIPAA\)](#).

Badgers Beyond Borders: Supporting Your Student's Study Abroad Experience

[Watch this virtual family forum](#) where staff from the UW-Madison Parent and Family Program and IAP discussed study abroad and how parents and families can support their Badgers as they live and learn around the globe.

Pre-Departure Preparation

IAP pays FIE your fees for the program, **do not pay FIE directly.**

In addition to general study abroad orientation materials in [your MyStudyAbroad portal](#), there are a series of orientations specifically for this program.

Optional Visa Orientation Session

In late May, we will schedule an online orientation with a representative from [FIE](#) to give instructions and answer questions about the visa application process. We will post date, time and meeting link in your MyStudyAbroad portal.

Online Pre-Departure Orientation

In June, we will host an online orientation for you and your parents/families.

We will share the date, time, and meeting link via email and in your MyStudyAbroad portal.

Content: Introductions, Health Insurance, MyStudyAbroad portal components, Visas, Housing, Next Steps.

[Take placement exams](#) before the July orientation. This will help support your course selection process.

In Person Mandatory Pre-Departure Orientation

** This orientation takes the place of SOAR and you do not need to sign up for a SOAR session. **

Thursday, July 16 (starting at 9:30 am) – Friday, July 17 (ending by 5:30 pm)

- In person on the UW-Madison campus, we will share a full schedule in June via email.
- Session leaders: IAP, academic advisors, campus partners, and FIE representatives.
- You must attend and are responsible for arranging your own transportation to and from the UW-Madison campus. We will provide lodging for you on Thursday night on campus.
- We will offer sessions for Parents/Families both days, but they must arrange their own lodging.

Before and after the orientation, you will receive emails at your **wisc.edu** account from both FIE and UW-Madison sharing more details.

Need Academic or other Accommodations? Please [connect with the McBurney Disability Resource Center](#) to apply for accommodations before departing. You will meet a representative at the in-person orientation.

As you prepare for your year on program, review medical information with your health care provider. For information on recommended immunizations for travel to the U.K., please [read the Center for Disease Control \(CDC\) recommendations](#).

Passport & Visa

Passport

To travel to and study in London, you will need a **valid passport by May 1, 2026**. If you do not have a passport, [apply for one](#) now. It must be valid through October 2027. If it is not, [submit your renewal application](#) now.

Immigration Requirements

To study in the UK, you must apply for a student visa. A student visa is a stamp placed in your passport and gives you permission to study in the UK. You cannot apply for a predeparture student visa after you arrive in the UK. **You must apply in your country of residence prior to departure.**

IAP & FIE will provide you with information and guidance regarding this process, but it is your responsibility to obtain a student visa.

Information on the visa application process:

- Read [FIE's Before You Go – London Visa Information page](#) carefully
- To access the guide, scroll down to IMMIGRATION INFORMATION and click on Internship Pathway – Including Service Internships and Service Learning Programs
 - Click on Read our immigration guide Password: FIE

As part of the application process (typically in June) you must make an appointment to have your biometrics taken (fingerprints and photograph) in person. For those in Wisconsin, appointments are typically in Milwaukee or Chicago. Students are responsible for their own travel arrangements for the appointment and for all associated expenses.

Flights

We will not be arranging a group flight for the program. We will share a suggested flight plan and arrival details. Do not book your flight until you receive this information. FIE will provide group transportation from the airport to FIE for those who arrive on the suggested flight plan. If you do not travel on the suggested flight plan, you will arrange your own transportation to FIE.

Packing

- **Practical Clothes.** Clothes that require minimal care and are comfortable to travel in are best. Layering is the best way to combat the unpredictable British temperatures. Casual clothing is the most comfortable for day-to-day British life. One dressier outfit is helpful.
- **Backpack.** Backpacks are easier to carry than suitcases on weekend and day trips. Your room does not have much storage space, so it may be best to bring a collapsible suitcase.
- **Comfortable shoes.** You will be walking around London A LOT.
- **Strong umbrella and raincoat.** it rains quite often here!
- **Bath towels.** FIE provides bed sheets, not towels. You could also buy bath towels nearby.
- **Travel purse or money belt.** To keep your passport, ID, and money safe.
- **Laptop.** You will submit a lot of your assignments electronically. There is free Wi-Fi in your housing and Foundation House. You will also have 24-hour access to a computer lab in Metrogate if you can't bring a laptop.
- **Necessary prescriptions and medications.** Prescriptions for some medications can be difficult to get in the UK so make sure you have the right amount of medication for the duration of your program, in their original labeled bottles. Complete this step well in advance of your departure so you can consult your doctor. If you are more comfortable with certain American brand-name products (ex. Tylenol, Advil), we recommend you pack a supply.

- **Toiletries** are widely available in supermarkets and stores like Boots or Superdrug (Britain's version of Walgreens). If you are particular about certain brands of toiletries, you may want to pack a supply.
- **Cellphone.** You will need a cell phone and a plan that can make and receive calls without being connected to wifi. If you are planning to use your current smartphone while abroad, visit your cell phone provider prior to departure and have your device unlocked and discuss plan options with them.
- **Adapter.** Bring an adapter for both the UK and Europe if you anticipate travelling as the sockets are different. British electricity runs on 240 volts, while U.S. runs on 110 volts.

Packing Tips

- [Read the FIE Arrival FAQs](#)
- **Avoid over-packing!** Airlines can charge extra for additional or overweight luggage. Leave room for purchases you will make in London.
- **Mark every bag** with your name and Metrogate address.
- **Create copies of important documents** before departure for yourself and for someone you trust at home. These documents should include copies or clear photos of your passport ID and signature page, visa information, debit/credit cards and insurance cards, and any other valuable information. It is helpful to carry these documents in a folder to make it easier for you to navigate border control when entering the country. Also save in a password secured online space.

Don't Pack

- **Electrical Appliances.** If you plan to use a hairdryer or electric razor, plan to purchase these items in London instead of bringing them with you. Appliances from the US won't work properly and run the risk of starting a fire or burning electrical outlets.
- **Pepper Spray** - Do not bring pepper spray or any similar self-defense tool with you when traveling abroad. While pepper spray or similar self-defense items are legal in the United States, they are illegal to possess and carry in many other countries (e.g., Australia, Japan, United Kingdom).

Registration and Orientation on Arrival

On arrival day, you will check into your Metrogate housing. That evening, you will attend a mandatory Welcome Meeting with FIE Residence Life Supervisors.

You will also register at Foundation House (where classes are held). Bring your boarding pass (physical or electronic) and your passport with you so that FIE can copy them. You will receive additional items for your first semester at this registration.

Orientation activities (required for all students) happen Thursday through Sunday.

The orientations will help you settle in and give you the opportunity to learn more about the academic program, where you are living, the local area, health and safety, and what's going on during your time in London.

Academics

General Information

You will take classes at FIE's Foundation House, Monday-Friday between 8am and 9pm. Classes meet one or two times per week. Part of your academic program in London will be outside the classroom. You are likely to visit cultural sites, museums, theatres and do tours with your professors as part of class time.

No unexcused absences are allowed. It is particularly important that you attend all your classes because a large part of your grade is based on your class attendance and/or participation. Professors do not accept traveling as an excuse for missing class. Attendance is also a stipulation of your visa.

Do Not make any arrangements for weekend travel until you have arrived in London and received your final schedule which will tell you when your classes and other compulsory events are taking place. Some cultural activities will take place on Saturdays and Sundays.

UW-Madison Academic Resources

- [UW-Madison Library Research Guide for Study Abroad Students](#) to help support your research and written work abroad.
- [The Writing Center](#) offers individual writing appointments virtually.
- [DesignLab](#) offers one-on-one digital design tutoring to help with digital projects, including presentations, posters, videos, audio, websites/blogs, and infographics.
- [Canvas Course Support](#) can help you troubleshoot any issues with Canvas, the platform you will use for your UW courses and scholarship requirements while on program.
- **Need academic accommodations?** [Connect with the McBurney Disability Resource Center](#) to apply for accommodations before departing.

[FIE Academic Resources](#)

- MyStudy is the FIE learning platform you will use for FIE courses. More information on these resources can be found in MyStudy.
- [Writing Support Tutors](#)
 - Book 48 hours in advance. After a face-to-face meeting, subsequent appointments can be via email
- Local public and specialist libraries. FIE will reimburse a day pass to Birkbeck Library.
- JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary sources accessible through FIE networks.
- On Demand TV and Radio for Education (BoB – Box of Broadcasts) from Learning on Screen..
- First Year Academic Mentors
 - Three individual, **mandatory** sessions
 - Your mentor will email you to book sessions in the first semester
 - They will provide support and guidance on the transition from high school to college

Registration

IAP will register you for a special "Study Abroad Course" for the terms you will be studying abroad. You do not need to register on the UW-Madison campus. This is a temporary registration that will be converted into graded UW-Madison credit after the completion of your program.

Course and Credit Information

You will register for 15 credits each semester. Each course in London is worth 3 UW-Madison credits, which means you will take 5 courses each semester.

2026 Fall Semester Courses

1. **Modern London: City of Refuge (taught by UW Program Leader)** While you have come to London to study, for centuries the city has been a refuge for people escaping persecution, war, and political turmoil across the world. Focusing on the period since the mid-to-late nineteenth century, this class will explore why people ended up in London, how they experienced the city in their everyday lives, and the ways in which the attitudes of their new British neighbors shaped alternate senses of belonging and alienation. While we'll explore each of our case studies—which will include Russian revolutionaries in the 1890s and Ugandan Asians in the 1970s—through a global lens, we'll also piece together local experiences through fieldtrips to the physical sites in which our historical protagonists lived, worked, and played.
2. **Beyond Living Memory: Reconstructing UK Life in World War II (taught by UW Program Leader)** As the last survivors of World War II pass away, we are entering a new phase in studying the war—one without direct witnesses. This hands-on class invites you to become a historical detective who reconstructs the diverse experiences of this transformative global conflagration in the United Kingdom: What was it like to live through the intense bombing of the Blitz? How did various groups experience the new terrors and opportunities ushered in by the war? What did ordinary people know about what was going on across the globe, including in the British Empire—and what did the government hide from them? Through exciting primary sources, which will include the Mass Observation Archive, and fieldtrips to such sights as the underground stations that acted as air raid shelters, we'll reflect on the changes—big and small—that the war brought about.
3. College Writing-Britain as a Text (Communication-A)*
4. British Life and Cultures
5. Choose one course from the list below

Course Options 5:

- Music in 20th Century Britain
- Sustainable Cities: London in the Era of Climate Change
- Media in Britain
- Harry Potter: Magic, Myth and Meaning
- Diversity in Britain: Immigration, Discrimination, and Integration
- The Political Economy of the European Union

*If you have already fulfilled your Comm A requirement, you won't take the course listed in 3 and will take two courses from the list for 5.

2027 Spring Semester Courses

1. UW in London Spring Faculty in Residence course (Choose one from two courses offered)
2. The Nature of Story Creative Writing (Communication-B)
3. International Service & Leadership
4. Choose one course from the list below
5. Choose one course from the list below

Course Options for 4 and 5:

- Understanding Art Through London's Collections
- Food, Society, and Culture in Britain: From Traditional Tastes to Contemporary Concerns
- Diversity in Britain: Immigration, Discrimination, and Integration
- British Politics
- Health Care Policy
- Shakespeare and Elizabethan Literature
- Creative Thinking for Advertising

Course Selection

You will meet with academic advisors during the July in-person orientation to make fall class selections. [Take placement exams](#) before the July orientation. This will help your course selection process.

[Retroactive credits](#) for world languages can be earned after returning to campus as no language instruction is available at FIE. For students enrolled in the Global Launch program, the L&S Academic Deans can interpret the retroactive credit rule that a student must take the appropriate language course *before he/she has earned 30 degree credits* to mean “within the first 30 credits of UW-Madison courses taken on campus/at UW-Madison”.

When taking a language course on campus after the program, you may need to submit the [Retroactive Language Request Form](#) to have the retroactive credits applied correctly to your UW-Madison record. It is most helpful to complete the form after you are enrolled in the language course at UW-Madison, so the L&S Deans will be able to see it on your record.

Course Equivalent Requests (CERs)

Each course you take abroad must be assigned a UW-Madison “equivalent” and the grade you receive in the course will be recorded on your UW-Madison transcript. What is posted to your UW-Madison transcript will look like a regular course that you could take on the UW-Madison campus, and it is considered in-residence. This means that these courses can typically be used to fulfill major, certificate, or general education requirements.

To establish UW-Madison course equivalents for your study abroad courses, you will submit a Course Equivalent Request (CER) through [your MyStudyAbroad portal](#) >Academics Tab. There will be a deadline for submitting CERs on that Academics page. This is a recommended date so that you do not forget to complete this task, but the CER submission deadline is flexible. Detailed information on the UW course equivalent process is in the [Study Abroad Handbook](#) and in [your MyStudyAbroad portal](#) >Academics Tab. We will also discuss this at your pre-departure orientation.

Questions on CERs?

- If you have questions about what UW equivalents would fit best for your academic plans at UW-Madison, your UW Global Launch Academic Advisors can help.
- For questions about how to submit CERs or the status of a submitted CER, contact [Joanna Poinsette](#), your Enrollment Manager for the program.

Pass/Fail/Drop/Audit [Rules and definitions](#)

Refer to [the Study Abroad Handbook](#) for academic policies and procedures.

- You must enroll in the full-time academic program.
- You should not request pass/fail through FIE. You will need to make the request through your IAP MyStudyAbroad portal.
- The deadline for submitting a Pass/Fail form is in [your MyStudyAbroad portal](#) >Academics Tab.
- Unlike the CER submission deadline, this deadline is not flexible. Any requests to take a course pass/fail or to change a pass/fail course back to regular grading must be received by IAP by the pass/fail deadline.

Students can only take one course per term as Pass/Fail. While we don't recommend this in general for first year students, if you wish to set up pass/fail for one of your courses, you will need to make your Course Equivalent Request (CER) for that course by the deadline listed in your MyStudyAbroad portal. Make an appointment with your academic advisor to discuss this early in the first semester if you are interested. Joanna can help answer questions about CER submissions/selection if you decide to move forward with that option.

Grades and Grade Conversions

Courses taken in London will follow the same grading scale as UW-Madison, and the grades you earn will apply to your overall GPA.

FIE Grade	UW-Madison Grade
A+ / A	A
A- / B+	AB
B	B
B- / C+	BC
C / C-	C
D+ / D / D-	D
F	F

Each course will be worth **3 UW-Madison credits**. This is true even if the UW-Madison course equivalent is usually taken for a different number of credits on campus.

Living in London

Housing and Classrooms

The program is located on FIE premises in the Kensington neighborhood of London. [Map of the area with local resources](#)

- **Foundation House** is where most of your classes are held, open 8am – 9pm during the semester. Student support is in the Student Life Office.
- **Metrogate House:** About a 10 minute walk from Foundation House is where you will live and receive mail. Metrogate House has a 24-hour reception, a computer lab, study rooms, and laundry facilities.
- [Housing FAQs](#)
- **Roommate assignments** won't be released until you arrive in London.

- Each student will share a bedroom with one, two or three other program participants.
- Housing changes can happen between semesters just like on campus. If a move is necessary, you will receive notice from FIE at the beginning of December so that you can make your plans for moving within the residence.
- Each floor has a communal kitchen space that everyone will share.
- We typically place students in rooms with others of the same sex. In some locations, this is necessary for legal or cultural reasons. We understand that not all students may identify as female or male, and we want to create a welcoming environment for you while you are abroad. We are happy to work with students who identify as transgender, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, and/or non-binary regarding life abroad. If you have questions or concerns regarding housing as it relates to your gender identity, please contact Carmen, your Study Abroad Advisor.
- Your housing will have a **small** living space and **small** storage space. This is why it is important to pack light.
- You will share a bedroom with other UW-Madison students and there will be students from other universities studying with FIE living in the residences.
- All rooms have their own TVs and bed linen that is changed every week (bed linen includes blanket, pillows and sheets). You should bring your own towels or plan to buy towels in London.
- **No overnight guests are permitted.**
- [Residence Life Supervisors](#) live in student residence. They are usually graduate students pursuing their own course of study in London or young professionals. They keep FIE informed of any discipline and welfare problems.
- **Arrival/Departure dates are firm;** no exceptions can be made for you to move in early or move out late.

Places to Study and Work

Metrogate House: 24/7

- Study Lounge
- Quiet Study Area
- Two classroom spaces, one with a piano

Foundation House

- Classrooms available during opening hours only
- Piano in Oscar Wilde Room
- **Room Bookings** Reserve space within FIE facilities for your own use as study space, group workspace, music practice, or interviews. Email roombooking@fie.org.uk and include: Date and time, Number of people, and information which is helpful for FIE staff to schedule e.g. if you require a quieter, more private space

Imperial College

- Student Union, public access facilities
- No library access

Kensington Central Library

- No registration is required to use the study spaces.
- Register for a library membership to book a computer or borrow materials.

Museums

- Victoria & Albert Study Rooms and National Art Library

- Science Museum Library (may need to book in advance)

Highlights of the Area in London

- FIE is located near Imperial College, the Royal College of Art, and the Royal College of Music.
- Just down the street are great cultural institutions including the Royal Albert Hall, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Natural History Museum.
- You will live and study near some of London's most fashionable streets, including Gloucester Road and High Street Kensington.

Accessing the Rest of the City

[Oyster cards](#) with unlimited free travel in Tube zones 1-2 will be given to you at check-in and fully explained in orientation. Getting to the rest of the city is easy and convenient. The area is served by several underground (Tube) and bus routes. Foundation House is located near the corner of Gloucester and Cromwell Road, at the Gloucester Road Tube stop. From here you have instant access to the Piccadilly, Circle, and District Tube lines.

Roommate Relationships (adapted from [UW Housing](#))

Having a roommate may be new for you. The college roommate relationship is a rewarding experience that you will always remember...but you have to work at it. Good communication is key, and if you establish this early on, you will make the most of the good times and be better prepared to deal with the more challenging moments.

- **Roommate Agreement**
Create a roommate agreement at the start of the semester and take it seriously. The agreement form you will receive at orientation will provide topics that we know are important to living together. You and your roommate should talk about all the topics listed and share what is important to each of you.
- **Having a “Tough” Conversation**
You and your roommate have had a great couple of months, then something happens in the room and you're feeling frustrated. This is natural, it has happened to all of us. Remember good communication? Now is the time to use it. Discuss openly with your roommate how you're feeling and seek a mutual resolution.
- **Still Not Going Well? Time for an Unbiased Third Party**
After having a conversation with your roommate(s), if you find that you are still unable to reach a resolution, email the Student Life team studentlife@fie.org.uk to set up a mediation meeting with the Residence Life Manager or Student Life Coordinator. They can be a valuable, unbiased third party to discuss concerns. Depending on the outcome, the FIE staff may work with you and your roommate(s) to revise the original roommate agreement or refer roommates to additional FIE staff for further discussion.

Return Housing Information for Academic Year 2027-2028

University Housing determined that Global Launch students will take part in the new student contracting process rather than the returning resident process. While this means that you will not be able to select your exact space in the fall, it does guarantee that you will have a space within University Housing if you choose to contract with them.

Instructions from University Housing: Below are the typical steps within the new student contracting process that you will complete to live in University Housing for Academic Year 2027-2028:

1. All students currently in London will receive a contract offer email from University Housing early in the Spring semester to their wisc.edu emails.
 - a) If choosing to live off-campus upon your return, ignore any contract offer emails from University Housing. [Off campus housing services](#)
2. To move forward with the contracting process, follow instructions in your MyUW housing portal.
3. If you choose to live on campus, sign the contract and pay the advance payment by the deadline of May 1. **If you complete the contract by May 1, 2027, you are guaranteed a space in University Housing.**
4. Once you have officially contracted, you will then be able to submit building, learning/affinity community, and roommate preferences by May 1, 2027.
 - a) Housing does not operate on a first come, first served basis. They utilize a lottery system for assigning students based on their preferences. You can be placed in any building, room type, or community on or off your preference list.
5. Once the contract has been signed, and the advance payment has been made, it becomes a legally binding contract, and Housing does not release you from the contract to live off campus while still attending UW-Madison.
6. Assignment information is released throughout the summer.

Housing questions? Email Steffi Schoeder sschoeder@wisc.edu, copy info@housing.wisc.edu

Health and Safety

You are required to complete IAP's Health and Safety Orientation online, which will provide general information on how to minimize risk and health and safety resources available to you abroad. Carry your emergency card and insurance card during your program.

Health and Wellness Resources in London

- [All FIE Health Resources](#)
- [Counseling and Mental Health Resources from FIE](#) for information on how to make an appointment with FIE's psychotherapist and counselor, Dr. Deborah Hill
- [Medical Services](#) You have access to a range of free medical and healthcare services, including NHS 111, pharmacies, and urgent care centres.
- [Student Space is run by Student Minds](#), the UK's student mental health charity. They empower students and members of the university community to look after their own mental health, support others and create change.
- [Exercise & Fitness](#) options, including online workouts.

Supports from Madison

- [CISI Resources](#) CISI Main Plan Policy #: 25 GLM N19012232
24/7/365 assistance partner, AXA Assistance - Worldwide, +1 (312) 935-1703 (collect calls accepted) medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us

Remote Mental Health Appointments

If you need **urgent mental health counseling** (for example without a prior appointment), contact AXA who will connect you via phone with a licensed mental health counselor. Three visits are

allowed and are free to the insured (the counselor will not be the same each time). *Note: In cases of harm/potential harm to self or others, a local first responder should be called first (i.e. using the country's local 911) and then AXA should be called to open an assistance case while crisis/medical help is on the way.

For non-urgent outpatient counseling (i.e. seeing a counselor on a bi-weekly or monthly basis), CISI has a curated list of online providers. The contact for London is **Dr. Kenneth Demsky, Tel: +44 20 7435 6116 Email: enquiry@drkennethdemsky.co.uk Website: <http://www.drkennethdemsky.co.uk/index.htm>**

UHS Mental Health Resources

- [Thrive Online](#) is an online resource designed to support student mental health and wellbeing.
- [Let's Talk offers no-cost, informal, confidential consultations](#) virtually.
- [Connecting Badgers](#) – Podcast hosted by UHS mental health providers
- [Meditation App](#) offered by Center for Healthy Minds to practice mindfulness.

Safety

Your orientation in London will provide more specific information.

General tips to encourage safety in any location:

- Use caution when traveling around the city.
- Do not travel alone after dark.
- Tell someone your whereabouts.
- Have a working phone on your person.
- Intoxication compromises your ability to make safe choices and may increase your risk of being a target of crime.
- The UW Code of Conduct applies during your time abroad and means that alcohol consumption is not allowed during any program events or activities and is not permitted in program housing.

The Kensington neighborhood is relatively safe. However, London is still a large metropolitan city and commonsense precautions are necessary.

- For police, fire and/or ambulance response in an emergency, dial **999**. To report a crime that is not an emergency, dial **101**.
- **Flat Security** Never let anyone into the flat without proper identification. You should always be informed of workers entering the building, so if someone comes unexpectedly, request an ID.
- **Pickpockets** London is known for its pickpockets, especially in busy places like Tube stations. Carry wallets and phones in your front pockets, keep purses zipped and tightly at your side, and never hang backpacks, bags, or purses on the back of a chair at restaurants.
- **Going Out** Make sure you leave with everyone you came with. Do not accept drinks from strangers. More information about staying safe in London will be explained at your Pre-Departure orientation and reiterated at your FIE Orientation in London.
- **Cab Services** Either call for a cab or take a London Black Cab. Black Cab drivers are certified through London's metropolitan police. Never get into unmarked cabs or cabs you have not called for.

Practicalities

Phones and Internet

When making calls, keep in mind [time zone differences](#). To make an international call to the United States, dial the access code for the country from which you are calling plus the United States country code (always “1”) followed by the appropriate U.S. area code and local number. To call internationally from the United States, dial “011”, the country code, city access code (if necessary) and the phone number. [Country and city codes](#)

- You must **have a working cell phone** that FIE and IAP can contact you on in case of emergencies and we will ask you to submit your number via our portals. If you are planning to use your current smartphone while abroad, visit your cell phone provider prior to departure and request to have your device unlocked. When you arrive in London, you will then purchase an International SIM card to use with your unlocked phone. Depending on the model of your phone, you may have an eSIM and be able to purchase a plan on an app like Airalo, rather than needing to buy a physical SIM card.
Or you could purchase an inexpensive pay-as-you-go phone. More will be explained about mobile phones in the UK during your July Pre-Departure Orientation. Currys PC World, Vodafone, and EE are local stores.
- All FIE buildings including your residences and Foundation House have **free Wi-Fi** for internet access on your mobiles or laptops. You will be given a password when you arrive.
- The cheapest way to video call friends and family in the U.S. is through Zoom, FaceTime, or Skype. If you are looking to lower international text messaging costs, then applications such as Whatsapp and Facebook Messenger may be helpful alternatives for you. Many students find these apps to be supplementary for traditional texting, and they only need Wi-Fi to operate.

Food

- **No meal plans are provided**, so we recommend learning some recipes before you go.
- You will live within walking distance of several supermarkets and many small shops.
- Sainsburys, Tesco, and Waitrose are the three major supermarkets in London and are all near Metrogate/Foundation House. Also within walking distance is Whole Foods. Aldi is a little further away.
- Most grocery stores are open between 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. but close earlier on Sundays.
- Food in Europe often has fewer preservatives, so milk, cheese, bread and other perishables will spoil much faster.

Food Etiquette (when eating out)

- Service not as dynamic as it is in the US
- You may need to call wait staff when you are ready to order
- You will need to request the bill (check) at the end of the meal
- Check to see if 12.5% service charge is already included before adding gratuity
- Typical gratuity is 10%; No need to tip at pubs

Clothes

If you need additional items once you are in London, and are looking for cheaper shops, try TK Maxx on Kensington High Street (10 minute walk) or Primark on Oxford Street (15 minutes underground journey).

Handling Money Abroad

- The cost of living in London will be significantly higher than many areas of the U.S.
- The UK currency is pounds sterling (GBP) [check the exchange rate online](#) – it can change daily.
- Start to familiarize yourself with the currency before you arrive.
- **Budgeting for London** Estimated expenses vary widely depending on your spending habits. We recommend you budget £80 - £100 each week for food and personal expenses.
- **Cash for Arrival** It is a good idea to carry some British currency with you for arrival to help you settle in during your first few days. We recommend exchanging this money before you arrive in London or get it from an ATM in the airport.
- **Banking** Do not plan to keep large amounts of cash in your room. The easiest way to handle your money abroad is often to use the same checking account you have in the US, using your debit card as your primary means of payment and cash withdrawal. ATMs are readily available.
- **ATM Fees** The largest banks in England are HSBC, Barclays and Lloyds. If your bank has a relationship with any of these banks, they may not charge an ATM fee. Check with your financial institution to see if they have these relationships, and what kind of charges you will incur on international purchases. Online banking with your U.S.-based account will help you keep track of how much you are spending in U.S. dollars.
- **Always have a backup.** If you are using your debit card as your primary means of money abroad, make sure you also bring a credit card (Visa or MasterCard recommended) in case your primary card is lost or stolen. Keep the backup card in a different place than your primary card.
- **Inform your bank and credit card companies before departure** that you will be abroad so they do not freeze your accounts for security reasons. Your bank/credit card company may require you to notify them of any additional international travel you take during the program.

Student Life

- [Student Life Introduction](#)
- [Student Life FAQs](#)
- [Fitness & Gym Membership Information](#)
 - Anytime Fitness (open 24/7); Chelsea Leisure Centre (pool); Victor's Yoga, local classes and meet up groups; local YMCA
- [Go Mammoth](#) get involved in a variety of sports across London, with London locals (American Football, Basketball, Cricket, Hockey, Netball, Ultimate Frisbee, Volleyball, etc)
- At the onsite orientation, you will receive an [Imperial College Union](#) Associate Membership card. This provides access to the union's [social spaces](#) and [events](#) and allows you to join many of the 370+ student-led [clubs, societies and projects](#).

Co-Curricular Excursions

Sponsored academic activities are an integral part of the program, to enhance the academics and serve as the cultural base of the program. A series of events including day trips to other English cities, popular sites, and meals will be arranged by FIE. You are required to attend academic excursions and will learn more about this (along with specific dates/schedules) when you arrive in London.

FIE Extra-Curricular Activities

The FIE Student Life Team offers you information about local events and sponsors special discounted outings for students. They are available in Foundation House to help with your questions and concerns.

You are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities as they heighten the cultural experience of the program. An [Activities calendar](#) will be posted each semester. The activities are subsidized by FIE and are limited to availability on a first come, first served basis. There is always a deadline for online sign-up early in the term, so if you are interested in an activity, be sure to sign up promptly.

The Program Leader may also work with FIE to arrange a series of additional optional events in the city for UW students, based on interest. The expenses for these events will be covered by the program and will be at no additional cost for students to attend and will be announced each semester.

Travel outside of London

London is a great hub of transportation to other parts of the UK and to Europe. Many students take the opportunity to explore the UK and Europe while abroad. You are strongly discouraged to travel to areas that the U.S. State Department has designated as hazardous or has advised against travel. [Check the U.S. State Department website](#) for Travel Advisories and Consular Information Sheets for any country you are considering traveling to or through before you make any plans.

Alert FIE staff online any time you leave London overnight. Submit the [FIE Travel Form](#) before any visit outside of London or overnight stay away from your FIE residence. This information makes sure that they can reach you in an emergency.