

UW Global Launch in London Academic Year 2025-2026 Handbook

Last updated 27 January 2025

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. This Program Handbook provides you with 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. Please **ensure your wisc.edu email account is set up** and begin checking it regularly. Additional instructions: <https://admissions.wisc.edu/admitted-freshman-checklist/> The 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 @fie.org.uk to your Safe Senders list, as all emails will come from this domain. If you haven't received information that you think you should have, check your spam/junk folder. Information on messages to expect: <https://www.fie.org.uk/homepage/before-you-go/before-you-go-london>

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

Program Contacts

UW-Madison International Academic Programs (IAP) Contacts

Also found in the Contacts tile of your MyStudyAbroad portal. **Tel:** 608-265-6329

- **Carmen Pitz**, Assistant Director for Study Abroad Advising (carmen.pitz@wisc.edu)
 - Program logistics, predeparture preparation, life abroad, health & safety, identity resources
- **Joanna Poinatte**, Assistant Director for Study Abroad Enrollment (Joanna.poinatte@wisc.edu)
 - Application and acceptance process; grade and credit information
- **Judy Humphrey**, Financial Specialist (judy.humphrey@wisc.edu)
 - Billing and scholarships

Have questions for your IAP team?

Feel free to email us your questions. We are also happy to arrange an advising appointment to answer your questions. You can request an advising time by emailing and we will arrange a date/time to meet via Zoom.

In the academic year, you can use Starfish to schedule an appointment with us. What is Starfish and how do you use it? Read here: <https://oacs.wisc.edu/starfish/starfish-student-resources/>

Want to know who else is in your cohort?

Contact information for your fellow program participants is in your MyStudyAbroad portal under the Contacts tab if you wish to contact the rest of your cohort before the program.

On-Site Program Information

Your primary contact in London will be:

[Minaree Jayasena](#)

Student Life Coordinator
Foundation House
114 Cromwell Road
London
SW7 4ES
UK

Your mailing address will be:

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

FIE: Foundation for International Education On-Site Contact Info

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

IAP Emergency Contact Information

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

Embassy Registration

All program participants who are U.S. citizens must register at the U.S. Embassy before departure as this will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap. Register for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) online at <https://mytravel.state.gov/s/step>.

United States Embassy <https://uk.usembassy.gov/>
33 Nine Elms Lane, London, SW11 7US, United Kingdom +44 (0)20 7499 9000

Program Dates

Important: Do not make any travel plans until you arrive in London and receive a list of confirmed dates. Flight departure anticipated **August 26**: suggested flight to be shared later.

Fall 2025

Arrival date in London	Wednesday, August 27
Orientation	August 27-30
UW Global Launch Welcome Event	TBD
Classes begin	Monday, September 1
Fall Excursion to Edinburgh	TBD (most likely Oct 17-19)
Fall break	October 20-24
Departure from Housing for Winter Break	By 12pm on Sunday, December 14

**** Students will not be allowed to stay in housing during winter break ****

Spring 2026

Arrival date for Spring	January 7, 2026
Orientation/ Welcome Event	January 7 - 11
Classes begin	Monday, January 12
Spring break	March 2-6
Departure date from Housing	By 12pm on Sunday, April 26

A Note for Students on Parents and Families

We expect students to:

- Take a proactive role in their experience during the entire process (pre-departure, on-site, and return).
- Discuss questions they have about the program with our staff and past participants.
- Read all emails and materials that our office and partners provide, complete tasks, and meet deadlines set by us or our partners.
- Create a communication plan with their parents/families/friends.
- Inform their parents and family of their decisions and share information received.

IAP will share information with students directly via wisc.edu email and in the MyStudyAbroad portal. The University of Wisconsin-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. **Students should take the lead in contacting IAP with questions.**

To help your parents/ families help support you, we created: <https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/family/>
Our philosophy for working with parents/families is that we:

- recognize that **parents and families** often play an important 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.

Parent and Family Program at UW-Madison Resources: <https://parent.wisc.edu/>

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 all 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

Check out this virtual family forum where staff from the UW-Madison Parent and Family Program and International Academic Programs discussed all things study abroad and how you can support your Badgers as they live and learn around the globe. <https://youtu.be/nM3x-iSrci8>

Pre-Departure Preparation

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

Optional Visa Orientation Session

An online session will be scheduled with [FIE](#), the provider we work with in London who will be supporting you as you prepare and while on the ground. They are an additional team who will support you and will be reaching out with important information, reminders, and next steps as we approach the start of your program. A representative from FIE will join us online in late May to answer questions about the visa application process. More information will be shared in mid-May.

Online Pre-Departure Orientation

An online orientation will be scheduled for early June. Details will be shared in May with a registration link. This meeting will be offered for both students and parents/family members. Content will include meeting the team, academic expectations, course selection information, programmatic highlights, health insurance coverage information, supporting students abroad, and MyStudyAbroad portal next steps. Review all the information located in your [MyStudyAbroad portal](#) prior to the pre-departure orientation.

Make every effort to take placement exams before the July orientation. This will help support your course selection process. More information on placement exams:
<https://exams.wisc.edu/placement/uw-madison-students.php>

Mandatory Pre-Departure Orientation – In Person

There will be an in-person orientation for both students and families **Thursday, July 17 (starting at 9:30 am) – Friday, July 18 (ending by 5:30 pm)** on the UW-Madison campus. Students are required to attend. A schedule will be provided in June. You will learn more about the program and be encouraged to ask questions about your year abroad. You will be responsible for arranging your own transportation to and from the UW-Madison campus. Lodging for students the evening of July 17 will be provided. This orientation will be led by IAP, academic advisors, campus partners, and FIE representatives. Parents will be invited to some sessions on both days but housing will not be provided for them. This orientation takes the place of SOAR and you do not need to sign up for a SOAR session.

Before and after the orientation, you will receive emails at your **wisc.edu** account from both FIE and UW-Madison sharing more details. Please remove any junk mail settings that may block FIE or UW-Madison emails.

Need academic 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.

Immigration Documents

Passport

A passport is needed to travel to the United Kingdom and must be valid at least six months beyond the dates of your program (through October 2026).

Immigration Requirements

To study in the UK, you must apply for a predeparture student visa. A student visa is a stamp that is 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 ultimately it is your responsibility to obtain a student visa.

Information on the visa application process:

- Visit FIE's "[Before You Go – London](#)" Visa Information page & Read the information carefully
- To access the guide, scroll down to IMMIGRATION INFORMATION and click on "Internship Pathway"
 - Click on the immigration guide next to USA passport holders (and other non-EEA countries) must obtain a student visa prior to their arrival Password: FIE

As part of the application process (typically in June) you must make an appointment to have your "biometrics" taken (fingerprints and photograph). Typically in Milwaukee or Chicago for those in Wisconsin, this in-person appointment is required. Students are responsible for their own travel arrangements for the appointment.

Flights

We will not be arranging a group flight for the program. A suggested flight plan will be shared with further details about arrival. Do not book your flight until you receive this information. FIE will provide group transportation for those who arrive on the suggested flight plan upon arrival in London to the FIE premises for check in and onsite orientation. Students not travelling on the suggested flight plan will receive instructions for navigating to FIE on their own.

Packing

- **Practical Clothes.** Clothes that require minimal care, are comfortable to travel in, and can be layered are best to take. Layering is the best way to combat the unpredictable British temperatures. Casual clothing is the most comfortable for day-to-day British life. If you plan on going out to dinner or to the theatre at night, dressier clothing would be best.
- **Backpack.** Backpacks are easier to carry than suitcases on longer trips. Your flats will not have a lot of closet/storage space, so it may be best to bring a collapsible suitcase. A small travel bag is convenient for weekend and day trips.
- **Comfortable shoes.** You are likely to be out and about walking around London in many of your classes in addition to outside your classes.
- **Strong umbrella and raincoat.** Many a Londoner will tell you it rains quite often here!
- **Bath towels.** Bed sheets will be provided and you will be able to buy bath towels upon arrival from a nearby store if you don't want to carry them over.
- **Travel purse or money belt.** To keep your passport, ID, and money safe.
- **Laptop.** We recommend you bring a laptop as a lot of your work and assignments will be electronically submitted. There is free Wi-Fi in your residences and Foundation House. You will also have 24-hour access to a computer lab in Metrogate should you not be able to bring a laptop.
- **Necessary prescriptions and medications.** Prescriptions for certain 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. Be sure to complete this step well in advance of your departure in case you need to consult with your doctor. If you are more comfortable with certain American brand-name products (ex. Tylenol, Advil), we recommend you bring a supply of these with you.
- **Cellphone.** You will need a cell phone that we can reach you at that doesn't have to operate on wifi. **(see p12)** If you are planning to use your current smartphone while abroad, you should visit your cell phone provider prior to departure and request to have your device unlocked and discuss plan options with them.

A few tips:

- Read the Arrival FAQs: <https://www.fie.org.uk/arrival-faq>

- **Avoid over-packing!** Airlines can place additional charges for extra or overweight luggage. You may also want to bring souvenirs or gifts back from the UK so leave some room.
- **Ensure that every bag is marked** in capital letters with your name and Metrogate address.
- **Create copies of important documents** before you go abroad both for yourself and for someone you trust at home. These documents should include scans of your passport, debit/credit cards and insurance cards, and any other important supplemental 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.
- **Electrical Appliances.** Make sure you 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. If you plan on using a hairdryer or electric razor, plan to purchase these items in London instead of bringing them with you. A hairdryer can be purchased for around £10 at Sainsbury's or Argos.
- **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 be expected to register at Foundation House, after having settled into your residences. You **MUST** bring your passport to registration – FIE will photocopy it for immigration purposes. You'll also receive additional documents aiding your stay in London. You will have a mandatory Welcome Meeting the evening of arrival with your FIE Residence Life Supervisors.

Orientations (required for all students) will be held after your arrival (Thursday – Sunday). The orientations will help you settle in and provide you with the opportunity to ask any questions about the academic program, where you are living, the local area, health and safety and what's going on during your time in London. Further orientation activities include a visit to the Houses of Parliament, a London bus tour, theater trip, and a welcome reception.

The Academic Program

General Information

The FIE/UW Program Assistant Minaree Jayasena will be based in the Student Life Office in Foundation House. Minaree and the Student Life Team are there to help you with every aspect of the program from academic inquiries, adjustment issues, and any other information to help you gain the most from your time in London.

The courses run from Monday-Friday and will be scheduled between 8am and 9pm. Classes normally meet one or two times per week. Part of your academic program in London will be outside the classroom. You are likely to visit areas, cultural sites, museums, theatres and do tours with your professors in addition to being able to see London outside your classes.

No unexcused absences are allowed. It is very 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 of classes is also a stipulation of your visa. [FIE Academic Resources](#)

You **MUST NOT** make any arrangements for weekend travel until you have arrived in London and received your term 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](#): This resource can help support your research and written work abroad.

- [The Writing Center](#): Offers individual writing appointments for UW-Madison students in-person and virtually. This resource will remain available to you while abroad.
- [DesignLab](#): Offers one-on-one digital design tutoring for UW-Madison students. This resource can help with digital projects, including presentations, posters, videos, audio, websites/blogs, and infographics, and will remain available to you while abroad.
- [Canvas Course Support](#): This resource can help you troubleshoot any issues with Canvas, the platform you will use for your courses and scholarship requirements while on program.
- **Need academic 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.

FIE Academic Resources

- Writing Support Tutors <https://www.fie.org.uk/london-writing-support-tutors>
 - Book 48 hours in advance. After a face-to-face meeting, subsequent appointments can be conducted over email
- Local public and specialist libraries. More info on MyStudy (the FIE learning platform). 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. More info on MyStudy.
- On Demand TV and Radio for Education (BoB – Box of Broadcasts) from Learning on Screen. Login information is on MyStudy.
- **First Year Academic Mentors**
 - For first-year students, extra support and guidance in the transition from high school to college
 - Three individual, mandatory sessions
 - In the first semester, check your email and respond to your mentor about booking sessions.

Registration

IAP will register you for a special “Study Abroad Course” for the terms you will be studying abroad; therefore, it is not necessary for you to register on the UW-Madison campus. This is a temporary registration, which will be converted into graded UW-Madison credit after the completion of your program.

Course and Credit Information

Classes are held at FIE’s Foundation House and Metrogate House. You will register for 15 credits each semester. Each course in London is worth 3 UW-Madison credits, so this means you will take 5 courses each semester.

Fall Semester Courses

1. 2025 Fall course: **Weird Victorian** What is it about the Victorians? Victorians were quite simply weird. It was the steam age and the dawning of the industrial revolution. The emergence of photography coincides with the ability to travel, and Victorians documented their trips and collected souvenirs. They brought back artifacts, specimens and oddities such as the elephant's foot umbrella stand. Visits to museums and historic places will provide the opportunity to discuss attitudes and traditions that remain enduring. Many are problematic and exhibit colonialist and outright racist viewpoints. This course will explore the Victorians through a material culture perspective.
2. College Writing-Britain as a Text (Communication-A)*
3. British Life and Cultures (History)
4. Choose one course from the list below
5. Choose one course from the list below

Course Options for 4 and 5:

- Music in 20th Century Britain (Music)
- Sustainable Cities: London in the Era of Climate Change (Environmental Studies)

- Media in Britain (Communications)
- Harry Potter: Magic, Myth and Meaning (English)
- Diversity in Britain: Immigration, Discrimination, and Integration (History)
- The Political Economy of the European Union (Economics or Political Science)

*If a student has already fulfilled their Comm A requirement, they won't take the course listed in 2 and will take three courses from the list for 4 & 5.

Spring Semester Courses

1. UW in London Spring Faculty in Residence course (Choose one from two courses offered: Humanities or Social Science)
2. The Nature of Story Creative Writing (Communication-B)
3. International Service & Leadership (International Studies)
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 (Art History)
- Food, Society, and Culture in Britain: From Traditional Tastes to Contemporary Concerns (Economics or Anthropology)
- Diversity in Britain: Immigration, Discrimination, and Integration (History)
- British Politics (Political Science)
- Health Care Policy (Social Work)
- Shakespeare and Elizabethan Literature (English)
- Creative Thinking for Advertising (Design Studies, Marketing, or Communications)

Course Selection

Participants sign up for fall classes in the summer before leaving for London. You will meet with academic advisors during the in-person orientation to make selections. **Make every effort to [take placement exams](#) before the July orientation.** This will help support 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, students may need to submit the [Retroactive Language Request Form](#), to have the retroactive credits applied correctly to their UW-Madison record. It is most helpful to complete the form after enrolled in the language course at UW-Madison, so the L&S Deans will be able to see it on their 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 ends up posting 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 the Academics tab of your MyStudyAbroad account. We will list a deadline for submitting CERs on that Academics page. This is a recommended date so that students 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 account under the Academics tab. We will also discuss this further at your pre-departure orientation.

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, you can contact Joanna Poinsette, your Enrollment Manager for the program.

Pass/Fail/Drop/Audit

Students are expected to enroll in the full-time academic program. Refer to [the Study Abroad Handbook](#) for academic policies and procedures. You should not request pass/fail through FIE. The request needs to be made through your MyStudyAbroad account. The deadline for submitting a Pass/Fail form can be found in the Academics tab of your My Study Abroad account. 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 on 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. Arrange for 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.

Rules and definitions: <https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/handbook/handbook-academics/>

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

As noted above, 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 Abroad

Housing and Classrooms

The program is located on FIE premises in the Kensington neighborhood of London.

Map of the area with local resources: <https://www.fie.org.uk/student-life-faq>

- **Foundation House:** Foundation House is FIE's main study center where many of your classes are held. The opening hours are 8am – 9pm during the semester. You will spend a significant amount of time in this building during the school week. Student support is located in the Student Life Office.

- **Metrogate House:** About a 10 minute walk from Foundation House, this is FIE's main residence building in the Kensington neighborhood. Upon arrival, this is where you will check-in to receive your housing assignment and key. Metrogate House has a 24-hour reception, a computer lab, study rooms, and laundry facilities. There are also three classrooms in this building and several FIE administrative offices. Your mailbox is located here too, so this will be your mailing address.

****IMPORTANT NOTE:** Roommate assignments won't be released until you arrive in London.

Student Residences

- [Housing FAQs](#)
- Each student will share a bedroom with one, two or three other program participants.
- Housing changes can happen between semesters, as it can also happen 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.
- British housing, in general, **is much smaller** than U.S. housing. Not only will you have a smaller living space, but also smaller storage space. This is why it is important to pack light.
- You will share a bedroom with other UW-Madison students, but 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. Stores like TK Maxx, Marks & Spencer, and Primark offer very inexpensive towels and pillows.
- **No overnight guests are permitted.** FIE can help you find inexpensive accommodations for your visitors.
- [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 and UW staff informed of any discipline and welfare problems which may affect the general harmony of all residents.
- 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 study space, group workspace, music practice, Skype calls, interviews
 - Please email roombooking@fie.org.uk including: Date and time, Number of people, and any information which may be helpful for FIE staff e.g. if you require a quieter, more private space

Imperial College

- Student Union, public access facilities

- No library access

Kensington & Chelsea Libraries

- Public libraries – complete a form online to join

Museums

- Victoria & Albert Study Rooms and National Art Library
- Science Museum Library (may need to book in advance)

Restaurants and Coffee Shops

Roommate Relationships

(adapted from <https://www.housing.wisc.edu/residence-halls/assignments/roommates/>)

Having a roommate is new to many students, especially if they had their own room growing up. 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**

To help start the conversation, create a roommate agreement at the start of the semester. Take it seriously. The agreement prompts conversation about topics that we know are important to students. Make sure you and your roommate address all topics listed and share what is important to each of you. You will receive a form during the July pre-departure orientation to practice and will be asked to complete it during your first week in London.

- **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 both 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 with both roommates. Depending on the outcome of the conversation, 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 2026-27

University Housing determined that Global Launch students will take part in our 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.

Here are the instructions from University Housing:

Below are the typical steps within the new student contracting process that you will complete in order to live in University Housing for Academic Year 2026-27:

1. All students currently in London will automatically 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 their return, they can simply ignore any contract offer emails from University Housing as we do not have a live-on requirement.
 - b) Off campus housing services: <https://www.housing.wisc.edu/undergraduate/off-campus/>
2. The contracting process occurs in their My UW Housing portal.
3. If they choose to live on campus, they need to sign the contract and pay the advance payment by the deadline of May 1, 2026. **If they complete the contract by May 1, 2026, they are guaranteed a space in University Housing.**

4. Once they have officially contracted, they will then be able to enter building, learning/affinity community, and roommate preferences. These will also have a deadline of May 1, 2026.
 - a) We do not operate on a first come, first serve basis. We utilize a lottery system for assigning students based on their preferences. They can be placed in any building, room type, or community on or off their preference list.
5. Once the contract has been signed, and the advance payment has been made, it becomes a legally binding contract, and we do not release students from the contract to live off campus if they are still attending UW-Madison.
6. Assignment information is then released throughout the summer.

Housing specific questions: Email Steffi Schoeder sschoeder@wisc.edu and copy info@housing.wisc.edu

Living in London

One of the world's great cultural and financial centres, London offers almost endless potential for study abroad. As London specialists, FIE staff and faculty have been helping universities, colleges and hundreds of students realize this potential each year since 1998 through programs of the highest quality.

Highlights of the Area

- FIE is located near schools 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.
- Kensington is home to charming residential areas where famous residents of the present (Madonna, Hugh Grant, Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise—not to mention the Royal Family) mixed with the ghosts of those who lived in the area in the past (T.S. Eliot, J.S. Mill and Beatrix Potter).
- Students live and study near some of London's most fashionable streets, including Gloucester Road, where students will find banks, a post office, pubs, restaurants, and grocery stores; and High Street Kensington, one of London's premier shopping streets.

At the onsite orientation, each student will receive an [Imperial College Union](#) Associate Membership card. This provides access to the union's [social spaces](#) and [events](#) and allows students to join many of the 370+ student-led [clubs, societies and projects](#).

Accessing the Rest of the City

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, students have instant access to the Piccadilly, Circle, and District Tube lines. [Oyster cards](#) with unlimited free travel in Tube zones 1-2 will be given to you at check-in and fully explained in orientation.

Communication

When making calls, keep in mind time zone differences (www.timeanddate.com/worldclock). 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 can be found online (<https://countrycode.org/>).

• Phones

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, you should visit your cell phone provider prior to departure and request to have your device unlocked. Upon arrival 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. Alternatively, you can 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.

- **Internet Access**

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 upon arrival to enable Internet access to your device. The Metrogate PC Lab is also available for participants to use and is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- **Skype/Facetime/Zoom**

The cheapest way to video call friends and family in the U.S. is through Zoom, FaceTime, or Skype.

- **WhatsApp/Messaging**

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.

Health and Safety

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

Health

For more information on recommended immunizations for travel to the U.K., please see the Center for Disease Control (CDC) web site: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/united-kingdom>

Health and Wellness Resources in London

- All FIE Health Resources: <https://www.fie.org.uk/health>
- Counseling and Mental Health Resources from FIE <https://www.fie.org.uk/counseling-mental-health>
- [Medical Services](#) You have access to a range of free medical and healthcare services, including NHS 111, pharmacies, and urgent care centres. For additional information on all local services, including private GPs, please visit the website.
- [Counseling & Mental Health](#) Visit FIE Counseling & Mental Health pages for information on how to make an appointment with FIE's psychotherapist and counselor, Dr. Deborah Hill, and find a wealth of mental health and wellbeing resources.
- [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](#) London is an active city with countless fitness classes, clubs, and facilities scattered around the capital. However you like to get moving, you can explore a variety of options, including online workouts, on FIE's fitness page.

Supports from Madison

- In addition to the NHS service you have in London, you also will be covered by [CISI supplemental health insurance](#) for the duration of their program. You can find more information in your MyStudyAbroad account on the Health, Safety and Insurance tile. You will often pay up front for any medical expenses and be reimbursed through them.

- UHS (University Health Services) at UW-Madison has compiled some resources that could be helpful to you while abroad. You can review the [Remote Health and Connection](#) to explore these online resources, UHS Services, and Identity Specific Resources.
- **Uwill** <http://go.wisc.edu/uwill> is an online counseling option for students. Licensed mental health professionals are available for video, phone, chat, and message sessions during flexible hours. Appointments are typically available within 24 hours.
- **Togetherall** <http://go.wisc.edu/togetherall> is a clinically moderated online community where students can anonymously seek and provide mental health support by sharing their experiences in a safe environment.
- **Connecting Badgers** <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health/outreach-services/connecting-badgers/> provides students with tips to promote their mental health to strengthen wellbeing and success. The podcast helps listeners improve their mental health so they can recognize, manage, and prevent mental health concerns. Connecting Badgers is available on all streaming platforms
- This [Meditation App](#) offered by Healthy Minds for ways to practice mindfulness.

Safety

Your on-site orientation will provide specific information once you arrive to London, but some general tips to encourage safety in any location include:

- 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 for 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, regardless of whether you are of legal drinking age in London.

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

London, particularly the Kensington neighborhood, is relatively safe. However, it is still a large metropolitan city and commonsense precautions are necessary to ensure your safety. You will want to follow the same safety precautions that you would at home.

- **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, do not be afraid to 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 it 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 once you arrive 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 other unmarked cabs or cabs you have not called for.

Practicalities

Food

You will live within walking distance of several supermarkets as well as 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 distance 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 than in the U.S., so milk, cheese, bread and other perishables will spoil much faster.

There are no meal plans provided, so we recommend learning some recipes before you go.

- <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/student-recipes>
- <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/how-survive-student-basic-recipes>
- <https://tasty.co/article/hannahloewentheil/21-single-serving-meals-you-can-make-in-a-college-kitchen>
- <https://www.allrecipes.com/gallery/cheap-and-easy-meals-for-college-students/>
- <https://www.allrecipes.com/gallery/easy-recipes-for-college-students/>
- <https://www.budgetbytes.com/top-10-recipes-for-college-students/>
- <https://www.tasteofhome.com/collection/easy-food-to-make-in-college/>
- <https://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/g41546978/college-recipes/>
- <https://www.fromvalerieskitchen.com/40-easy-recipes-for-college-students/>

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 any gratuity
- Typical gratuity is 10% (easy maths :))
- No need to tip at pubs and bars

Clothes

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

Toiletries

Toiletries are widely available in supermarkets and stores such as Boots or Superdrug (Britain's version of Walgreens). Again, if you are particular about certain brands of toiletries, you may want to bring a supply with you.

Handling Money Abroad

The cost of living in London will be significantly higher than many areas of the U.S. In addition, the U.K. currency, pounds sterling, has at times been valued much higher than the U.S. dollar. The exchange rate changes daily and can be checked [here](#). We suggest you begin to familiarize yourself with the currency before you arrive.

Budgeting for London

Estimated expenses vary widely depending on the student. How much you spend will depend on your lifestyle, such as how much you eat out and travel during your free time. We recommend you budget for £80 - £100 each week for food and personal expenses. Keep in mind that your purchasing power is directly related to the dollar/sterling exchange rate.

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 you exchange this money before you arrive in London or get it from an ATM at the airport before you leave the airport. Be sure to ask for mixed notes in small denominations.

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 U.S., using your debit card as your primary means of payment and cash withdrawal. ATMs are readily available.

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 whether 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 are recommended) in case your primary card is lost or stolen. Keep the backup card in a different place from your primary card.

You must inform your bank and credit card companies well in advance (1-2 weeks prior to departure) that you will be abroad so they do not freeze your accounts for security reasons. Keep in mind that 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](#) Resource: get involved in a variety of sports across London, with London locals – about £8 per week (American Football, Basketball, Cricket, Hockey, Netball, Ultimate Frisbee, Volleyball, etc)

Co-Curricular Excursions

Sponsored academic activities are an integral part of the program, serving 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. Participants are required to attend academic excursions. You will learn more about this (along with specific dates/schedules) when you arrive in London.

FIE Extra-Curricular Activities

The FIE Student Life Team in Foundation House offers you information about local events and sponsors special discounted outings for students. They are available to help with your questions and concerns. Participants are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities as they heighten the cultural experience of the program. Activity calendar and instructions for sign up can be found: <https://www.fie.org.uk/london-activities>

The Program Leader may also work with FIE to arrange a series of additional optional events in the city for UW students, based on the interest and time commitments of the students. These could include art exhibitions, theatre performances, or trips to local markets. The expenses for these events will be covered by the program and will be at no additional cost for students to attend. You are encouraged to attend these events to enjoy/explore London while getting to know your fellow UW program participants and Program Leaders!

Unique FIE offerings

Extra-curricular calendar: to show students a different side of British culture, FIE coordinates an optional extracurricular calendar of events taking place around London. 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 students should **make sure to sign up promptly** to avoid paying full price somewhere else! This may include a spin on the London Eye, sporting events such as football or rugby matches, theatre trips to the West End, and a weekend in Wales. Students will receive a copy of the calendar via email **before they arrive in London**, with instructions about how and where to sign up for the events.

- Access to the [Imperial College student union](#): you can join some of the 300 societies and sports clubs at Imperial and get to know British university students.
- [Host UK](#) weekend British home stays
- Regular Facebook updates: [join up now!](#)

Free Museums in London

- Tate Britain
- Victoria & Albert (V&A)
- Natural History
- British Museum
- Museum of London
- Design Museum
- Science Museum
- National Gallery
- Tate Modern
- Imperial War Museum
- V&A Museum of Childhood

Additional Websites of Interest

[Time out London](#)

[Transport for London](#)

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 (<http://travel.state.gov/>) for Travel Advisories and Consular Information Sheets for any country you are considering traveling to or through before you make any plans.

Remember to 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 - please complete the form with as much detail as possible.