

Cardiff, Wales

Cardiff University

IAP Program Handbook

The Cardiff, Wales program is offered by International Academic Programs (IAP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in conjunction with Cardiff University. This IAP Program Handbook supplements handbook(s) or materials you receive from Cardiff University as well as the IAP Study Abroad Handbook and provides you with the most up-to-date information and advice available at the time of printing. Changes may occur before your departure or while you are abroad.

Questions about your program abroad (housing options, facilities abroad, etc.) as well as questions relating to your relationship with Cardiff University or academics (e.g. course credit and equivalents, registration deadlines, etc.) should be directed to International Academic Programs at UW-Madison.

This program handbook contains the following information:

Contact Information	2
Preparation Before Leaving	3
Travel and Arrival Information	4
The Academic Program	5
Living Abroad	5
Student Testimonials.....	9

Contact Information

On-Site Program Information

International Office
Cardiff University
Deri House, 2 - 4 Park Grove
Cardiff CF10 3BN
Wales, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 29 2087 4432
international@cardiff.ac.uk
www.cardiff.ac.uk/international

UW-Madison Information

International Academic Programs (IAP)
University of Wisconsin-Madison
716 Langdon Street, 106 Red Gym
Madison, WI 53706
Tel: 608-265-6329
Web: www.studyabroad.wisc.edu

Jessa Boche
Study Abroad Advisor
boche@studyabroad.wisc.edu

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; after-hours or on weekends call the IAP emergency phone 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. You can register on-line at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at your home country's embassy or consulate.

U.S. Embassy in the UK

Physical Address

(GPS & Google maps)
24 Grosvenor Square
London, **W1A 2LQ**
United Kingdom

Mailing Address

24 Grosvenor Square
London, **W1K 6AH**
United Kingdom

Phone number: [44] (0)20 7499-9000

Preparation Before Leaving

Immigration Documents

Passport

A passport is needed to travel to the United Kingdom. Apply immediately for a passport if you do not already have one. Passport information and application forms can be found on the U.S. State Department website (<http://travel.state.gov/passport>). If you already have your passport, make sure it will be valid for at least 6 months beyond the length of your stay abroad.

Visa

To be allowed to study for an extended period of time in the United Kingdom, you will need a student visa. The only exceptions are for citizens of the UK and the European Union. A student visa is a stamp that is placed in your passport that gives you permission to study in the UK. IAP can provide you with information and guidance regarding this process, but ultimately it is your responsibility to obtain a student visa. Refer to the Travel & Visa section of your My Study Abroad account for specific info about the UK Visa.

Handling Money Abroad

The currency of the United Kingdom (Wales, Scotland, England, and Northern Ireland) is the pound sterling, commonly referred to as the pound. The pound can be divided into 100 pence (p), just like the US Dollar (\$) can be split into 100 cents. There are paper pound notes in denominations of £5, £10, £20, £50, and pence coins for 1 pence (penny), 2 pence, 5 pence, 10 pence, 20 pence, 50 pence, 1 pound and 2 pound coins.

You may exchange currency in the airport upon your arrival in Europe. Bureau de Change (Currency Exchange) booths in airports may charge a high commission rate. Most students choose to bring a debit card and withdraw currency at an ATM upon arrival to avoid these commission rates and fees. Please note that some banking institutions may charge a fee on international transactions. Be sure to alert your banking institution of all travel plans to avoid holds being placed on your card when using it outside of the United States.

Packing

Most airlines allot one checked piece of luggage on a trans-Atlantic flight, with a weight limit of 50lbs. Overweight and additional checked luggage will require a fee. Be sure to check the luggage weight restrictions of your airline prior to your departure.

Electronics

Electrical standards within the UK are different than those in the United States, and you will not be able to simply plug your devices and chargers directly into the wall. Here is a comparison of the two electrical standards:

United States: 120 volts, 60 megahertz, type A & B plugs

United Kingdom: 230 volts, 50 megahertz, type G plugs

If your devices are compatible with both voltages, simple plug adaptors are readily available to match the US plugs to the UK square three pin sockets. For example, most laptop computers and many hair styling appliances can operate on the different frequency and voltage, and will only require a plug adaptor to physically fit in the UK outlet.

However, do not assume your device will be compatible. If you attempt to plug in a non-compatible device, you can ruin your appliance and potentially start a fire. Check the electrical requirements label on your devices to be sure. If your device does not have dual-voltage compatibilities, you may need to purchase a converter (also known as a transformer) to manually reduce the voltage between the wall power supply and your device. These can be expensive and may still ruin your device – It may be more cost effective to leave these devices at home and purchase one from the UK upon your arrival. Such devices may include: hair dryer, flat iron, electric toothbrush or hair trimmer, etc.

Travel and Arrival Information

Students are responsible for arranging their own flights to and from the United Kingdom. Flights directly into Cardiff International Airport are available through KLM Royal Dutch Airlines via a transfer in Amsterdam. Students may opt to fly into London Heathrow and take a coach bus from London to Cardiff University (approximately 3 hours via coach).

There is also a free coach collection service available for international students arriving into Cardiff and London Heathrow Airports. A Cardiff University representative will meet you at your arrival gate and direct you to the coach bus where you will be brought to your accommodation at Cardiff University. Spaces for these services must be reserved in advance and are only available on specific dates. For the most current dates and links to book your place, consult the Coach Collection Service page on Cardiff University's webpage: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/for/prospective/international/coming-to-cardiff/before-you-arrive/coach-collection-service.html>

The Academic Program

General Information

For information from Cardiff University on International students studying abroad, see Cardiff's website: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/for/prospective/international/>

Course Information

Please refer to the IAP Academic Notes for detailed academic information about the Cardiff University Program. The Academic Notes cover registration, course equivalencies, credit and grade conversions; this can be found in your MyStudyAbroad account.

Living Abroad

Wales is a place of natural drama, providing endless starting points for your next adventure. The nation's history is told through its ancient monuments and over 500 castles scattered through the countryside. Living and attending a world-class university in Wales' capitol city of Cardiff offers students the opportunity to further their studies while experiencing the unique Welsh culture and studying side-by-side with students from all reaches of Great Britain and the world.

Plan excursions and trips around Wales at the Visit Wales website.

<http://www.visitwales.com/>

Housing

After you are accepted into Cardiff as a Study Abroad student, you will be sent specific information about University Halls of Residence and you will be able to submit your preferences for your accommodation. Study abroad students are guaranteed a single-occupancy place in University residences for the full duration of their program. In your student residence, you will have your own study bedroom within a flat of 4-8 bedrooms. Each room has a bed, desk, chair, wardrobe and storage drawers. You won't need to buy additional furniture. Some halls have private en-suite bathrooms while others have shared bathrooms.

If you've selected a self-catered accommodation, you will have access to a kitchen/dining room that is shared by 4-8 students living in your flat. This area includes an oven/range, refrigerator, sink, table and chairs. University accommodation is generally self-catered (meal plans are not offered). A shared kitchen is fun, as it provides a great opportunity to bond and cook with other students.

Semi-catered accommodations provide hot dinner meals, served Monday through Friday from 4:30-7pm. Students must provide their own meals during vacations and academic breaks.

Additionally, all University Halls of Residence are connected to the University's network and high-speed internet. This makes it easy to keep up with coursework and stay in touch with friends and family back home.

See Cardiff University's Accommodation brochure for more detailed information:

<http://cardiff.ac.uk/for/prospective/accommodation/undergraduates.html>

Student Life

Students are encouraged to join a club or society (student organization) within the Students' Union at Cardiff University. There are over 200 sports clubs and social societies available, including many created specifically for international students. There is a joining fee for most clubs and societies (£1-5 for societies, £10-15 for clubs).

Transportation

Most students get around Cardiff on foot rather than by car. Students have the option of keeping a bicycle in the student residences where there are lockable sheds for storage. Cardiff does have a developed city bus system but students are responsible for their bus fares – bus passes are not included in the IAP program fee. Taxi cabs are also an option that most students utilize when venturing into downtown Cardiff at night. Splitting a cab fare with a group of friends is the best way to keep transportation costs low.

Cardiff Central Station is the main train depot in Cardiff and will be where students depart if taking a train to London or beginning a far-venturing train journey. There are other train stations located around the edges of Cardiff and can be used to shorten a trip into downtown, Cardiff Bay, or small cities and villages around the area. Train fares vary depending on distance traveled and if a prior reservation was possible.

Safety

Cardiff boasts one of the lowest crime rates in all of the United Kingdom. However, students should exercise caution when venturing through the city alone, and should of course avoid walking alone at night.

Health

Upon your arrival to Cardiff, you will need to register with a doctor, locally referred to as a General Practitioner (GP). If you are on a program lasting six months or more you can get most health care free of charge from the National Health Service (NHS). This applies from the first day of your stay in the UK.

If you are in Wales for less than six months you can get essential treatment at the Health Centre, an NHS walk-in centre, or at the accident and emergency (A&E) department of a hospital. You should also ensure that you bring prescriptions (in English) for any medicines you regularly take, in case you need to show a doctor.

Communication

Most US phones will not work abroad (be sure to contact your cellular service provider to see if they offer service options outside of the country). Many students purchase an international phone for the duration of their program abroad. These can be set up on a monthly-plan with an allotted amount of minutes and texts, or they can be a pay-as-you-go plan, charging students per minute and per text.

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 (www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/dialing.html). Some of above steps can vary if you are using a calling card.

Skype is a free, downloadable software application that allows users to make live video and voice calls over the internet. Skype users can also add money to their account and can then use the service to call land lines and cell phones internationally at very low rates. Additionally, Skype also provides an instant messaging function as well as file sharing.

To create a Skype account, users must download the application from www.skype.com and create a user name and password. Once the application is installed onto their computer, they can search for friends either by first and last name or using their friends' Skype usernames. Once a friend is added to a users contact list, they will be able to see whether that person is available to chat. If two users both have web-enabled video cameras for their computers, they will be able to chat face to face. For users without a web cam, a microphone is all that's required for calls to another computer.

ADDITIONAL RELEVANT INFORMATION/WEBSITES OF INTEREST

U.S. State Department Students Abroad site:

<http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov/>

UW-Madison International Academic Programs

<http://www.studyabroad.wisc.edu>

U.S. State Department:

<http://travel.state.gov>

U.S. State Department Students Abroad site:

<http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov/>

Center for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

Current exchange rates

<http://www.oanda.com>

Lonely Planet

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>

Student Testimonials

The testimonials below are from past participants; they reflect various students' experiences and are included to provide different perspectives. IAP does not endorse any specific view expressed in this section.

"My process of prepping prior to my departure included talking with other students who had studied abroad and asking them for general advice. It helped to calm my nerves by hearing stories from someone who has traveled and been in those unfamiliar situations. I also packed my suitcases a few days in advance to be sure that I wouldn't be over the luggage weight limit – I was right on the 50lb mark!"

"I arrived to Cardiff a day before the normal check-in day because I wanted to adjust for a day and my flights were cheaper if I arrived on a Sunday. I stayed in a hostel in the city centre with the other UW-Madison student and together we wandered through Cardiff, extremely jet-lagged, trying to absorb every bit of our new British home."

"The academic structure in the UK was very different and took a while to get used to it. Students really have to manage their time throughout the semester since there aren't typically homework assignments or tests throughout to keep you on task and studying. If you don't stay on top of things, the finals can be terribly difficult – and your entire grade will depend on those."