

Handbook for Accepted Students

Danenberg Oberlin-in-London Program

Oberlin College

Fall 2025

**After Brexit: Cultural Practice in 21st Century
Britain**

**Read this carefully, do the items on the checklist, and
share with your family.**

Take this handbook with you to London.

This handbook is also available on the program website, www.oberlin.edu/london.

The information in this Handbook is current at the time of writing and is provided in good faith. However, Oberlin College takes no legal responsibility for any omissions or errors. This is a living document; please send comments or corrections to london@oberlin.edu.

revised June 2025

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Greetings from the Danenberg Oberlin-in-London Chair

Dear Oberlin Students,

Let me extend a warm hello to anyone reading this Handbook who has been accepted to study in London on the Danenberg Oberlin-in-London Program. I write to you as the Chair of the Danenberg Oberlin-in-London Program. The Danenberg Oberlin-in-London Program aims to fulfill the promise contained in its very name. That is, it strives to combine the best features of a small liberal arts college – accessible faculty dedicated to scholarship and to teaching, working closely with students eager for an education that privileges critical thinking, open-minded inquiry, and high academic standards – with the resources of one of the most culturally rich and humanly diverse cities on the planet.

Students can thus expect an academic program tailored to combine classroom-based study with experiential learning. How this happens varies with the design of each year's program. But what programs will have in common is a commitment to use London, and sometimes also the wider UK, as a classroom. This means that such things as field trips, visits, theatre performances, concerts, walks, speakers, and independent projects that make use of London's myriad opportunities will be planned to complement lectures, discussions, and readings.

Beyond the structured opportunities for learning presented by the Oberlin-in-London Program there lie the wider possibilities of life in London. This is your chance to put down roots in a major world city and to start to make it your own. Whatever your enthusiasms may be, London will offer you opportunities to pursue them. Even better, you may discover new enthusiasms. What is certain is that London is an inexhaustible treasure-house, a wide-open, three-dimensional encyclopedia of human life, history, and culture. If you don't believe me, get busy now on the internet: use your research skills to discover the sorts of venues, groups, activities, and events – mainstream and specialist – that London has to offer.

In London, your primary point of contact will be Dr. Lisa Bowers Isaacson, who is the resident director associated with Florida State University. You should feel free to be in touch with Lisa if you have London-specific questions before you depart. Her email address is: lbowersi@fsu.edu. She works closely with a team of colleagues who you will also find to be a wonderful resource in your exploration.

Note also that, while every effort has been made to check the accuracy of the information provided below, things in London change all the time. Phone numbers may be out of date, organizations may have folded, etc. If you spot inaccuracies in this handbook, please let me know!

With very best wishes,
Zeb Page, Professor of Geosciences
Chair, Danenberg Oberlin-in-London Program

Checklist of important tasks

Don't use this checklist as a substitute for careful reading of other information and future emails, daunting as that may seem! You are responsible for reading, accepting and acting upon ALL the information we send.

- ____ 1. **Obtain a passport, or make sure the one you have is up to date.** If you already have a passport, make sure that it is **valid for at least 6 months after the END of your stay in the UK**. You should have at least two blank pages within the passport. If you have questions about applying for a passport, visit the following website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html> . Start work on this immediately. It can take a good many weeks, and the documents you need to submit for a passport have to be originals or certified copies.
- ____ 2. **Leave a photocopy of the identifying pages of your passport at home.**
- ____ 3. **If you are not an American or UK citizen, OR if you are a dual citizen or the holder of a green card, you may need a visa** along with your passport to enter Great Britain. Check with your embassy or the British consulate (www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa) to see what you may need. **If you are an American citizen, you do not need a visa, but, starting in 2025, you must [register with the ETA program before your departure](#)**. The ETA lasts up to 2 years and costs 16 GBP. If you have further questions about your visa status, please contact [International Student and Scholar Services](#). FSU is also able to help sort out any potential immigration issues.
- ____ 4. **Complete all the necessary Oberlin and FSU online forms including the Waiver of Liability form, the Health & Medical Information form, and the Personal Data Questionnaire on studyaway.oberlin.edu, and the FSUIP site.**
- ____ 5. **Pay your deposit.** Use the [payment portal](#) for your student account.
- ____ 6. **Make sure you have received your original signed letters, one signed by Lisa Bowers Isaacson, the other by the Registrar.** You will get these in late July or August. Keep them with your passport and flight information. It is essential that these be readily available for immigration officials when you enter Britain.
- ____ 7. **Buy a round-trip plane ticket to London.** A one-way ticket is not acceptable. The Immigration Officer will want to see evidence of when you plan to leave the UK. **See "Schedule" below for guidance about arrival and end-of-program dates.** To find the best airfare available, you should check and compare on the following websites: <https://www.kayak.com/flights>; <http://www.farecompare.com/>; <http://www.studentuniverse.com/> (which often offers special student rates).
- ____ 8. **Provide your travel information on the Google Docs spreadsheet** when it is shared with you. With this information, you may discover that there are fellow Obies on your flight with whom you can arrange transport from the airport into London.
- ____ 9. **Make absolutely sure that you are completing all of the necessary plans on the FSUIP portal and any additional requests from the London Resident Director, Lisa Bowers Isaacson (lbowersi@fsu.edu) and her colleague, Emily Greene**

(egreene@fsu.edu) You must continue to maintain contact over the summer period. It may be necessary to contact you in a hurry and right at the last minute. During this time, consider whether anything needs to be updated since you entered this information online.

- ____ 10. **Have a digital passport-type photograph of yourself.** You should upload a photo to the IP Student Portal. This will be used for your Great Russell Street Access Card.
- ____ 11. **Make arrangements for any medical check-ups, transfer of health records, filling of prescriptions, etc.** Check whether you need additional vaccinations. You are advised in particular to be sure to be up to date on both meningitis, COVID, and hepatitis B vaccines. A flu shot is also strongly recommended.
- ____ 12. **Make appropriate arrangements for accessing funds while you are in London.** See below, Getting money to London.
- ____ 13. **Make a budget.** Use the information you have gathered about what you would like to do while abroad and the information provided in this handbook concerning costs and make a realistic budget for yourself. And then make a plan for how you are going to stick to it.
- ____ 14. **Make sure a family member has all the relevant telephone numbers and addresses for reaching you in an emergency.** Remind them about the five-hour (east coast) time difference. A phone call at 3 am London time needs to be an emergency – especially if made to the Resident Director!
- ____ 15. **Consider your travel plans while in the UK.** Eurail passes can only be purchased in America, not in Europe. The earlier the purchase, the cheaper the ticket for the Eurostar (the Channel tunnel train) and most of the cheap airlines. Youth hostels, which can provide the best cheap accommodation, can book up fast, particularly in cities. Do some research so that you can make the best of your opportunities.
- ____ 16. **Prepare for your London experience: do some reading!** You will enjoy and profit from your experience more if you have prepared. See below “Suggested Reading” for some titles, both fiction and non-fiction. Use the internet to see what issues are current in the British media. The websites of the BBC and Channel Four News are good places to start, as are those of major newspapers, such as *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and *The Times* [*The Independent* and *The Times* have paywalls to consider]. Also, take some time to look at maps of the city where you will be living and studying.

Additional Things You May Need to Do while in London

- **Check your financial status** with Student Accounts and with the Financial Aid Office to ensure that you will not have any outstanding bills at Oberlin College at the time you arrive in London, and that payment of next semester’s bill has been arranged.

- **If you will be graduating in December**, double-check your graduation requirements and consult your advisor.
- **You should enroll for Spring semester housing during the Fall semester**, so check your emails from Oberlin throughout the Fall. Expect to get an email in November.
- **You will be registering for Spring courses** while in London, so keep any eye on the schedule and associated emails.
- **If you are working at an on-campus job**, check in before you return to campus about that position.

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General Information

📅 Semester schedule

Dates	Description
Monday, 1 September	Fly to London (flights leave the US in the early evening to arrive in the UK the next morning)
Tuesday, 2 September	Arrival in London
Tuesday, 2 September	Welcome Tea
Wednesday 3 September to Thursday 4 September	MANDATORY Orientation Note: There may be an additional Saturday session
Monday, 8 September	Classes begin
Saturday, 18 October to Sunday, 26 October	Fall Break
Thursday, 4 December	Last day of classes
Tuesday, 9 December	Program ends. Recommended departure date. You will need time to clean your flat and tie up loose ends after the completion of the semester. This is the day when pre-arranged housing contracts will end.

📍 Office and classrooms

The Danenberg Oberlin-in-London Program leases space from the Florida State University London Study Centre, at 99-104 Great Russell Street, near the British Museum in the Bloomsbury district of central London. We have a program office and use of a classroom. Students also have the use of the small Study Centre library, two computer labs (open 24 hours a day), a small student lounge, and a quiet study area. The Oberlin office will likely be Room 29. The FSU London Study Centre also leases space to the study abroad programs of several other American colleges and universities, including, for example, at present Grinnell College, Drew University, Bucknell University, Lawrence University, The George Washington University, Wake Forest University, and Hollins College.

The building is open to students and monitored by security staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Students will receive a photo ID card that will provide access to the building. **For security reasons, this ID card must be in your possession at all times when you are in the building.**

[Website for the FSU London Study Centre](#)

📍 Directions to the Program office

The nearest Underground station is **Tottenham Court Road**, on the Elizabeth, Northern, and Central lines. Take Exit 2, where you'll come out on Tottenham Court Road near the Dominion

Theatre. Pass the theatre on your right, then turn right at the first corner, which will be onto Great Russell Street. The FSU building is a block and a half down Great Russell Street, on the north side of the street (*i.e.* your left hand). The main entrance is at no. 99.

Mail at the Program office

Students may receive mail, both letters and packages, at the address below.

Oberlin-in-London Program
c/o FSU Study Centre
99 Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3LA

Be sure to ask that “Oberlin-in-London” be included as part of your address when things are sent to you. If you would like to send packages to yourself in London c/o the teaching site, please be sure that they do not arrive before mid-August.

There is one exception to the above! FSU will no longer sign for or take delivery of student packages sent via FedEx. The reason for this is that there is often a customs or waybill charge to be paid, which FedEx does not disclose at the time of delivery. FSU has received many requests from FedEx for payment after the student has left London. **Students should therefore have their packages sent via UPS, DHL, or Parcelforce.**

Student regulations

Students on the Oberlin-in-London Program are expected to follow all academic and student conduct policies as outlined in the Oberlin College Course Catalog and the Student Regulations, Policies and Procedures, available at <http://new.oberlin.edu/office/dean-of-students/conduct/>. Students will also enroll in FSU and be responsible for adhering to all of their policies as described in the documents provided by FSU.

Contact Information

In Oberlin

Zeb Page

Professor of Geoscience; Chair, London
Program Committee
zpage@oberlin.edu
(440) 787-6932

Jeffrey Pence

Associate Professor of English and Cinema
and Media
Jeffrey.Pence@oberlin.edu

Tom Lopez

Professor of Computer Music and Digital
Arts
Tom.Lopez@oberlin.edu

Twila Colley

Administrative Assistant
Twila.Colley@oberlin.edu
(440) 775-8315

Deanna Bergdorf

Director of Winter Term and Global
Learning
Deanna.Bergdorf@oberlin.edu

Campus Security Emergency Number

(440) 775-8911 (24-hour line)

In London: FSU

Oberlin-in-London Program

c/o FSU Study Centre
99 Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3LA

Lisa Bowers Isaacson

Senior Associate Director
lbowersi@fsu.edu
Tel. +44 (0) 75 4586 5637

FSU Study Centre Reception Desk

Tel. +44 (0) 20 7813 3223

Emily Greene

Senior Programs Manager
egreene@fsu.edu
Tel. +44 (0) 78 0125 4010

Four Program assistants are also in residence at the FSU Centre. Tel. +44 (0) 75 9736 3066 or
Tel. +44 (0) 75 9736 3068

*Please don't ask Reception Desk staff to take messages unless it's extremely urgent. Several
hundred students use this building.*

📞 Emergencies in London & Europe

The UK emergency number is 999. An emergency is when a crime is happening, someone suspected of a crime is nearby, someone is injured, being threatened or in danger. Use 999 to call police, ambulance, or the fire brigade in such an emergency. 999 calls are free of charge. The European emergency number is 112. It operates just like 999, and will also work in the UK. Calls to 112 are also free of charge.

📞 Phoning the UK from the US

The full string of numbers to phone, for example, Lisa Bowers Issacson's # is: **011 44** 75 4586 5637

"011" puts you through to the international system. "44" is the UK "country code" in that system. The numbers that follow are London-specific numbers.

📞 Phoning within the UK

Unlike in the US, UK telephone numbers clearly distinguish between mobile phone and landline numbers. All mobile phone numbers begin '07'. London landline numbers begin with '020', normally followed by either a '7' or an '8', and then 7 more digits. Many organisations, helplines, etc. have numbers beginning '0800', '0844' or '0845'.

- a) To phone a London landline from outside London, you need to use the full London number: 020 7419 1178. Note that the first "0" drops out when you are phoning from abroad.
- b) To phone any landline in London or outside London from a mobile phone, you need to use the full number: 020 7419 1178.
- c) To phone a mobile phone from another mobile phone or from a landline, you need to use the full number: 07754 182 389.

📞 Phoning the US from the UK

The full string of numbers begins with "001," then the area code, then the seven-digit number.

Housing

Housing in London is arranged by FSU. The flats are at or very near to the study centre, safe, secure, and reasonably well equipped. Weekly cleaning and bed linens (sheets and one towel) are also provided. Each flat is co-ed, with shared bedrooms, and a washing machine. There is a property manager to deal with maintenance and emergencies.

Description of flats

The group of flats house between 5 and 6 students each, with 2-3 students per bedroom. Each bedroom has a separate key that is assigned to the students residing in the room. Some flats are interconnected and share a communal entrance but have separate living spaces. There is a kitchen, a lounge/dining area, and at least one bathroom, with no more than 5 students assigned to each bathroom. Some past FSU students have recorded [YouTube videos](#) that describe the facilities.

Students should let the FSU staff know about any damages or breakage when they occur so that the necessary repairs or replacements can take place. The inventory provided on arrival will be rechecked on departure.

The flats are in safe areas and reasonably well equipped. The kitchen has all the basic items like pots and pans, plates, glasses and cutlery (in various qualities); sometimes there are extra appliances such as a coffee maker, hot pot, or rice cooker. The amenities vary by flat but should include a dining table, oven/stove, microwave, fridge, as well as linens and towels. Washer and dryer in the building are for shared use. Internet access is provided.

Your rent will be billed through Oberlin on your Fall term bill.

Some important points: Any flats routinely used by students are likely to be well worn and, while there is a maintenance staff, repairs can take time. Few flats come with desks, though they do have a dining room table. FSU will provide an orientation presentation during your orientation. **Guests are not allowed.** Students should be aware of the posted cleaning times and have the flats tidy and ready to be cleaned.

Costs and charges

The housing cost for Fall 2025 will be \$5,800 for the term. Included in that cost are utilities, including internet.

Be aware that you are nevertheless responsible for the condition of the flat and its contents, and in the case that any serious damage occurs, you and your flatmates may be billed.

Housing procedure

Once the London students are all selected, students will be divided into suitably-sized and hopefully compatible groups. We will honor your preferences as far as possible, but much flexibility will be required in order to place everyone in a housing group.

As indicated above, the rent will be charged to your Fall term bill, which you'll pay at the usual time. (Financial aid will be credited to the bill. We urge all students receiving financial aid

to meet with Val Kepner in the Financial Aid office if you have any questions about how your costs will be figured.)

The following needs to be clearly understood:

- 1. London housing is more expensive than on-campus housing, so the charge on your term bill will be higher than usual. It is difficult or impossible to provide single-occupancy rooms in London for a reasonable cost. You should expect to be in a double or triple bedroom.**
- 2. You will be responsible for adhering to the rules of the FSU as our housing provider, which are different from those of Oberlin College residence halls.**
- 3. Flats in London for international students (including all those that the Oberlin program has used in the past) typically have strict rules about guests that may seem unreasonable to Oberlin sensibilities.**

Immigration

📌 Visas

You can check if you need a visa to enter the UK by using this website. <https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa>. You should mark STUDY and LESS THAN SIX MONTHS. Further information about study away for non-US Nationals can be found by contacting The FSU Study Centre.

If you are a US National and studying in the UK for less than six months and are not participating in an internship or any other type of work while in the UK, whether paid or unpaid, you are eligible to enter as a Standard Visitor. More information is available here: https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa/y/usa/study/six_months_or_less. You should apply for an Electronic Travel Authorization (<https://www.gov.uk/eta/apply>) before you depart. The cost is 16 GBP.

You must be prepared to supply the Immigration Officer with the correct documentation. You will receive a letter from FSU London confirming that you are seeking to enter the UK as a Standard Visitor. You should store this letter safely in your hand luggage and have it ready to present to a Border Officer if requested. Alternatively, should the electronic facial recognition gates at the UK border be open, you may use them to enter. You will also receive a letter from Oberlin Registrar, which should be similarly stored in a readily available place, should you need to use it.

Students entering the country under the ETA/Standard Visitor category will not be permitted to work in any capacity (either paid or unpaid), or to participate in an internship.

Once you enter the UK, your immigration permission will last for six months. You may stay in the UK beyond the end date of the program, but please bear in mind that your accommodation and CISI insurance will end with the end date of the program. Your CISI insurance cards will be emailed to you closer to your departure from the US. We will be collecting your flight itineraries via a Google form, shared between Oberlin and FSU.

📌 At the airport

You may enter the UK via Ireland or any other country without issue, as you will enter as a Visitor no matter where you depart from. This means you do not need to travel directly from the US and may travel elsewhere prior to coming to the UK. You should, however, research the immigration and Covid-19 requirements for your chosen travel destinations, ahead of travel.

After your flight arrives, you will need to clear Customs and Immigration by meeting with an Immigration Officer. You must present a valid US Passport that has at least 6 months validity after the END of your stay in the UK.

You should be ready to present original signed copies of two letters, one signed by Lisa Bowers Isaacson, the other by the Registrar (digital or physical). You must have these original letters with you and available (not packed in your checked luggage) upon meeting the Immigration Officer.

You may be asked to show the Immigration Officer that you will have the necessary funds

to support yourself for the entire period you intend to stay in the UK. There are several ways you can do this, including having with you (a) a current bank statement (in your or your parent's name) showing a balance of at least several hundred dollars; (b) a letter from your parent(s) guaranteeing to support you in full while you are in the UK; and/or (c) a credit card statement showing an adequate credit limit.

You will need to demonstrate your willingness to leave the UK once your course of study is complete by showing return tickets or an itinerary with your name and information on them. After reviewing your materials, the Immigration Official will stamp your passport with the Standard Visitor stamp/endorsement, and you will be permitted to enter and study in the UK.

Insurance

Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) for Student Accident and Sickness Insurance is provided for all students on the London Program. The cost of this insurance will be covered by the program. This insurance offers excellent accident and sickness coverage to students who are studying abroad. Information about CISI is available at www.culturalinsurance.com/students/service_and_support.asp; information about your policy will be emailed to you once you are enrolled. You will be given instruction on how to enroll by our FSU colleagues over the summer.

Money

📌 Tuition and fees

Students on the Oberlin-in-London Program are billed for Oberlin tuition and fees just as they would be if enrolled on campus. They are not billed for Oberlin room and board. Once you have formally accepted your place on the program, if you later withdraw, a mandatory \$500 cancellation fee will be charged to your student account.

Tuition and fees cover costs in the following categories:

- Admission costs, theater ticket costs, etc. for curricular activities, when students are enrolled in the relevant course; transportation costs when such trips involve out-of-London travel; and accommodation costs if overnight stays are included. **Note: meals are not paid for by the program.**
- Similar subsidies for certain co-curricular activities that may be planned
- Membership in the International Students House
- Insurance through CISI.
- London Underground Travel Card loaded with an initial sum of £90. This is not meant to cover costs for the whole semester. You will be responsible for additional costs for travel within London on your Travel Card.

Students are responsible for the following additional costs (estimates only, at 2024 rates):

- Transportation to and from London (upwards of \$650, though bargain fares are sometimes available)
- Housing in London - billed by the College (See Housing, above)
- Meals
- Transportation in London beyond the amount preloaded for you (varies greatly dependent upon one's proclivity to walk, and various options available)
- Other expenses such as course books, personal travel, and personal items

📖 Financial Aid

Once students confirm their participation in the London Program, the Financial Aid Office will adjust the financial aid cost of attendance to take into account the higher housing costs in London and the fact that work-study is not available there. Students receiving financial aid from the College should ensure that they have submitted all required forms and documentation and made any necessary arrangements for the processing of their financial aid prior to leaving the country. N.B: There is no early disbursement of financial aid.

📖 Costs

In addition to tuition and fees, students will need to pay for transatlantic air fares, accommodation, food, and transportation while in London, as well as such other expenses as course books, personal travel, and personal items. Expenditure tends to vary greatly depending on personal choices.

London can be a very expensive city. In the first week or so the shock of prices is compounded by the fact that there are a lot of things to pay for right at the start in settling into accommodation and getting ready for classes. However, do not panic: once you are settled in, weekly expenses are considerably reduced, and London offers so much in entertainment and enrichment for free! Previous program participants have found ways to economize and limit their weekly spending, while still enjoying London thoroughly. You will too. Accommodation will be your largest fixed expense, but it is also the only regular fixed budget item.

One of the most productive areas to economize is on your food budget. Eating out is expensive, so do it sparingly. If you shop ahead at your local supermarket, pack lunches to eat at the site, pack food to take with you on field trips, and plan to cook your own evening meals rather than eat out, you can eat *relatively* cheaply (considerably more cheaply than on a meal plan in Oberlin).

As for activities, read the listings of free events on www.TimeOut.com/London and www.Londonist.com. Every week there are concerts, lectures, and a variety of events from the wonderful to the weird that cost either nothing or very little, especially for students. Personal travel doesn't have to mean taking a plane to another urban environment. A country walk outside London with three or more people using a **GroupSave** return train ticket will cost much less than a weekend in Amsterdam.

What the semester may cost

The numbers below are based on self-reported student expenditure for Fall 2024 Oberlin-in-London, the last one to run for a full semester. These numbers were estimated by

students at the end of the term, and should therefore be treated as very approximate figures rather than hard ones.

Category	Oberlin-in-London, Fall 2024 (10 responses)
Airfare	\$450 - \$1500
Food per week (mostly eating in)	£20 - £65 (90 % of respondents)
Food per week (meal or two out)	£30 - £80 (75% of respondents)
Entertainment per week	£16 - £25
Travel in London per week	£10 - £25
Travel outside London per semester, excluding Fall Break	£0 - £800 (widely varied)
Fall Break	£50 - £800 (widely varied)
Books	£0 - £400 (most 0)
Mobile phone costs in total	£0 - £200
Laundry per week	£0 - £2 (most 0)
Medical expenses	£0 - £200 (70% spent 0)
Total, excluding airfare, housing and break	£655 - £2300 (widely varied)

See “Money saving tips” on p. 56.

📌 Getting money to London

There are different options for getting money to London, and the best advice is to make sure you have at least one back-up plan for accessing funds in case of problems with your primary method. Think through carefully in advance what will work best for you.

The UK has become largely cashless, particularly in London. You will not need to withdraw lots of cash or bring lots with you. Contactless payments are common in the UK, and you should plan to get a chip and pin card in the US, before you come to the UK. Banks such as Revolut, Wise and Chime allow easy exchange of local currency at good exchange rates and work in easy app formats. You or another party can deposit dollars into your account and then easily and swiftly convert this into pounds, using some of the best exchange rates. We also recommend installing Apple or Samsung Pay on your phone. These apps are particularly helpful if you lose your card, as they are connected to your bank account, not the card.

ATM Cards

Students report that the method for accessing cash that works most easily and economically is use of an ATM card at a “hole-in-the-wall,” as they are called in London. If your ATM card is part of the Visa or MasterCard networks, then you should have no problem with this method. Make sure you have a 4-digit PIN number: a longer PIN will not work in British machines.

In order to access your US account, you must have money in the type of primary account designated for international access by your bank. Contact your home bank to ensure that your account is properly designated for international access.

The currency you receive in pounds (£) from an ATM transaction will be debited directly from your US account in dollars. In most cases, this is the best exchange rate you will receive. Note, however, that you will not be given a receipt that shows you what your US bank balance is after the debit, so you need to have established some other way to keep tabs on that. These days many students have set up online banking.

To avoid extra charges, use ATM machines that are in or outside British banks and that display a notice saying that you will not be charged for the transaction. ATM machines found in other places, *e.g.* supermarkets, *will* charge you per transaction and they are best avoided. Note that your US bank may add an extra service charge each time, however. Check what your bank's policies are before going abroad.

Note, too, that there will be a limit to the amount of money you can draw per day at these machines. That amount varies but it may be no more than £200-£300.

It is strongly recommended that you let your bank know that you will be abroad and for how long, so that they do not put a stop on your account because of 'unusual' transactions. You may also want to see whether your bank would be willing to adjust the daily and one-time withdrawal limit on your account.

Note that if your card is 'captured' by a cash machine, or if it apparently completes the transaction but fails to give you cash, there is little that the British bank branch can do about it. You will have to contact your issuing bank in the U.S. to get a replacement. **This is why it is an excellent idea to have a back-up way of accessing funds.**

Visa & MasterCard

Visa and MasterCard credit cards are accepted pretty universally throughout Europe. However, **most US credit cards charge exchange fees** on purchases in currencies other than US dollars. (Capital One and some Chase credit cards are among the few that do *not* charge foreign exchange fees. See

[http://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/top-credit-cards/no-foreign-transaction-fee-credit-card/.](http://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/top-credit-cards/no-foreign-transaction-fee-credit-card/))

Some debit cards, however, have not imposed fees. Check with your card company.

Some very small shops in the UK may not accept cards (especially if your card is not 'chip and PIN,' which many US-originated cards still are not), and many shops impose a minimum expenditure for credit card use. The exchange rate that you get when you use your credit cards to make purchases tends to be a favourable one compared to other ways of translating pound expenditure into dollars. However, you should not use your credit cards in an ATM as a way of getting cash: you will begin to pay interest on what is effectively a 'loan' from the moment that you obtain cash in this way until you pay your monthly credit card bill. This is a very expensive way of accessing cash.

With any credit card, be sure to know your maximum expenditure limit. Also be sure that you know how to cancel or replace your card if it is stolen. **As with the use of bank debit cards, it is a very good idea to let your credit card companies know in advance the dates that you will be in the UK and Europe.** The card is otherwise likely to be stopped after one or two transactions as a precaution against fraud.

Travelers' Cheques

These are not recommended, as they carry high fees.

Wiring Money / Transferring Money

See www.westernunion.com/info/selectCountry.asp for information about wiring money via Western Union. This is an expensive but useful way to get money from the US to the UK if you need it in a hurry. Other banking methods, such as Revolut, Wise or Chime, are easier and more convenient. You could ask a designated party to deposit or transfer money into your account.

Personal Checks

These are not recommended. In most cases you would have to deposit them into a British bank account (and as a short-term visitor you will be unable to open a bank account) in order to turn them into cash. Any corner money exchange shop willing to negotiate your American personal checks is likely to give you a very bad deal.

Packing

No matter where you are traveling, passports, program letters, travelers' cheques, plane tickets, cash, credit cards, and IDs should not be put in your checked luggage. Keep such valuables on your person. *Strongly consider* buying a money belt that can be worn around your waist or a special pouch that can be worn around your neck under your clothes. Do not carry valuable items in places from which they might be stolen – thieves are very, very clever. Backpacks, shoulder bags, wallets in the back pocket – all of these are 'scenarios' that pickpockets are good at profiting from. **Think defensively at all times.**

Do not over-pack. Have there ever been more famous words more frequently flouted? Once students are in London they often feel that they have brought too much with them. The journey into central London trying to manage heavy suitcases can often be enough to convince them! **Be sure to check with your airline's website about restrictions on size, number, and weight of bags.** Label your luggage with your name on the inside as well as on the handle.

Clothing. We recommend bringing a combination of casual and dressy clothes. Bring clothes that can be combined in various ways to make more outfits. To accommodate weather changes – and over the course of the program there will be big ones – pack clothes that can be worn in layers. Be prepared for more frequent rainy days, usually not heavy downpour, but precipitation in which a light, packable rain jacket can be very handy. Londoners dress up more than Midwesterners do; you don't have to copy them, but you might want at least one nice outfit. Bear in mind that London does get cold, and flats can be drafty and/or inadequately heated. These days, it can also get very warm! Don't forget also that you'll be walking around a lot: comfortable shoes, preferably a couple of pairs, are a must. Checking the typical average daily highs and lows for London ahead of time is a good idea.

One towel and bed linen are provided per person. Of course you can buy more in London as well.

📋 Medicines

For prescription medication, bring a supply that will last the entire semester. Label all bottles clearly and bring the actual prescription with the generic name of the drug in case you need to have it filled while in London. Having the prescription will also help avoid any potential problems with Customs when you initially enter the country.

If you have an **allergic condition** that requires you to have shots periodically, you should prepare carefully. It would be a good idea to check in with FSU personnel to learn how to deal with this. Here are a few suggestions based on prior experience:

- A letter signed and office-stamped from your home doctor with the diagnosis of your condition and details of the course of treatment which the doctor has prescribed.
- Precise information about dosages
- A statement as to whether, and if so, how many, injections have already been given in the series.
- A statement as to whether any adverse reactions to previous injections have occurred.
- If you are bringing the serum with you, phials which are clearly labeled and dated. These must be kept refrigerated.

If at all possible, arrange to have allergy shots shortly before you leave so that you do not need to be taking care of this during the first two weeks of your stay in London.

📋 Other items

You should take along an **extra pair of glasses or contacts, or a good supply of disposable contacts if you use them**, as well as the **prescription** for them. This precaution is especially important if you wear contacts, because the type of lens you wear may not be available abroad. Any medication or prescription glasses you have sent to you from the US will be held up at Customs (for up to a month!) and they will charge you the Value Added Tax, or VAT, on the value of the medicine. Bring such items with you if at all possible.

Also bring written information from your doctor about any long-standing medical condition/history that might affect how you should be treated in a medical emergency, or that would assist a UK doctor in understanding why you have been prescribed a particular drug. If you wish to bring your own towel(s), consider a light, fast drying one if possible. Dryers in the UK are much less powerful and line drying is common.

Most students choose to bring a laptop or tablet to London. There is a wireless environment at the FSU Centre available 24 hours a day. But only bring your laptop if you have insurance coverage for it. Also, check with your supplier about procedures you should follow if your laptop develops a fault, especially if it is still under warranty.

If you are going to be leaving London for any weekend trips involving hiking, shoes that you can use for hiking may be a good idea. You might want these in any case, as you'll want to explore beyond London too – Great Britain has many, many miles of wonderful public footpaths through the countryside. Do not underestimate how different the weather may be outside London – certainly colder, maybe wetter! You will certainly need rain gear wherever you are, preferably a coat with a hood. One with a zip-in lining for added warmth would be ideal. The

ability to change out of wet shoes and into dry ones may make all the difference to your comfort.

There are many good used clothing stores and charity shops, as well as some outdoor flea markets, in London. If your wardrobe needs to be supplemented in London, it needn't be costly.

Don't bring. . .

- Electrical appliances, except those clearly marked as “dual voltage” (as most laptops, phones, and electric shavers are: they will be labeled something like “100-240V”). The voltage in the UK is different (240 volts by comparison with the US 110 volts). Although some appliances can be used with an adapter and transformer, the transformers are expensive. Appliances may still not work right, and they may also be destroyed by the attempt to use them in the UK. In addition, you risk damaging wiring and even starting a fire.
- American ring-binders, unless you bring paper to go in them. Paper sizes and hole punch patterns are different in the UK.
- Personal security devices such as pepper spray. **Such products are illegal in the UK.**

Suggested reading

You will enjoy and profit from your time in London a lot more if you prepare for it. The more of a historical, political, or cultural matrix you have when you come, the more informed responses and intelligent connections you will be able to slot into it. This will add to your pleasure! Here are some suggestions:

Fiction

Peter Ackroyd, *Hawksmoor*; *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*; *The Clerkenwell Tales*

Monica Ali, *Brick Lane*

Martin Amis, *London Fields*

Elizabeth Bowen, *The Heat of the Day*

Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent*

Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*; *Our Mutual Friend*; *Little Dorrit*; *Great Expectations*

Margaret Drabble, *The Millstone*; *The Ice Age*; *The Radiant Way*, *A Natural Curiosity*, *The Gates of Ivory* (a trilogy)

Buchi Emecheta, *Second Class Citizen*

Sebastian Faulks, *A Week in December*

Alan Hollinghurst, *The Line of Beauty*

Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*

David Lodge, *Changing Places*; *The British Museum is Falling Down*; *Therapy*

John Lanchester, *Capital*

Andrea Levy, *Small Island*

Ian McEwan, *Saturday*
Timothy Mo, *Sour Sweet*
Iris Murdoch, *A Word Child*
Maggie O'Farrell, *Hamnet*
Caryl Phillips, *A Distant Shore*
Ruth Rendell, *The Keys to the Street; Thirteen Steps Down; Portobello* (crime fiction)
Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*
Kamila Shamsie, *Home Fire*
Zadie Smith, *White Teeth; NW*
Muriel Spark, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye; The Girls of Slender Means*
Barbara Vine, *King Solomon's Carpet*
Sarah Waters, *Fingersmith; The Night Watch*
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*

Here is a website with many other suggestions:

<https://bookriot.com/2017/06/06/100-must-read-novels-set-in-london/>

Poetry

Mark Ford, ed., *London: A History in Verse*

Non-fiction

Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Biography*
Bill Bryson, *Notes from a Small Island*
Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*
Kate Fox, *Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour*
Helene Hanff, *84 Charing Cross Road*
Stephen Inwood, *A History of London*
Jeremy Paxman, *The English*
Roy Porter, *London: A Social History*
Craig Taylor, *Londoners: the Days and Nights of London Now – As Told by Those Who Love It, Hate It, Live It, Left It and Long for It*
Polly Toynbee, *Hard Work*
Martin Upham, *Britain Explained*
Any good history of Britain

Newspapers and magazines

The Economist; The Guardian; The Independent; The Times; The Daily Telegraph

Arrival in London (you are likely to get more up to date information from FSU)

❓ Passing through Immigration at the airport

Have ready to show the Immigration Officer these essential documents:

- Your passport (having completed the ETA online)
- Your program letters from the Registrar and the Resident Director
- Your round-trip ticket (to the UK and back to the US)

Be scrupulously polite and answer truthfully any questions you may be asked. If you encounter any difficulties at Immigration, you should ask that the Immigration Officer contact the London Director, Lisa Bowers-Isaacson. Have the relevant contact details with you.

Having these other documents readily available to produce may be advisable, if necessary:

- Your Oberlin College ID
- A copy of a document that confirms you have medical insurance.
- A letter or email confirming your residential address in London (if you are arriving early, have the address of hotel/hostel to hand)
- Supporting evidence that you will have access to funds to cover your housing and other living expenses while you are in Britain. A US bank statement showing a reasonable balance would be good for the latter. A document providing evidence of relevant financial aid, an affidavit of financial support from your parents – any of these could be helpful, depending on what questions you are asked at Immigration.
- Any prescriptions, certificates of immunization, instructions for treatment, etc. that you may have from your doctor, especially if they relate to drugs you have to carry with you.

❓ Travelling into London from the airport

Think ahead about the journey from the airport to your accommodation. There is an essential website for information about travelling around London, which is maintained by Transport for London, the overall authority managing the London Underground, the London buses, and many greater London overground train routes. Familiarize yourself in advance with its features! It is: www.tfl.gov.uk

Here you will also find information on any disruptions to lines because of planned engineering work or unplanned events, such as signal failure. The website has a “Journey Planner” facility, which you can use to plot the best route between any two points in greater London. The website will also give you information about prices – for example, what you might expect to pay if you take a taxi from Heathrow airport into central London. Please read the following advice only as a preliminary to the more detailed advice that this website can give you on all of the following.

❓ Travel from Heathrow Airport

From Heathrow, you can choose to take TfL [Transport for London] Rail (direct train to Paddington Station), the London Underground (the new Elizabeth Line), a private car service, a taxi, or a bus. Regardless of what you choose, work out your route to your destination before you board: know where you need to change, and what line you are changing to. Pick up a London Underground map at Heathrow if you do not already have one. The following website expands on most of the information that follows:

https://www.londontoolkit.com/travel/heathrow_central_london.htm

We recommend taking the Elizabeth Line into the city and to your accommodation (£13.30 one way). The Elizabeth Line connects Heathrow Airport to Tottenham Court Road, near the FSU Study Centre, a journey of about 45 minutes. (The Elizabeth Line also connects to Paddington Station, which will connect you to the rest of the Underground system.) The Elizabeth Line leaves Heathrow every 15 minutes from the Terminal 2 / 3 or the Terminal 4 Rail Station. If you're arriving at Terminal 5, you can take a free transfer service to the Terminal 2/3 stop. From Tottenham Court Road you can walk to your accommodation (it is about a 20 minute walk), or you can take a taxi if you have awkward luggage or are tired!

There's also another train to Paddington called the Heathrow Express, but since it costs twice as much [£25.00 if purchased from a ticket machine or ticket office] and is not faster, it's not recommended. See www.heathrowexpress.com for more info. Note: tickets are cheaper if purchased online 14-90 days in advance—see the website for deals.

The cheapest way into central London is by tube (£6.30, paying cash without an Oyster Card; an Oyster card costs £7 and would reduce the fare). Heathrow Airport is in Zone 6 of the London Underground on the Piccadilly Line. There are trains every few minutes from approximately 5:00 am (a little later on Sundays) until just before midnight (around 10:50 pm on Sundays). Journey time to the FSU Study Centre is about 70 minutes with a number of train changes. **If your luggage is heavy or awkward to carry, be warned: many stations have stairs to negotiate – this may not be your best route if you have much to carry.**

Car service

Private car hire can be surprisingly affordable, especially if you're traveling with one or more other people, although prices have been increasing. And it's obviously much more convenient than the Underground or the train if you have much luggage. One reliable service is Blackberry Cars (<https://www.blackberrycars.com/>), which currently charges around £90 (plus tip) to meet you at Heathrow and drive you and your luggage to your destination in central London. That's per car, not per person, for a car that will fit 3 or 4 passengers and 3 pieces of luggage; they also have larger vehicles available (see the website). It's bookable in advance online, and even less expensive (around £50 per car) when you're going to Heathrow. Another similar and reliable service is <https://www.atlascars.com/>.

Taxis

The Transport for London website reports that journeys from Heathrow Airport take between 30 and 60 minutes and cost on average between £56 and £105. Sharing a taxi with other

students can make this a more affordable option, though be aware that you will pay a small additional charge per item of luggage.

National Express buses

National Express also runs coach (i.e., *bus*) services into central London from Heathrow Airport (currently tickets range from £6.00 - £10.00 to Victoria Coach Station). For full details, consult https://www.londontoolkit.com/travel/heathrow_bus.htm .

? Travel from Gatwick Airport

The recommended method of travel into central London from Gatwick Airport is the Gatwick Express. This 30-minute train ride delivers you to Victoria Station, from where you can either take the London Underground or a taxi to your final destination. The Gatwick Express leaves the airport every fifteen minutes. The current cost of the one-way journey is £19.50 if booked online, or slightly more if booked at the station office. If three or more people are travelling together, they can get a group deal, i.e., tickets for 34% off each. See www.gatwickexpress.com.

Alternatively, you can take the Thameslink train from Gatwick, heading toward Peterborough, Bedford, or Cambridge to Farringdon Station. Tickets cost £13.70. From Farringdon, you can take a number of tube lines to your destination.

<https://ticket.thameslinkrailway.com/>

? Arriving at your accommodation

Use the “Journey Planner” feature of the Transport for London website, together with the section below in “London Information” about travelling around London, to help you think about how you will do this. It may also be helpful to download the **CityMapper app** for use when navigating in London.

As described in Section 3, the Danenberg Oberlin-in-London Program site is located just west of the British Museum on Great Russell Street, near the Tottenham Court Road underground station. Go to the Reception desk at the main entrance (99 Great Russell Street).

In order to have regular access to the FSU building at 99 Great Russell Street, you will need to obtain a key card. Go to the Reception Desk between 9 am and 5 pm, where your name will be listed with the Danenberg Oberlin-in-London Program. The key card, which is designed to be worn around the neck on a lanyard, gives access not only to the front door, but to the library and computer labs. All persons in the building are expected to display their cards at all times as a security measure.

You will be instructed on how to obtain IT access in the FSU building during Orientation.

Travelling around London

The main modes of transport around central London are the London Underground (“tube”), buses, local Overground trains, and taxis. The cost of journeys on the tube is mainly determined by the distance you travel: the network is divided into ‘zones’ that form concentric rings around central London.

Pricing and ticketing on the London underground is complicated by different fares and schemes. For the complete picture of how it all works, go to the website of London Transport:

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk> .

Oyster Card

To travel around London on the bus and underground system, **you will get an Oyster Card through the program.** You’ll learn more at Orientation about the form of this card but here are a few key points. Oyster Cards for travel on the London Transport underground and buses are priced to be the cheapest form of travel.

ADVICE: Do not purchase cash single fares on the Underground: the rates are punitive! A single journey from one station to the next in central London will cost you £6.30. **Use an Oyster Card instead!** If you are travelling around the city before receiving your FSU-issued Oyster card, you may want to purchase an Oyster Card first, although this will cost £7.00.

Oyster Cards operate by means of two different payment systems:

1. “Oyster Pay as you go” loaded onto an Oyster Card

An Oyster card can be “loaded” with a sum of money – usually £5, £10, or £20 – and fares will be debited from this sum as you travel around London each day. This is called “Oyster Pay as you go.” The Card computer system keeps track of your journeys and will “cap” the amount you pay in a day, so that it will always be cheaper to travel by this means than by any other kind of day ticket. The Pay-as-you-go capping rate for travel in Zones 1&2 is £8.10. See <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/adult-fares.pdf> . ***You must always be sure to touch your Oyster Card on the reader as you enter and leave underground stations in order to be sure you get the best rate!!***

You could get an Oyster card as soon as you arrive at Heathrow Airport and load some ‘Pay as you go’ money on it.

At time of writing, your Oyster single fare from Heathrow to central London would be £5.10 during peak times (06.30 to 09.30 and 16.00 to 19.00 Monday to Friday) or £3.10 during off-peak times (all other times). It would be £6.00 (at all times) if you simply pay cash. You can also use an Oyster Card between Gatwick and London.

2. “Weekly or Monthly Travelcard” loaded onto an Oyster Card

The Oyster Card can be used as a ‘Travelcard,’ meaning that for a single lump-sum payment, your card is good for a selected period of time within selected travel zones for an unlimited

number of journeys on the underground, buses and some local trains. Any Londoner who travels to school or work every day by London Transport uses this system. In 2023, a 7-day Weekly Student Travelcard will cost you £28.40 (£40.70 for a normal adult) for Zones 1&2. Do the math and you will see that this is the most economical way to travel around London if you are going to be travelling on a daily basis. **Having a weekly or monthly Travelcard is also a tremendous psychological stimulus to getting out and doing things, because you are not constantly thinking about what journeys will cost.**

Pay as you go using a contactless credit card, Apple Pay, etc.

TfL also accepts contactless cards, Apple Pay, Google Pay, Samsung Pay, and other forms of contactless payments. Students have used this in the past, and the FSU staff have not seen issues. You will be charged the normal Oyster Card fare with these forms of payment but you must use the same card / payment method to tap in and tap out. NOTE: Ensure that your credit card does not charge Foreign Transaction Fees or you will be charged a fee each time you use your card. For more information, please see the TfL website:

<https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/how-to-pay-and-where-to-buy-tickets-and-oyster/pay-as-you-go/contactless-and-mobile-pay-as-you-go?intcmp=55539>

Note that unlike the NYC subway, you MUST “Tap in” and Tap out” with the same card for your journey. Only one person can travel on a card at a time.

CityMapper App

The Citymapper app is a very useful app to download onto your smartphone or other such device. It will give you access to a wealth of real time transport information in London: directions by bus, tube, etc., including multi-transport options for your journey; bus arrival times; bus stop location information; transport disruption alerts; and more. Go to <https://citymapper.com/london> for full details.

London Underground

Using the London Underground can be confusing at first, but you will be pleasantly surprised how quickly it becomes second nature. The London Underground map is a work of genius: it makes seeing where you are with relation to where you want to go very easy. But if you get confused, London Underground staff are normally on hand (during the daytime, at least) to offer advice. Seek their help. Ordinary members of the public are also normally happy to help strangers – but **never** accept help if/when you are trying to buy a ticket at a ticket machine. This is classic con-artist territory.

London Underground stations will have maps of the system. Pick one up at your earliest opportunity if you haven’t acquired one before coming to London. Tube maps and street maps can also be downloaded onto your iPad or smartphone.

In addition to the Transport for London website (www.tfl.gov.uk), you can call the 24-hour London Transport Information Line (0843 222 1234) for more information.

Buses

In recent years London buses have improved dramatically. Buses come fairly frequently and there are many, many routes traversing all of London. Many people find them a more pleasant mode of travel than the London Underground, because you can see where you are going and thus get a better sense of the relation between one place and another. There is also simply more to look at than on the Underground. However, they will often (though not always) be a slower mode of transport than the Underground and probably won't be your best choice if you have to be sure to be somewhere on time. The single fare is £1.75 for any 'Pay as you go' journey with an Oyster Card. Bus travel is included in any weekly or monthly Travelcard you have loaded onto your Oyster Card. **You can't use cash to pay for your bus fare.**

There is also a system of Night Buses that run throughout the night. They are less frequent than daytime buses, but they are a reliable means of getting home if you have been out late in central London, after the underground network has closed down at around midnight.

Taxis

There are two kinds of taxis you can take in London – traditional 'black cabs' (they are not always black) and 'minicabs'.

a) Black cabs

These are the safest option but also the more expensive. As they are government-regulated, they must charge a consistent metered and posted rate. Each individual cab has a licence number clearly displayed inside. They are available at designated locations near some train and underground stations, but you can also hail them in the street. A cab is 'for hire' if the yellow "Taxi" light on the roof is lit up. As a rule, you should tip the driver – 10% is adequate, though some people just round up to the next whole pound.

Black cabs can also be ordered by phone:

One-Number Taxis:	0871 871 8710
Computer Cab:	020 7908 0271
Dial-A-Cab:	020 7253 5000
Radio Taxis:	020 7272 0272

There is a charge when booking by phone and other terms and conditions may vary so please check when booking.

If you have a smartphone, download one of these apps: "Gett" or "FREE NOW." They will both locate a licensed black taxi nearby, send it to your location, and give you the option to pay by card if you're stuck without cash.

b) Uber

Uber is operational in London but has had several problems with license renewal. You should be able to use the Uber app.

c) Mini-cabs

London's streets are also served by independently owned and operated 'mini-cabs.' These vehicles look like ordinary cars. Many of the companies that operate mini-cabs are reputable and licensed, but you need to be sure. To find out more about mini-cabs, go to:

<https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/taxis-and-minicabs/> .

Under no circumstances should you get into a 'mini-cab' soliciting business at an underground station, outside a pub or club – or anywhere. It is illegal for mini-cabs to solicit business in this way. Such drivers will not be legitimate. You will be putting your safety at serious risk if you get into such a vehicle. Do not even do this as a group.

Travel outside London

The resources of the internet have taken away the need to provide a great deal of information here. Be aware, though, that both the FSU centre library and the Oberlin-in-London office have many travel books which may be consulted and borrowed. You will travel in the UK as part of your course, but you may also want to take trips over the weekend or during breaks.

“I went to Ireland, Amsterdam and Spain. But I really should have travelled more around England. I would suggest this, and Brighton is awesome.”

“I travelled to Paris, France for a week. I wholeheartedly recommend travelling to the continent if at all possible but at the same time don’t travel too much. The London program offered numerous activities to take advantage of and I advise future students to consider the wealth of options available in London before attempting to spend a great deal of time travelling.”

“Day trips to Oxford, Cambridge, or Canterbury are worthwhile. I visited the Eden Project in Southern England (Cornwall). I recommend visiting Scotland or otherwise getting out of London and into the countryside.”

See Britain First

When you are thinking about possible travel outside London, consider the arguments that you should ***See Britain First***. You will have future opportunities to visit Europe as a tourist but you may not readily have a future opportunity to put down roots for so long in one place and get to know it well. For a small island, Great Britain is astonishingly diverse in its history, landscape, people, and culture. Have a look at www.visitbritain.com , www.visitscotland.com , www.visitwales.com . Before you opt to take CO₂-producing short-haul flights to Europe, consider the alternative of taking coaches (i.e., buses) and trains round the UK. Both modes of transport offer substantial discounts to students:

- National Rail offers a 16-25 Railcard. For an initial outlay of £30 you can save 1/3 off most journeys. You may recoup the cost of this card with one journey to Scotland! Go to www.railcard.co.uk/
- National Express, the principal inter-city bus (‘coach’) company operates a similar scheme, the Young Persons Coachcard, costing £12.50 plus £2.50 postage and packaging. Go to <https://www.nationalexpress.com/en/offers/coachcards/young-person> Journeys by coach are normally cheaper than journeys by train.

Before coming to the UK, you should also investigate train passes that must be bought in the US, e.g. Eurail Youth Pass, Britrail Pass, etc.

Train services are operated by a variety of companies. Some companies offer special deals, especially if booked in advance. To find out more about train travel in the UK, including details of train schedules and fare options, visit www.nationalrail.co.uk. There is also a National Rail enquiries number: **08457 48 49 50**.

Note: you need to take care to note all the terms and conditions of any rail tickets you buy. Some tickets are flexible, but the cheapest usually apply only to the train time specified. Be sure to board the correct train if you have one of these non-flexible tickets – if you take an earlier or later train, you could be charged a large penalty fare.

📌 Travel to the European continent

Eurostar trains which use the Channel Tunnel depart from the beautifully restored St Pancras International terminal, next to King's Cross. This is the fast and easy way to get to central Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam, and to connect into European rail networks. If booked well in advance, and/or if you are willing to depart very early in the morning, Eurostar tickets can also be fairly cheap. Go to www.eurostar.com.

For cheap air travel to the European continent, go to: www.ryanair.com ; www.easyjet.com ; www.cheapflights.co.uk ; www.statravel.co.uk/cps/rde/xchg/uk_division_web_live/ (STA Travel is one of the main student travel companies in the UK).

"Ireland, Germany and Switzerland were all fun, beautiful, and accessible. Any travel in Europe, I gather, is spectacular. I also went to Birmingham and Manchester. It was fun seeing other British cities."

"I think the amazing part of London is that it is simultaneously a hub to travel to amazing locations cheaply, and also so enjoyable to live in! I travelled to Amsterdam, Ireland, and will soon go to Turkey, Greece and Sweden very inexpensively. I think it is a great asset for being in London."

"Go to Ireland, but near the coast, countryside."

📌 Organized travel

Some students have enjoyed travelling with companies that specialize in tours in particular locations. Past students have mentioned favourably in particular:

- Paddywagon Tours through Ireland (www.paddywagontours.com)
- Anderson Tours [formerly Hallam Anderson] (www.andersontours.co.uk/)
- Haggis Tours through Scotland (www.haggisadventures.com/)
- Rabbie's Tours, based in Edinburgh (www.rabbies.com/)
- The Backpacker Tour Company (www.backpackertours.co.uk)
- International Friends (www.internationalfriends.co.uk)
- The International Students House Travel Club trips

📌 Accommodation

The cheapest and most popular form of accommodation for students while travelling is hostel accommodation. Check out the details of:

- Youth Hostel Association: www.yha.org.uk
- Hostelling International: www.hihostels.com

- Information in guidebooks, especially *The Rough Guide* series, *The Lonely Planet* series, the *Let's Go* series.

Returning home

📌 Travel to the airport

If you're taking the Gatwick Express train from Victoria Station or the Heathrow Connect train from Paddington Station, it might be easiest to book a cab from your flat to the train station. Or see information above, under "Travel from Heathrow airport: Car Service," about Blackberry private car service.

Whatever you do, give yourself as much time as possible. Traffic – both rail and road – cannot always be relied on to run smoothly.

📌 Reverse culture shock

You might want to think ahead to how it's going to feel to be back. Although you will be returning to a place you know well, it (and perhaps you) will have changed while you are away. You will be returning to family and friends who haven't shared your experiences and may not be able to summon up the degree of interest in hearing extensively about them that you might have expected. Your group of friends, or the relationships within the group, may have changed. Even the United States may look different to you. All of these things can be positive opportunities for reflective self-awareness and enhanced cultural and political awareness. But they can also make you feel unhappy and at least momentarily isolated. Students report that such feelings are common, if felt to different degrees.

Here are some tips for dealing with such feelings:

- Try to treat them as a positive opportunity for making observations about yourself and about the country you are returning to. Re-read your journal if you kept one.
- Stay abreast of news and current affairs in the UK.
- Get together with other program participants to talk about your common experiences: arrange a social event.
- Help with recruitment for future programs: prospective participants will be very interested in hearing about what you experienced!
- Follow up on some of the things you learned, either in classes or on your own. Think about whether they suggest future directions. Many students report that their semester studying abroad was a life-changing experience. How will it have changed your life or suggested new possibilities?
- Consider returning, or travelling elsewhere. Speak to people in the Study Away office about what your options might be.

- If you are more seriously unhappy on returning, seek help from the student health services at Oberlin.

Safety and security

The Resident Director and Florida State University team members will provide extensive information on safety and security during the orientation session. The Resident Director is in touch with the American Embassy and other program directors, and she will advise you should they make any information available relevant to your safety in London.

Medical and emergency help in London

The general emergency telephone number is **999**. You should use this if you need to contact the police, fire brigade, or an ambulance in an emergency.

The Resident Director from Florida State University will provide further information on medical help, including mental health.

Emergency and Urgent Care

You can visit the Accident and Emergency Department (“A&E”) of a hospital if you are in **serious need of immediate treatment** but are not in an emergency requiring an ambulance. Oftentimes sudden medical needs seem to arise on weekends; the nearest hospital emergency room may be your most practical option for seeking treatment. Accident and Emergency departments are normally very busy. Expect to have to wait quite a long time to be seen, depending on the severity of your condition – up to four hours. However, when you finally are seen you should not be charged for this medical attention. Should you need to be admitted to hospital, you would have to pay.

Not all hospitals have Accident and Emergency Departments. The main central London hospitals which do have them are:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University College Hospital
235 Euston Road
London WC1
(Euston Square underground station)
Switchboard: 0845 1555 000
www.uclh.nhs.uk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London W2
(Paddington underground station)
Switchboard: 020 3312 6666
www.imperial.nhs.uk/stmarys |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Mary’s Hospital
Praed Street | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chelsea & Westminster Hospital
389 Fulham Road
London SW10 |

(Fulham Broadway underground station)
Tel. 020 8746 8000
www.chelwest.nhs.uk

Tel. 020 3311 1234
www.imperial.nhs.uk/charingcross

· **St. Thomas's Hospital**

Lambeth Palace Road
London SE1 7EH
(Westminster underground station)
Tel: 020 7188 7188
www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk

· **Moorfields Eye Hospital**

City Road
London EC1
(Old Street underground station)
Tel. 020 7253 3411
Advice line: 020 7566 2345 (M-F 9.00 - 4.30)
www.moorfields.nhs.uk
For an accident or for serious concern about your eyes

· **Charing Cross Hospital**

Fulham Palace Road
London W6
(Hammersmith underground station)

Check the location of the hospital nearest to your flat that has an Accident and Emergency Department.

Minor Injuries Units

Minor injuries units are for patients with less serious injuries, such as sprains, cuts, fractures and grazes. The waiting times are much shorter than those in Accident and Emergency Departments. You do not need an appointment.

St Bartholomew's Hospital

Outpatients Wing
West Smithfield, EC1
Open: Monday to Friday, 8 am to 4 pm

Reception/enquiries: 020 3465 6843

St Charles Hospital Minor Injuries Unit

Exmoor Street, W10
Open 8 am to 6 pm daily

020 8962 4262

Guy's Hospital Urgent Care Centre

Ground Floor, Tabard Annexe
Great Maze Pond
London SE1 9RT
Open: 8 am to 8 pm (last patient booked in at 7.00 pm)

020 3049 8970

NHS Direct: Phone Line for Medical Advice

NHS 111 Service is a 24-hour confidential helpline and telephone advice service. To access it, simply ring **111**. Also see: www.nhs.uk.111/. You will be asked to provide some basic information about yourself and to describe the nature of your call. If you need advice about a

health problem you are asked if you are calling for yourself or on behalf of someone else and are asked to explain:

- What the symptoms are, how they affect you/the person and when they began
- What you/the person have tried already
- Any drugs you/the person are already taking
- Any existing medical conditions
- Anything else you think is relevant

If you are calling on behalf of someone else, that person needs to be in the same room as you so that the adviser can accurately assess their symptoms. NHS 111 advisers will use their skills and experience, together with a comprehensive computer system, to advise you on the most appropriate course of action to take – for example, whether you should see a doctor immediately, whether it can wait till the next day, whether you should instead seek over-the-counter help at a pharmacy, etc. He or she will also have details of other relevant health information services, late-night pharmacies, after-hours dentists, etc. that you can contact if you need to.

If you need to see a doctor

General Practitioners

You are covered under the terms of the CISI insurance, which reimburses you for 100% of reasonable expenses for doctor visits while you are on the program. You will be receiving an email with full details, which will also be discussed during orientation in London. Be sure to download the CISI app onto the smartphone you'll be using in London, since this will be the easiest way of interacting with CISI and receiving updated information.

For general health, there are many private GPs in London that have readily available appointments. Students will typically have to pay upfront and then submit a claim to CISI for a reimbursement. Should they need to see a specialist or wish to have CISI coordinate payment for any appointments, this can be done by opening a ticket with the insurance company but will take longer than booking an appointment directly.

Here are a few options for private GPs:

<https://www.boots.com/healthhub/managing-pain/online-gp>

<https://samedaydoctor.org/>

<https://doctap.co.uk/>

<https://www.londondoctorsclinic.co.uk/>

<https://www.bupa.co.uk/health/payg/gp-services>

If you need a dentist

NHS 111 Service

111

They can give you details of emergency dentists in your area.

24 Hour Emergency Dentist

www.24hour-emergencydentist.co.uk

Emergency hotline: 020 8748 9365

Four treatment centres in central London

Soho Dental Care

1 Frith Street

London W1

Tel. 020 7534 6622

Kensington Dental Spa Emergency Dental Service

21 Kensington High Street

London W8 5NP

(High St. Kensington underground station)

24-hour emergency hotline: 0800 389 1998

Non-emergency dental treatment

Dr. Peter Lawrence

Tel. 020 7580 1610

NHS 111 Service

111

They will give you details of dentists in your area who may treat you as a private patient.

To find a dentist in your area, search on: www.192.com/. This is a powerful business/people search engine that you can use to find a dentist in your area. See also the NHS website www.nhs.uk. Search under "Health services near you - Dentists."

If you need a pharmacist (chemist)

Pharmacists, or chemists as they are often known in the UK, are good medical resources. They can give you professional advice about what your medication or treatment needs may be. Once you have settled into your housing, be sure to locate a nearby chemist. The **Boots** chain is the commonest on London streets, but there are also others.

Here are some chemists shops in central London which are open late:

PharmaCentre

149 Edgware Road

London W2

(located midway between Edgware Road and Marble Arch underground stations)

020 7723 2336

Open until midnight every day

Zafash Pharmacy

233-35 Old Brompton Road

Earl's Court, London SW5 0EA

020 7373 2798

Open 24 hours a day: the only one in London!

📍 If you need an optician

There are many opticians in London. To find one in your area, try www.192.com. Or try www.londontown.com/. Both sites will enable you to search businesses and services in your area.

See also: Boots Opticians (www.boots.com/opticians) and Specsavers (www.specsavers.co.uk)

📍 For mental health concerns

Mental health care is included under the CISI policy.

For mental health, we utilize a practice called Sloane Court Clinic: <https://sloanecourtclinic.com/>

FSU team members are able to refer students directly to the practice and they coordinate direct billing with CISI. They have numerous clinicians with a variety of backgrounds and specialties and offer virtual and in-person appointments.

You can also make use of the service provided by London Nightline, to which the Danenberg Oberlin-in-London program is a subscriber:

London Nightline

Confidential listening, support and information service run during term-time by trained students, for students.

Tel. 020 7631 0101 between 6 pm and 8 am.

See: www.nightline.org.uk

More information about what London Nightline is and why you might want to contact them will be given at Orientation in London. FSU will provide up-to-date information on mental health services and CISI coverage.

📍 Where else to go for advice and support

Living and studying in London can be very rewarding, but it can also sometimes be overwhelming. But there is help available. There are many organizations and services in London offering advice and support to international students on immigration and legal matters, disability, drugs and alcohol, HIV and AIDS, and pregnancy. See the list in the appendix for specific organizations that might be appropriate for your needs. Additionally, do not hesitate to discuss your concerns with the Resident Director, or other FSU staff. They can help point you in the right direction for a support group or arrange for you to meet with a counsellor.

Health/medical care or advice

Medical information for US citizens	www.travel.state.gov
US Consular information: UK	www.state.gov/travel/
Student Specific Health Links	www.studenthealth.co.uk
NHS Health Advice	www.nhs.uk
Meningitis Now	www.meningitisnow.org/ 0800 80 10 388 (9 – 5 M-F)

Mental health

SANELINE	0300 304 7000 (4 pm-10 pm daily)
Samaritans	FreeCall 116 123 (UK)

Alcohol

Alcoholics Anonymous	0800 9177 650 help@aamail.org www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
Drinkaware	0300 123 1110 (9am-8pm, M-F; 11am-4pm weekends)

www.drinkaware.co.uk/alcohol-support-services

Smoking & drugs

Action on Smoking and Health	www.ash.org.uk/
Talk to Frank	0300 123 6600 www.talktofrank.com
Narcotics Anonymous	0300 999 1212 www.ukna.org/
Release	020 7324 2989 ask@release.org.uk www.release.org.uk/

Sexual health

British Pregnancy Advisory Service	03457 30 40 30 www.bpas.org
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FPA: The Sexual Health Charity	www.fpa.org.uk
National Sexual Health Helpline	0300 123 7123 (9am – 8pm, M-F)
Marie Stopes UK – Central London	0345 300 8090
Sexual Health Line	0800 567 123 (free confidential information and advice on sexual health)
Terrence Higgins Trust (<i>Advice about HIV/AIDS</i>)	0808 802 1221 www.tht.org.uk
Switchboard LGBT+ helpline	0800 0119 100 hello@switchboard.lgbt
<u>Eating disorders</u>	
Beating Eating Disorders (BEAT)	0808 801 0677 https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/
Advice for (international) students	
International Students House (ISH)	229 Great Portland ST; W1N 5HD 020 7631 8366 (Student Welfare) www.ish.org.uk
<u>Lost or stolen credit cards</u>	
American Express	0800 917 8047; +44 (0)1273 696 933
Visa	1-303-967-1096
Mastercard	1-636-722-7111

Other resources in London

📱 Getting a mobile phone (also: making international calls)

You are required to have a working cell phone (“mobile phone” in the UK) with you at all times while on the program. There are two ways to accomplish this:

1. Typically, you can use your own smartphone from home by installing a UK SIM card in it, assuming your phone is unlocked. (Here’s a quick explanation of “unlocking”: <https://www.consumerreports.org/smartphones/how-to-unlock-your-phone-from-any-major-carrier/> . Note: if you’ve paid off your initial phone contract, then it’s easy to unlock, if it isn’t already.)

SIM cards are sold with prepaid plans that include a data allowance for internet usage. Here too, Carphone Warehouse sells SIM card plans from a variety of providers, can advise you about them, and will be happy to help you install the card. Plans vary, but one of the least expensive pay-as-you-go plans is from GiffGaff. See the website for full details: <https://www.giffgaff.com/offer>. One recent student reports the following: “I ordered a *free* SIM card (free shipping too, so truly free) from GiffGaff before I left the States. Then when I arrived all I had to do was install it per the directions on their site (my US phone was already unlocked for international service) and sign up for a data package online. Excellent coverage so far, and it comes with free wifi access in the underground tube stations.” (Note that if you’re ordering the SIM card too late to reach you before you leave for London, you can use the program address as your mailing address.) Other students report satisfactory experience of SIM card packages bought from Vodafone, EE and Three. If the instructions in the above link about unlocking don’t suffice, it’s sometimes possible to get your phone unlocked once you arrive in the UK. Luckily, there are many places to do this near the study centre, namely near the intersection of Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street. Look for “mobile unlocking” signs in shop windows. Fees vary depending on your phone model, so shop around to get the best rate, which will range from £30 - £45. Students have also used UnlockFusion.net to unlock their phones for as little as \$1.99.

Note that if you install a new SIM card, you will have a new UK phone number, and your phone will no longer be reachable at your old number until you leave the UK and reinstall your old SIM.

2. eSim – Some newer US phones, including the iPhone 14 line, do not have a physical SIM card, so it will be necessary to purchase an eSim card to get a UK number. At the time of this writing, LycaMobile offers a pay as you go eSim, while Vodafone offers a month-by-month contract for eSim. Each carrier offers different levels of data by cost. At the time of this writing, the use of month-to-month eSim is untested.
3. Some students decide to buy a UK mobile phone for the period that they are in London. Mobiles can be purchased extremely inexpensively. Cost, terms, and rates are variable and need to be researched once you arrive in London. It is a good idea to seek out specialist and independent advice for purchasing a mobile phone. Carphone Warehouse

(www.carphonewarehouse.com) is a major independent chain in Britain, selling mobile phones at a range of prices and on all the different networks. They should be able to advise you on the best phone deal to meet your needs. There is a branch of Carphone Warehouse located inside the Curry's near the Warren Street Station

Note that you should buy what's called a "pay as you go" phone in order not to be locked into a lengthy contract. Students have found it advantageous to buy phones on the same network as one another (e.g. EE, Virgin, GiffGaff, O2, etc.), as calls and text messages to other phones in the same network are priced more cheaply than calls to other networks.

4. Another option is to sign up for an international plan from your US provider while you're in the UK, but this is likely to be considerably more expensive than either of the first two options and is not recommended—unless you have service via T-Mobile, which may include international service. It also would probably mean that others on the program wouldn't be able to make voice calls to your phone without paying international rates.

International calls from the UK: Remember that you can make free voice and video calls over the internet via such apps as Skype (www.skype.com), WhatsApp, Apple Facetime (<https://support.apple.com/guide/facetime/welcome/mac>), and Facebook Messenger (<https://www.messenger.com/>). These will also work via your data plan when you're not connected to wifi.

Libraries

The site library

The FSU London Study Centre library is open 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. The computer labs are open 24 hours. There is a quiet study space, called the Conservatory, at the back of the library.

The British Library

Undergraduates may now get a Reader's Pass to the St Pancras Reading Rooms of the world-renowned British Library on Euston Road. This is a reference library: a reader's pass entitles you to use the catalogues and consult books on site, but not to take books away. To receive a book from the stacks normally takes 45 minutes to an hour, though for some books, not housed on site, it can take a couple of days. With your pass, you can request books online to pick up at a particular time, so if you plan ahead, it is possible to significantly shorten this wait. To get a Reader's Pass, go to the Reader Registration Desk and bring with you two forms of identification: a) proof of signature – e.g. passport, driving licence, credit card; and b) proof of your home address in the US – e.g. bank statement, credit card statement, driving licence. Note that a single item, such as a driver's licence, can only be used as one form of proof: either of signature OR of address, but not both. See www.bl.uk for full details.

Although entering the Reading Rooms requires a Reader's Pass, there are public areas inside the Library but outside the Reading Rooms that have comfortable seating and tables that may be used for studying – and designed for using laptops!

The Wellcome Library

Located near the study centre at 183 Euston Road, NW1, this library specializes in the history of medicine and is also open to members of the public to use, including as a place to read. You need to bring personal identification and proof of address to join. Many program participants have joined this library and reported very positively on their experience with it.

Westminster Reference Library

This library is located behind the National Gallery, at 35 St. Martin's Street, London WC2. This library's reference collection may not be borrowed, so the books are permanently available. It is a useful place for students who find it difficult to study at home.

Guildhall Library

The City of London's archive and reference library is located in the Guildhall, on Aldermanbury, London EC2, and is open Monday to Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. It has open shelves of books on London history, as well as extensive collections on English and parliamentary history, including the complete series of House of Commons papers and journals from 1800.

Barbican Library

Located in the Barbican Centre, London EC2, this is one of the local libraries of the City of London system. There is also a very good music library here. The Barbican Centre itself makes a quiet place to study, occasionally with musical accompaniment. There are tables and chairs with good lighting on several levels indoors and a lakeside terrace with tables and chairs when the weather is fine.

Local libraries

Local libraries will allow members to take out books. Although the collections are obviously not geared specifically to undergraduate academic needs, local libraries in a borough try to ensure that, among them, they cater to a wide range of subjects that you can access through interlibrary loan.

Once you have established a flat address, find out where your nearest library is (the FSU office can help you determine this) and go there to join. You will need proof of your address, for example a copy of your lease, or a proof of address document provided by your housing provider.

Specialist libraries

There are also many specialist libraries in London, often reference libraries, ranging from the Poetry Library on level 5 of the Royal Festival Hall on the South Bank to the Karl Marx Library in Clerkenwell. The FSU office has information on those specialist libraries which allow access to undergraduates.

🔍 Quiet places to study

It can be difficult to find a quiet place to study in London. Even if your flat or residence is a good place, it is not necessarily close enough to the teaching site to use in the middle of the day. So here are a few suggestions of other places to study, in addition to the libraries listed above.

The South Bank: The National Theatre has lots of tables, chairs, and comfy corners. Try the Lyttleton Terrace! The Royal Festival Hall is a newly refurbished concert hall with a large foyer with seating and a poetry library on level 5. The National Film Theatre has cafes and comfy chairs and sofas in public areas.

At bigger bookstores (with coffee shops): Waterstones, on Gower Street, is the main bookshop for the University of London. It has a coffee shop on the ground floor. Foyle's, on Charing Cross Road, is another good venue.

Eating and drinking

Supermarkets

Large supermarkets are cheaper than smaller food stores. The biggest names are Tesco, Sainsburys, Morrisons, Asda, Waitrose, and Marks & Spencer. Lidl (close to the housing) and Aldi have reputations as being the least expensive (but Sainsburys is often competitive), Waitrose and M&S as most expensive. There is a Sainsburys Supermarket very near the FSU centre, at the junction of Great Russell Street with Tottenham Court Road. You can use the supermarkets' websites to locate the ones nearest to your flat, or ask your landlord for information. Program staff are also happy to help. The staff at the Reception Desk in the FSU building also know a lot about where to shop locally.

Markets

- **Berwick Street Market** (Leicester Square or Piccadilly Circus underground stations). Open 9 am-6 pm Mon-Sat. The best and cheapest selection of fruit and vegetables in central London. Also good for cheese, fish, bread, herbs, spices, and a variety of international street food.
- **Borough Market** (London Bridge underground station). Open Tuesday - Sunday. This is an astonishingly wonderful farmers' market, though not especially cheap. There are plenty of opportunities for free tastes of things, though. A number of traders specialise in organic produce. There are also a number of vendors and shops selling food for take away. See: www.boroughmarket.org.uk.
- **Brick Lane Market** (Aldgate East, Shoreditch, or Liverpool Street underground stations). See www.visitbricklane.org. A huge range of things is on sale here: meat, fruit, veg, electrical items, tools, bicycles, clothing, jewellery, and household goods. There are lots of great vintage shops in the area as well.
- **Brixton Market** (Brixton underground station). See www.brixtonmarket.net for full details of opening times. This is a thriving multicultural market where you can find African and Caribbean produce along with traditional fruit and veg and fish. There are also record stalls, second-hand clothes, and bric-a-brac. The newer part of the market, Brixton Village, is bursting with amazing independent restaurants and cafes.

- **Camden Market** (Camden Town or Chalk Farm underground stations). See www.camden-market.org. A whole collection of markets on Saturdays and Sundays primarily. Youth culture, street fashion, and retro clothes dominate; also crafts. It's very busy, sometimes claustrophobic.
- **Old Spitalfields Market**, 65 Brushfield Street, E1. See www.oldspitalfieldsmarket.com. Old covered market with a wide variety of shops and stalls, including an international food centre. Crafts and antique stalls are especially notable. This is near Brick Lane market, so you can plan to visit both on the same day.
- **Petticoat Lane Market** (Liverpool Street underground station). Primarily 9 am-2 pm Sundays. A traditional East End market selling a wide variety of things, including inexpensive clothing.
- **Portobello Road Market** (Ladbroke Grove, Notting Hill Gate, or Westbourne Park underground stations). See www.portobellomarket.org. The antiques market (Saturdays) has a huge choice and range; the general market (most days) still has some of the cheapest fruit, veg, and flowers that you'll find in west London. Also famous for its new and vintage clothes stalls.

Eating out cheaply

Here are some relatively cheap places to eat near the FSU site. Consult the *Time Out* website to research restaurants by type of food, by location and by price.

Relatively inexpensive restaurants close to the FSU centre include:

- **Chipotle**, 114-16 Charing Cross Road WC2 (Tottenham Court Road area). Missing Mexican food? This popular US chain will sort out your burrito cravings! Burritos, tacos, and salads range from about £9-11.
- **Diwana Bhel Poori House**, 121 Drummond Street NW1 (Euston). There is a set, buffet all-you-can-eat, amazing-value lunch available here. But it's an inexpensive Indian meal in the evenings too. (Be aware that in this country, unlike some places in the US, you usually have to order and pay for rice separately in Indian and Chinese restaurants.) Also in the same block with a great-value lunch buffet: another Indian restaurant called Chutney's.
- **Five Guys**, 266 Tottenham Court Rd. An American burger chain.
- **Fryer's Delight**. 19 Theobalds Road WC1 (Holborn). Good fish and chips. Get the mushy peas and mug of tea, too, for a real traditional English supper.

- **ICCo**, 46 Goodge Street W1 (Bloomsbury). ICCo serves up fresh, handmade pizzas for take away or dine in, in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. Pizzas start at just £3.50 for margarita style.
- **Indian YMCA**, 41 Fitzroy Square W1 (Fitzrovia). This is authentic and very cheap Indian food. Most of the diners here are Indian students. Average price: £6-13
- **Joyce's Jerk Joint**, 189 Wardour Street W1 (Soho). Popular Caribbean café.
- **Maoz Falafel**, 43 Old Compton Street W1 (Soho). This popular lunchtime restaurant offers delicious falafel in pitas with fresh, crisp veggies and hummus. The cost is about £6-7 for a very filling meal (often with a drink!).
- **Masala Zone**, 48 Floral Street WC2 (Covent Garden). One of a chain of Indian restaurants serving excellent, inexpensive food.
- **Rasa Express**, 5 Rathbone Street W1 (Fitzrovia). Primarily a take-away, this is part of the Rasa chain of fantastic restaurants serving South Indian cuisine. Excellent vegetarian dishes, too.
- **Roti King**, 40 Doric Way (Euston). Malaysian and Singaporean street food, under £10 generally.
- **Shake Shack**, 24 Market Building, The Piazza WC2 (Covent Garden). Located in the heart of Covent Garden Market, this is where you'll find American burgers, fries, shakes, and hot dogs. This is London's first location of the popular NYC chain. Cheeseburgers start from £8, and prices increase as you add more toppings.
- **Japes Deep Dish Pizza**, 22-25 Dean Street W1 (Soho). Excellent pizza at very good prices. Strongly recommended.
- **Wagamama**, Many locations around London. Wagamama is a Japanese noodle bar chain popular with students and anyone wanting a nourishing, nutritious, and not very expensive meal in central London. To get there, turn left out of our building, right at the first corner onto Bloomsbury Street. Cross Bloomsbury Street at this corner too. The first left is Streatham Street.

Tipping – aka 'service' or 'service charge'

Restaurants in London often add a so-called 'optional' service charge to the bill when they bring it to you. This will be either 10% or, more frequently, 12½%. Check whether service has been

added! Don't fall into the trap of leaving a tip twice. If service hasn't been added, then leaving something in the region of 10-12½% will be adequate.

Money-saving tips

- **Tastecard:** £1 for a 90 day trial. The card entitles you and your party to either 50% off or 2-for-1 offers at participating restaurants. Trial information can be found at www.tastecard.co.uk/trial/headertry . The list of participating restaurants can be found at www.tastecard.co.uk .
- **Student discounts:** It's common knowledge that students are entitled to discounts on exhibition entry fees and movie tickets, but students can also get 10% off at some popular high street shops like Topshop, Topman, Burton, Dorothy Perkins, Faith, GAP, New Look, Office, Ryman and Schuh. Many shops require you to be a member of a club such as UNiDays.
- **Inexpensive grocery shopping:** Grocery stores significantly mark down items which are set to expire that day, and the best time to look for marked-down items is around 5pm in areas where there are a lot of office workers and a few hours before closing in residential areas. Marks & Spencer also do great markdowns on Tottenham Court Road. If you're happy to freeze bread or use other ingredients they've marked down in that night's meal then it's a great way to save money. The same principle applies at Itsu (a sushi takeaway chain) – they mark down their food 50% a half hour before closing time at their various locations.
- **TK Maxx**, 120 Charing Cross Road, London WC2: Located just a few minutes away from the study centre, this is a great place to find discount housewares (if your kitchen is missing something!), shoes, coats, luggage, sheets, umbrellas, scarves and lots of clothing! The markdowns are significant and if you don't mind hunting a bit, you can find some great bargains on big name brands.
- **Telediscount** (for BT landlines): On this website you'll find access codes to dial before making an international phone call. The savings made on calls using these codes are significant: Telediscount
- **Living Social and Groupon:** Register with these websites to receive local London discount offers on a daily or weekly basis. Most recently, offers like 50% off gift cards for Marks & Spencer and Starbucks have been on offer. Sometimes there are free grocery delivery passes or inexpensive gym membership passes. See www.livingsocial.com and www.groupon.co.uk.
- **myWaitrose:** If you regularly pass by a Waitrose grocery store which sells coffee/tea, then it is worth asking for a free myWaitrose membership card. There are some benefits to having this card but the main one is that it entitles you to a free coffee or tea once a day.

- **Flying Tiger**, 222-224 Tottenham Court Road, London W1: Probably one of the most inexpensive places to pick up notebooks, organizers, spices, wrapping paper, cards, housewares, decorations...practically anything you could possibly imagine!
- **Being nice:** Remember to be friendly to people working in chain takeaway restaurants, particularly ones like Pret. Staff members are encouraged to give away freebies to people they feel might deserve it. Make sure to smile, and if they ask how you are, sometimes saying something like "I'm a bit nervous for a big exam" or "I'm great, it's my birthday week!" or "It's my first day of my internship" will cue them to possibly give you a free coffee! The same goes with theatre ushers – they've been known to upgrade seats from the very back rows if they know better seats are not being used closer to the stage. Also, if you visit a chain restaurant's website and notice that there is a place to leave positive feedback about a particular location, make sure you take the opportunity to compliment them. Sometimes managers will invite you in for a free meal (Itsu is known for doing this)!

📍 Gyms and swimming pools

There are three gyms that program participants have used in recent years. You will need to check what the current rates are for joining them:

- **YMCA** (has swimming pool)
112 Great Russell Street
London WC1
This is a one-minute walk from the FSU centre. Students can join the YMCA at a reduced student rate.
- **Camden Oasis Sports Centre** (has swimming pool)
32 Endell Street
London
WC2H 9AG
Phone: 020 7831 1804

<http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/leisure/sport-and-physical-activity/sports-centres/oasis-sports-centre/>
- **The Gym Group**, from £ 24.99 / month
The Plaza
120 Oxford Street
London W1D 1LT
Phone: 0330 055 3568
This recently built gym is only a five-minute walk from the FSU Study Centre. There are no contracts and the cost is only £19.99 per month.

❓ Meeting the locals

It's not always easy to meet the British socially. Some of the best ways to do so are to join a club, do volunteer work, or attend a local church or other place of worship.

While it may not come naturally to you, you should try hard to take initiative about talking to people – e.g. in pubs, while you are standing in a queue, at concerts or theaters, etc. If you smile, are friendly and interested in others, you will be likely to meet with a positive response: the great British reserve is much overstated!

Try, for example, the **Saturday Walkers' Club**, which has weekly outings. You can just turn up for any of them. There's no charge other than the train fare to the walk's starting point. For details of weekly walks, see www.walkingclub.org.uk. Britain has over 120,000 miles of public footpaths, and this is a great way to see the countryside and to meet people. See also the **Ramblers Association**: www.ramblers.org.uk. Or there is the **London Intervarsity Club** that organises evening and weekend walks in and around London every week for members. Membership starts at £1a month for a six-month trial. See www.londonivc.com. You could also look into HOST. This is a voluntary organisation that arranges for students to stay with people who enjoy meeting and welcoming international students into their homes at any weekend during the year and also at Christmas. These are volunteers who enjoy learning about other cultures and are pleased to share their own lives with students from different countries. HOST is not able to place every student who would like an invitation, so you need to apply in plenty of time. Students pay nothing except their travel costs. See www.hostuk.org. Tel. 020 7739 6292.

❓ Groups and clubs

Here is just a *small sample* of the kinds of groups you might find in London:

Sports

Badminton clubs, boxing training for beginners, cricket clubs, fencing clubs, football clubs, handball clubs, korfbal clubs, running clubs, tennis clubs, volleyball clubs, walking clubs, lacrosse clubs. Martial arts/self defence classes of all kinds are popular.

Dance

- Danceweb: interactive directory for UK dancing enthusiasts; www.danceweb.co.uk
- Danceworks, London W1. www.danceworks.com. Tel. 020 7629 6183
- The RADA Studios, London WC1. www.rada.ac.uk. Classes: dance, fitness, singing, etc.
- English Folk Dance and Song Society, London NW1. www.efdss.org. Tel. 020 7485 2206.
- Ceilidh Club. Scottish dancing. www.ceilidhclub.com.
- The Gay Gordons, London N1. Scottish country dancing for gay people and friends. www.thegaygordons.org.
- London Swing Dance Society. www.swingdanceuk.com. Tel. 01895 613 703.
- The Place, London WC1. Dance classes. www.theplace.org.uk.
- Much more!

Karaoke bars, pub quizzes. See *Time Out*.

Music

- East London Chorus. www.eastlondonchorus.org.uk.
- Imperial College Choir. www.union.ic.ac.uk/arts/choir/
- St. Matthews Choir. www.smce.org.uk
- The Pink Singers. www.pinksingers.co.uk.
- Non-professional orchestras in London. See: www.amateurorchestras.org.uk/

📺 Cinema

See <https://www.timeout.com/london/film> for listings. Central London cinemas can be expensive. For much cheaper options, try:

- **The International Student House** shows free, current films on Sunday evenings to members. You are a member!
- **Amnesty International** screens films at its east London action centre. See www.amnesty.org.uk/events.asp.

📺 Theatre

There are several ways to get cheaper tickets to major productions:

- **The National Theatre** has inexpensive tickets available. See <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/your-visit/ways-to-save/>
- **The Royal Shakespeare Company** makes some tickets to their productions in Stratford and in London available to those 25 and under for only £10. See <https://www.rsc.org.uk/ticket-10-tickets>
- **The Barbican Centre** makes tickets for arts events (theatre, music, film) available to 16-25-year-olds for as little as £5. See <https://www.barbican.org.uk/join-support/young-barbican> for details.
- **Tickets at the Young Vic Theatre** are often available for £12, especially if you book in advance: <https://www.youngvic.org/visit-us/concessions> .
- **ATG student discount** makes tickets to West End plays available to students: <https://www.atgtickets.com/offers/totum-student-offers/#London>
- **See other options here:** <https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/top-ticket-discount-offers-students-47476.html>
- **Student Standby.** Many other theatres also sell heavily discounted tickets to students in the hour before the show begins. Just show up at the theatre's box office. You need to present a

valid student ID. Student rush seats may be available at other theatres in the mornings. Check websites for details.

- **Discount and rush tickets** are also available through the TodayTix website and app: <https://www.todaytix.com/shows/london> .
- **TKTS: the Leicester Square Half-Price Ticket Booth.** The official half-price ticket booth is the grey building located in the middle of Leicester Square. Tickets for same-day shows are available here. Tickets are sold at half the face value of the ticket, but you must take the tickets next on top of the pile. There is also a £3.00 service charge added to the price of the ticket. Therefore, this may still end up being a relatively expensive option for a student on a budget. See www.tkts.co.uk.
- **Standing room tickets for sold-out shows have also been recommended by some students.**

Theatre enthusiasts should note the wealth of London's fringe theatre activity waiting to be explored. This is a dynamic sector that stages both new writing and freshly-imagined revivals. Don't make the mistake of assuming that because it's "fringe" it will be inferior to what you would find on the "West End" stages; but it certainly will cost you less to see. The venues are smaller and the feeling of being a member of an audience intimately involved in that essential performer-audience transaction is correspondingly often much more gratifyingly intense. Consult *Time Out* on a regular basis to see what's on where, and what is recommended. Fringe theatres with strong track-records include:

- **The Bush Theatre**, Shepherd's Bush. The Bush is a world-famous home for new plays and an internationally recognised champion of new playwrights. It has produced many groundbreaking premieres since it opened in 1972. (Shepherd's Bush Market, Shepherd's Bush, or Goldhawk Road tube stations)
- **The Arcola Theatre**, Hackney. Tuesday nights here are "pay what you can" nights, purposely created for those who find the regular price of theatre tickets off-putting. A theatre with a strong recent track record. (Dalston Kingsland or Dalston Junction Overground stations)
- **The Gate Theatre.** The Gate has an average seating capacity of 70, but punches far above its weight. It is London's only producing theatre dedicated to international work and has a first-class track record. (Notting Hill Gate tube)
- **King's Head Theatre**, 115 Upper Street, N1. The theatre is located in the back room of the King's Head pub; this room has also been, in its time, a boxing ring and a pool hall. Over the years it has staged many new works, 37 of its shows transferring to the West End. It has recently been rebranded as London's Little Opera House at The King's Head Theatre, and will specialise in producing classic opera with new interpretations. (Angel or Highbury/Islington tubes)

- **The Battersea Arts Centre** (www.bac.org.uk) produces many innovative productions. (Clapham Junction mainline station – from Victoria or Waterloo)
- **Soho Theatre**, 21 Dean Street, W1: a short walk from the teaching site. Since its founding ten years ago, this theatre has been building a strong reputation for producing new writing. Its program includes theatre, comedy, and writers’ events. It is also home to a buzzy bar scene.
- **Theatre Royal Stratford East**. Every night the lively linked bar (with good, cheap food) has a DJ. The theatre itself has a strong reputation for theatre generally, and a good line in theatre about multicultural London. (Stratford tube)
- **Menier Chocolate Factory**, 53 Southwark Street, SE1. There is an attached restaurant, and you can get theatre/meal deals. The theatre itself has a strong recent track-record of putting on non-mainstream or forgotten-about musicals: wonderfully done in a small space! (London Bridge tube)
- Not a fringe theatre, but artistically significant and not to be missed (modern British drama is said to have begun here on a night in May 1956) is the **Royal Court Theatre** in Sloane Square. *The New York Times* once described it as “the most important theatre in Europe.” It has both a main stage and a theatre upstairs, and both stages frequently produce innovative new plays. On Monday nights all tickets are £12. The Royal Court also offers special deals for students, including standing room tickets (restricted view) at their main, downstairs theatre for 10p, from an hour before the performance. (Sloane Square tube)

📺 Music

There are too many venues and kinds of music available in London every night of the week to begin to list them all. What’s certain is that there is something for every taste and that there is much that is affordable or even free. Among the free offerings you might like to note are:

- ‘Tate Lates’ is an eclectic pop music night on the first Friday of every month. See <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/tate-modern-lates>
- St Martin in the Fields Church, Trafalgar Square, has £10 lunchtime concerts. <https://www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org/lunchtime-concerts/>
- The BBC Concert and Symphony Orchestras have some free recitals. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/symphonyorchestra>
- The South Bank Centre. The concert halls here (Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room) sponsor many free musical events. See: www.southbankcentre.co.uk.
- For other free music venues, see regular listings in *Time Out*.
- Not free, but students can get standby tickets for as little as £25 at the Royal Opera House (<http://www.roh.org.uk/for/students>) and the English National Opera (<https://www.eno.org/your-visit/ways-to-save-offers/>).

📍 Museums and galleries

The following major museums are all FREE and FANTASTIC. This is not an exhaustive list by any means:

- The British Museum
- The National Gallery
- The National Portrait Gallery
- The Tate Britain
- The Tate Modern
- The Imperial War Museum
- The Museum of London Docklands
- The Victoria and Albert Museum
- The Young V&A
- The Museum of the Home (the museum of the British Front Room, from 1600 to the present)
- The Science Museum
- The Wellcome Collection
- The Natural History Museum
- The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich; also the Royal Observatory in Greenwich – essential!

📍 Auction houses

Christie's exhibits art valued at millions of pounds for free. Works going under the hammer at upcoming auctions are shown in plush salons at its London premises. Dress smartly and the doorman will wave you in. Contemplate works by Botticelli, Renoir, or whoever is coming up for sale, and gawp at the price tags. Some of these paintings may never go on free public view again. Christie's, 8 King Street, St James's, London SW1. See www.christies.com. Also see Sotheby's, a very similar rival auction house at 34-35 New Bond Street, W1: www.sothebys.com

📍 Speakers' Corner

In a category of its own. This is an enduring symbol of Britain's right to free speech, visible every Sunday in a corner of London opposite Marble Arch. Ever since the right of free assembly was recognized in 1872, Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park has been the place for philosophers, politicians, and anyone else to get things off their chest. Past orators have included the Pankhursts (famous suffragettes), Karl Marx, Lenin, and George Orwell. Other London parks have designated speakers' corners too, including Clapham Common and Finsbury Park. Two subjects are off limits: the royal family and overthrowing the government.

📍 Haircuts

- **Vidal Sassoon Davies Mews School, Davies Mews, W1** offers some "model appointments" at greatly reduced rates. The session takes about 3 hours, though.
- Finally, see <http://www.timeout.com/london/shopping/londons-best-free-haircuts> for many other possibilities.

📌 Hostels in London

Hostels provide the cheapest temporary accommodation. Here are a few useful websites that have lists of hostels:

- Hostels worldwide: <https://www.hostelworld.com/>
- The Youth Hostels Association (YHA): <https://www.yha.org.uk>
- Generator Hostels: <https://www.staygenerator.com>
- London Hostel Association: <https://lhalondon.com/>

Some Hostels/Hotels near the Oberlin-in-London site:

- **Astor Museum Hostel**
(Russell Square tube)
27 Montague Street
Bloomsbury WC1B 5BH, London
(020) 7580 5360
This is a privately run hotel very near the FSU centre.
- **International Students' House**
(Great Portland Street tube)
229 Great Portland Street
London W1M 5HD
(020) 7631 8300
- **The Wesley**
(Euston tube)
81-103 Euston Street
London NW1 2EZ
(020) 7380 0001
www.thewesley.co.uk
(See 'Student Accommodation')

Youth Hostels Association (YHA)

The YHA has seven hostels in London with beds in shared rooms. Maximum stay is two weeks and prices are around £30 per night, with a supplement if you do not have YHA membership. YHA hostels are also friendly, good value places to stay when travelling around Britain.

See <http://www.yha.org.uk/> www.yha.org.uk.

The YHA hostel nearest the FSU centre is:

St. Pancras YH
(King's Cross Tube)
179-81 Euston Road

NW1 2QS

0845 371 9344

Other central London YHA hostel locations include Oxford Street; St Paul's (City); Holland Park; Earls Court.

Hotels in London

Most of these hotels have websites. Websites that provide reviews such as Tripadvisor (www.tripadvisor.com) may be worth checking. Also consult *Let's Go London*, and *The Rough Guide to London*.

Hotel	Location and Description
Arosfa Hotel (Euston Square Tube)	83 Gower Street WC1 (020) 7636 2115 <i>A simple budget hotel near the FSU centre.</i>
Arran House Hotel (Euston Square Tube)	77-79 Gower Street WC1 (020) 7636 2186 <i>Single and double rooms. Breakfast included.</i>
Celtic Hotel (Holborn or Russell Square Tube)	62 Guilford Street WC1 (0)20 7837 6737
Citadines Apart'Hotel (Holborn Tube)	94-99 High Holborn WC1V 6LF (020) 7395 8800, fax (020) 7395 8799 Other London locations too. <i>Studios and apartments with well-equipped efficiency kitchens. This is a French chain, highly recommended for clean, efficient accommodation, with living and dining space so you can easily prepare meals and save considerably on dining-out expenses. See: www.citadines.com/</i>
George Hotel (Russell Square Tube)	60 Cartwright Gardens WC1H (020) 7387 8777
Harlingford Hotel (Russell Square Tube)	61-63 Cartwright Gardens WC1H (020) 7387 1551
Morgan Hotel (Tottenham Court Road Tube)	24 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QI (020) 7183 0135 <i>A stone's throw from the FSU centre.</i>

Hotel	Location and Description
Ridgemount Hotel (Euston Square Tube)	65-67 Gower St, Bloomsbury WC1 (020) 7636 1141
Ruskin Hotel (Russell Square Tube)	23-24 Montague St WC1B 5BH (020) 7636 7388
Tavistock (Russell Square Tube)	Tavistock Square WC1H (020) 7636 8383
Thanet Hotel (Russell Square Tube)	8 Bedford Place, WC1 (020) 7563 327440
Vandon House Hotel (St. James Park Tube)	1 Vandon Street SW1H OAH (020) 7799 6780 <i>This hotel is a few minutes walk from Victoria Rail Station (where Gatwick Express arrives).</i>

For more information on hostels, hotels and accommodations, and booking services, see:

- London Tourist www.londontourist.org/
- Visit London www.visitlondon.com
- Londontown.com www.londontown.com/

Places of worship in London

The FSU team can supply a more comprehensive list of places of worship in the Oberlin office, and/or help you find what you are looking for that may not be represented here.

Buddhist

- Buddhapadipa Temple
14 Calonne Road, London SW19
Tube: Wimbledon

Christian

- The American Church in London (interdenominational)
79a Tottenham Court Road, London W1P
Tube: Goodge Street
- Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church
235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2
Tube: Tottenham Court Road

- Brompton Oratory (Roman Catholic)
Brompton Road, London SW7
Tube: South Kensington, Knightsbridge
- Westminster Cathedral (Roman Catholic)
Victoria Street, London SW1
Tube: Victoria
- All Souls, Langham Place (Evangelical)
2 All Souls Place, London W1
Tube: Oxford Circus
- Holy Trinity, Brompton (Church of England/Episcopal)
Brompton Road, London SW7
Tube: South Kensington
- St. Bride (Church of England/Episcopal)
Fleet Street, London EC4
Tube: Blackfriars, St. Pauls, Chancery Lane
- Chelsea Methodist Church and Pastoral Centre
155a Kings Road, London SW3
Tube: Sloane Square
- Friends House (Quaker)
173 Euston Road, London NW1
Tube: Euston, Euston Square

Islamic

- London Central Mosque
146 Park Road, London NW8
Tube: Baker Street

Jewish

- Union of Jewish Students
- The Liberal Jewish Synagogue (similar to American 'Reform')
28 St. John's Wood Road, London NW8
Tube: St. John's Wood
- West London Synagogue (Reform – closest to American 'Conservative')
33 Seymour Place, London W1
Tube: Marble Arch
- Western Marble Arch Synagogue (United Synagogue)
1 Wallenberg Place, London W1
Tube: Marble Arch

