

United Kingdom and Ireland Study Abroad Manual

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This manual is meant to supplement any information you receive from your program provider or host institution. If any of the information provided in these notes conflicts with information you have received from your provider or host institution contact Cory Petersen (cory-petersen@uiowa.edu, or 319-335-0353) as soon as possible.

Health

For general information about health and Safety see our **Health and Safety Abroad** website here: <http://international.uiowa.edu/study-abroad/prepare/health>

Before you leave

Before you leave the US, contact your doctor, counselor, dentist, and any other healthcare professional to get a general check-up. This will help prevent any occurrences of current medical issues while you're abroad.

Health Insurance

University of Iowa students who study abroad are enrolled in an international health insurance plan through **Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI)**. As of April 2018 the cost of this insurance is \$1.31 a day for the duration of the program.

This is charged to directly to your U-Bill about three weeks prior to the start of your program.

You will receive more information about this plan about three weeks prior to departure.

For more information about CISI visit <http://international.uiowa.edu/study-abroad/prepare/health/insurance>

You may also receive additional insurance coverage through your program provider if you are studying abroad through a provider such as IES Abroad, CIEE, USAC, etc. This may result in

you being enrolled in two international health insurance policies. You can find more information about this under the **Double Coverage** heading of our website here: <https://international.uiowa.edu/study-abroad/prepare/health/insurance>

Your current health insurance may also cover you while you're abroad. Contact your health insurance provider for more information on how your coverage might work abroad.

Continuation of Care Benefit

Continuation of care for ongoing medical conditions while abroad can be arranged before you travel.

The Iowa Regents CISI insurance plan covers all students studying abroad under the auspices of the University of Iowa. CISI can help connect you with appropriate medical care providers abroad in advance of your departure.

If you would like to receive treatment for a current medical condition when you're abroad and would like to pursue a continuation of care plan contact safety-abroad@uiowa.edu to request assistance.

Disability Accommodations Request

The University of Iowa is committed to working with students to provide reasonable accommodations for disabilities while abroad. If you would like to request disability accommodations while abroad, contact safety-abroad@uiowa.edu for more information.

Food and Dietary Restrictions

In terms of ingredients and preparations, food in Ireland and the U.K. is similar to food in the U.S. If you have dietary restrictions, you will need to be at least a vigilant about what you eat abroad as you are in the U.S.

Discuss your diet with your doctor to make a plan about how to ensure you are adhering to your required diet while you're abroad, and

contact us at safety-abroad@uiowa.edu if you require any special accommodations.

Prescription Medications

If you take prescription medications and plan to take them with you when you go abroad, it is important that you ensure that you have enough to last you throughout the time you'll be there. If this requires an alteration of the usual amounts you get when you fill your prescription, contact your doctor as soon as possible to make special arrangements to ensure you have enough medication to last you throughout your time abroad.

Prescription medication should only be carried in their original packaging. You should also bring the prescription and a note from your doctor indicating that the medication is meant for you, and briefly describing the condition the medication is meant to treat.

Prescription drug availability abroad

There are two issues to be aware of here: *legality and availability.*

- **Legality** is about whether or not a drug is considered legal, illegal, or a controlled substance in the host country. Some drugs that are common in the U.S. are considered illegal in other countries, and possession of those drugs can lead to fines, jail time, etc.
- **Availability** is about whether or not you can actually buy the drug while you are abroad. Just because a substance is legal does not mean you will be able to easily find it in local pharmacies while you are overseas.

At this time, we are not aware of a good resource to find out about drug legality and availability other than by contacting your host country's embassy here in the United States. But actually, it is quite common that embassies

do not return travelers' phone calls, which we understand can be quite frustrating.

Bottom line: **talk to your physician for advice.**

Ask your physician for information about whether or not any prescription medications you take in the U.S. are legal and/or available abroad. If they are not, you should discuss alternative medications or treatment options with them. If you need assistance making a plan for alternative options abroad, contact safety-abroad@uiowa.edu.

This is particularly true for medications used to treat mental or emotional disorders, as well as ADHD and similar conditions. If you take medications for these or similar conditions, contact your doctor or safety-abroad@uiowa.edu to discuss your options.

If you do take medications abroad, have your physician write a note for you on official letterhead stating that the medications are for your personal use only and that you do not intend to share the substance with others. ***You may need to show this doctor's note if you are questioned at airport customs about why you have a large quantity of pharmaceuticals in your bags.***

Over the Counter Medications

Most over the counter medications available in the U.S. are available in the U.K./Ireland. However, if there is a specific over the counter medication that you prefer to take, it is a good idea to bring a supply (carried in the original packaging only) with you just in case it is not available while you're abroad.

Immunizations

Check with your **doctor or the International Travel Clinic at the Student Health and Wellness** (more info here: <http://studenthealth.uiowa.edu/services/international-travel>) for information about recommended vaccinations and other health concerns specific to travel in the U.K./Ireland or anywhere else you plan to travel.

If you're planning to travel to other countries while you're studying abroad, those countries may present specific health concerns that are less of an issue in the U.K./Ireland. If you plan to travel to other countries discuss these plans with a doctor prior to departure just in case!

If you do not currently plan to travel outside of the U.K./Ireland while you're studying abroad, but decide to do so while you're already abroad, meet with a doctor in your host country to discuss health recommendations.

Illegal Drugs

The U.K. and Ireland (and other countries in Europe and around the region) have extremely strict laws related to the sale, purchase, possession, and consumption of illegal drugs. Violation of these laws typically involves heavy fines and significant jail sentences. It is not uncommon for tourists and students visiting many of the places you'll be visiting to be offered illegal drugs.

For both legal and health reasons, we advise you, in the strongest possible terms, NOT to sell, produce, purchase, possess, or consume illegal drugs of any kind under any circumstances while you are abroad.

Safety

General Tips

Just a few notes on this in addition to the information covered through the online predeparture orientation:

- For a general advice and health and safety issues abroad, refer to the **health, safety, & security abroad** section of our website here: <https://international.uiowa.edu/study-abroad/health>

- Due to a variety of global issues, over the last few years the U.K. and Ireland have experienced an increased threat of terrorism. While the specific threat to your personal safety and security is low, it is wise to keep an eye on the local news, and stay in touch with the international office at your host school as well as the Study Abroad office at the University of Iowa for updates on any security concerns. If any issues do develop, **it is extremely important for you to take them seriously and take the advice of the international office or your program provider.**

In general, the crime/safety issues you are most likely to encounter are petty theft and similar issues common to tourists abroad. Don't leave your valuables out in public, avoid carrying large amounts of cash, and stay aware of your surroundings, **never travel alone- always travel in a group.**

- In general, the best way to stay safe is to practice **situational awareness**. Because this is a new place, with new cultural cues, it will be more difficult for you to identify dangerous/generally shady people/places/situations. In your home country, it's much easier to know when a situation is unsafe because you've had a lifetime to learn how to identify a dangerous situation. However, when you're abroad it's much easier to get into dangerous situation and not know it until it's too late.

Because of this, it's extremely important to keep an eye on your surroundings, as well as keeping an eye on your friends. This especially the case if you're drinking... if you're intoxicated, it's always much more difficult to be aware of your surroundings. Please keep this in mind!

- Avoid using an Iphone/Ipod/MP3 player with ear buds/headphones while you're walking around abroad. This will severely limit your ability to pay attention to your surroundings, and can make you an easy target for crime.

- Do not share your travel itinerary, address, specific location, or international travel plans on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or any other social media. Since these resources are publically searchable, it is fairly easy for criminals to search for and target individuals who post this information online. It is fine for you to share this information with friends and family, but it is best NOT to share this information in any sort of public forum.

- If you use **Uber, AirBnb, or similar services** while you're abroad, it is important that you do as much research as possible on the individuals you are staying with or riding with. Thoroughly read and pay attention to the reviews for the individuals you are working with, travel in groups, etc.

- Remember that they drive on the **left side of the road** in the U.K. and Ireland, and traffic accidents are common among tourists who are used to looking the other way when crossing the street. Just to be safe, ALWAYS look both ways before you cross the street.

- Finally, keep emergency contact names and numbers for local emergency responders, the international office at your host school, your accommodations, friends, the study abroad office at the University of Iowa, and your family on hand at all times. If you run into any problems, this information can be extremely valuable!

Terrorism in the U.K./Ireland

There is no indication that terrorist organization poses an ongoing threat to any part of the U.K./Ireland associated with any active study abroad programs. However, the safety of our students is our primary concern, and we will continue to monitor any potential threats and respond accordingly.

For more information about terrorism and safety abroad, take a look at our Health and Safety page

here: <http://international.uiowa.edu/study-abroad/prepare/health>

Safety and Gender

Take a look at the following links for information about safety and gender.

- UI Study Abroad's **Gender Issues** page: <https://international.uiowa.edu/study-abroad/first-steps/identity/gender>
- **Journeywoman**- advice on clothing and other tips for international female travelers: <http://www.journeywoman.com/>

Identity Issues

Take a look at the **Diversity and Identity Abroad** section of our website for information about a wide variety of identity issues related to study abroad, including Race and Ethnicity, LGBT, Disabilities, first-generation, and non-traditional students, and feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns: <http://international.uiowa.edu/study-abroad/first-steps/identity>

More information

If you'd like to speak to someone in our office more specifically about gender or identity concerns, please contact Cory Petersen at cory-petersen@uiowa.edu or 319-335-0353.

Emergency Response Plans

Your local staff, and the Study Abroad office at the University of Iowa have specific safety plans in place to respond to emergencies. If an emergency occurs it is extremely important that you stay in contact with your local staff and the Study Abroad office at the University of Iowa for updates.

It is essential that you check your University of Iowa email account frequently while you're abroad. All communication from the University of Iowa will be sent to this account, and we will

use this to get in touch with you in case of an emergency.

Staying in Contact

While you're abroad, it is essential that you check your University of Iowa email account frequently- at least several times a week. The University of Iowa will direct all communication to you through your UI email account. This will be especially important in case of emergency.

If there is an emergency of any kind while you're abroad, the University of Iowa will be in contact with you through your University of Iowa email account to 1) check in on your status and ensure that you are safe, 2) provide follow up information to you about getting help and staying safe.

It is essential that you check your University of Iowa email address, and respond to any messages you receive from the Study Abroad office while you're abroad.

Travel Safety

If you plan to travel outside of your host country during your study abroad program it is important that you 1) provide a travel itinerary to Cory Petersen at cory-petersen@uiowa.edu, and 2) (for US citizens) that you register your travel itinerary with the US Department of State's **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)**: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/step.html>. Registering your travel plans with the US Department of State allows them to contact you in the case of an emergency, and provide health and safety/evacuation support.

Registering with the US DOS also allows them to provide aid if your passport is lost or stolen while you travel.

Ensure that you do this each time you leave your host country so that you can stay aware of health and safety concerns that might be an issue, and so that the US State Department can

be in contact with you in the event of a security concern or event.

If you are NOT a US citizen, you may contact your home country embassy for information about any similar programs that might be available to you from your country of citizenship.

Identity Theft/Data Protection

Identity and data theft is not uncommon among students travelling abroad. To help prevent this, it is a good idea to ensure that your passwords and data are as safe as possible.

Take a look at the following article for advice on to help keep your personal information, bank accounts, credit cards, data, etc as safe as possible: <https://its.uiowa.edu/security>

Conduct while abroad

- First, remember that you are a representative of not just yourself, but of the University of Iowa, Iowa City, and your home country in general. Of course the behavior of one individual doesn't represent everyone from that place, but your behavior will strongly influence the way that people you meet perceive other people from your home country. **All safety issues aside, please act accordingly.**

- It is important to note that the **University of Iowa Code of Student Life** applies while you are abroad in the same way it does while you are on campus, and appropriate conduct is all the more critical given the international and cross-cultural context. All students are expected to adhere to the University of Iowa Code of Student life (see <https://dos.uiowa.edu/policies/code-of-student-life-17-18/> for more information), as well as policies and regulations established by the local and U.S. program staff.

- Finally, keep in mind that while you are abroad, you are subject to the laws of your host country. **If you violate laws in abroad, the United States (or your home country), the**

University of Iowa, and the Study Abroad office WILL NOT have any power to change the legal implications of your behavior.

Billing and Financial Aid

Study abroad program fees are charged to the U-Bill, following the University of Iowa billing calendar. Payment options will be explained on the bill itself (i.e. due date, Billing Office contact information, etc).

As with any other academic session, financial aid (grants, scholarships, and loans) will be disbursed within about a week of the start of your program, and will apply to your U-Bill first, with any remaining funds being refunded back to you.

The Course Fees, Study Abroad Administrative Fees, and the CISI health insurance fees related to your program vary based on program, and can be found under the **Costs** heading of the **Application** section on each program's website.

If you receive any sort of financial aid (scholarships, grants, or loans) it is important that you set up **direct deposit** with the University of Iowa. Having this set up allows the University of Iowa to deposit any aid that is left over after paying your U-Bill directly into your bank account.

If you do not have direct depositing set up the University of Iowa will send your refund to you via check, and this can take up to several weeks to be processed and sent to you, meaning that you may not have access to your financial aid until several weeks after your program begins.

You can set up **direct deposit** on MyUI using the instructions provided on the Billing Office's webpage: <https://ubill.fo.uiowa.edu/financial-aid-refunds-direct-deposit>

Academics

- Classes (usually called **modules** or **courses** rather than 'classes'... although not always!) in the U.K. and Ireland typically meet less often, and require you to be more independent than classes in the U.S.

A typical class involves about two hours of class time each week, with the rest of the time meant to be spent working independently.

Classes are usually lecture-based, and focus less on in-class discussion. You are encouraged to meet with your instructor during their office hours- this is a great time to talk through your ideas and get questions answered.

You will usually be given a long list of course-related books, and you're expected to develop your own plan of study and read the books most related to your interest.

- You can expect **less homework**, and more **heavily-weighted exams**. Many classes will only have one paper due during the semester, worth about 20% of the grade, with the remaining 80% of the grade based on one, large cumulative test given during the exam period at the end of the semester.

- You will be earning academic credit/semester hours for your program, and your courses will satisfy your degree requirements based on the approvals you received on your **Credit Approval Form (CAF)**. However, in most cases **you will not be receiving U.S. letter grades for the courses you'll be taking**.

You will earn a grade in the British/Irish systems, but those grades will not appear on your UI transcript, and will not affect your GPA.

However, your grades are equally as important as they are in the U.S.! You still need to pass your classes in order to receive credit, and you'll need to produce transcript from your host

institution if you plan to apply for scholarship/grants in the future, or attend graduate school.

- The exception to this the **Iowa Regents' Semester in Wales**. In this case your grades will be changed from U.K./Ireland marks to U.S. letter grades when you return to the U.S., which will then apply to your GPA.

Course Registration Abroad

In most cases, you will not be able to register for classes until you arrive on campus at your host university. You will tell your host university which courses you would like to take as part of your application, but you will not officially register until you arrive. While it is likely that you will be able to take most of the courses that you'd like to take when you're there, it's very possible that your chosen courses will not be available.

Because of this, it is important to have several alternative courses in mind, and even get many of them reviewed for your major, minor, certificate, or general education requirements, to ensure that you are able to complete all of your requirements while you are abroad.

If there is a specific course that you need to take while you're abroad, it's possible that that course might be full or unavailable when you arrive, so you will need to contact your academic advisor at the University of Iowa before you finalize your visiting student application to set up an alternate so you have a back-up plan that allows you to move forward with your graduation plans even if you are unable to take your preferred courses abroad.

Fulfilling your University of Iowa degree requirements

By default, all of the classes you take while abroad (aside from any course involving cooking or the consumption of alcohol) will be applied to your UI degree requirements as **general elective** credits. You will not need approval for

these courses to apply as general elective credits.

If you would like to apply the credit to a **major, minor, or certificate requirement**, you will need to have the syllabi for those courses reviewed by your academic advisor in that department.

If you would like to apply the credit to a **general education requirement**, you will need to have the syllabi for those courses reviewed by the Study Abroad office (contact Cory Petersen for more information).

- In general, expect the academic experience there to be different than the U.S. system- the new learning environment, accents, jet lag, culture shock, and brand new academic system will all provide you with new experiences that will challenge and engage you in new ways. Some students find the academic experience challenging, while some student thrive in the new environment. This experience can be extremely challenging for some students, and it is not uncommon for students to earn lower grades abroad than they normally would on campus at the University of Iowa. Students should be prepared to spend significantly more time and effort in their classes abroad than they do at Iowa to earn similar grades. You will also need to work closely with your professors during their office hours, and collaborate with your peers abroad to ensure that you are prepared for your exams and succeed in your courses.

Housing/Accommodation

Housing/Accommodation Abroad

You will receive information about housing from your host institution. Unless you are studying through the Iowa at Oxford program, payment for housing will be made to you host university or program provider.

If you are studying through the Iowa at Oxford program, the course fee covers housing so you will not need to make an additional payment.

University of Iowa Housing Contract

If you need to be released from your UI housing contract contact your study abroad advisor to get a housing release letter. You can then submit that letter to the UI Housing office to be released from your contract for the time you'll be studying abroad.

Flights

When to Buy Plane Tickets

After you have heard back from your host school with your official acceptance, have secured your housing, and received your visa (if necessary), you can buy your plane tickets.

Ticket prices will start to increase significantly within about six weeks of your departure date, so it is strongly advisable that you to purchase your tickets as soon as you can. However, DO NOT purchase your plane tickets until all of the following conditions are met:

- 1- *You have received official acceptance from your host university*
- 2- *You have arranged for your housing*
- 3- *You have received your visa, or you have prepared all of the immigration requirements for your host country (see the **Visa** section below for more information).*

If you think you'll have problems paying for your ticket, please contact Cory Petersen (cory-petersen@uiowa.edu or 319-335-0353) as soon as possible so we can discuss your options.

Which Airport to Fly Into, and How to Get to Your Accommodations When You Arrive

Most host universities/program providers will provide you with information about which airport to fly into, and how to get from the airport to your accommodation. If you have not received this information within eight weeks of your departure date, contact Cory Petersen (cory-petersen@uiowa.edu or 319-335-0353).

An Essential Note For Students Studying in the U.K.

If you're studying in the U.K., ***DO NOT travel through Ireland on your way to the U.K. Travelling through Ireland on your way to the U.K., even if it's just a stopover in an airport in Ireland, can cause you significant problems when getting your visa to study in the U.K.***

If you travel through Ireland on your way to the U.K., you will not be issued a visa when you arrive in the U.K., and you will not be allowed to enter/study in the country.

How to Purchase Plane Tickets

You will have to make flight arrangements on your own- the Study Abroad office will not arrange a group flight. We recommend working with Meacham Travel Service, as they are a locally run, vetted, University-sanctioned travel service provider. They can generally provide good deals and excellent logistical support throughout the process.

You can contact Meacham Travel at 319-351-1360.

If you would prefer not to purchase your tickets through Meacham Travel, that's fine. You can purchase your tickets through a travel agent, directly through an airline, through a website like STA Travel, Kayak, etc, or through any other means.

Students that purchase their own tickets online generally have good luck with STA Travel, which

is a student-oriented travel service, but you should use the option that works best for you.

How to Avoid Unexpected Fees/Penalties

It is essential that you thoroughly read and understand the **terms and conditions** of any flight arrangements you make, as a wide variety of rules, restrictions, and additional fees can apply.

A travel agent can help explain these terms and conditions to you, and can help get you the most favorable terms. However, if you purchase your ticket without the help of a travel agent, you will need to review these conditions on your own.

If you need to rebook your ticket for any reason, you will be responsible for all costs associated with rebooking your ticket. **The University of Iowa will not be responsible to pay for any additional fees incurred as part of any flight changes.**

This applies to rebooking for **any reason**, including a **weather delay** that prevents arrival to the airport in time for your flight, a flight cancellation due to bad weather, a lost passport, a missing visa, denial of entry to the U.K./Ireland, illness, or any other reason.

It is important to be aware of all fees related to changes or cancellation of your tickets before you finalize your purchase. If you are not sure about what fees might apply should you change or cancel your ticket for any reason, it is essential that you not purchase your ticket until you have clarified what fees you may be responsible for by checking with your travel agent or airline.

Winter Weather Delays/Travel insurance

Flight delays and cancellations due to bad winter weather are common for flights to and from the U.K./Ireland, especially when you fly during November through February. Because of the increased chances of travel delays at this time of the year, and the high fees associated

with rebooking tickets (*often hundreds or even thousands of dollars*), we strongly encourage all students to purchase travel insurance that applies even in the case of inclement weather.

If you purchase your ticket through Meacham Travel Service (319-351-1360), they will be able to provide you with an insurance policy called **Travel Guard Gold**. This policy insures against changes to flight plans for covered reasons such as inclement weather and documented illness. The cost for this insurance policy is variable based on the policy holder's age, destination, etc. Meacham will be able to clarify the cost if you choose to pursue this option.

If you choose to book your ticket without working with Meacham Travel, we still advise that you contact Meacham to purchase the Travel Guard Gold insurance plan to ensure the costs associated with travel delays can be greatly reduced.

If you choose to purchase trip insurance elsewhere, that is also fine. If you purchase your own travel insurance, keep in mind that many travel insurance policies do not cover the costs of travel delays or cancellations due to inclement weather, so it is recommended that you confirm that your plan covers your costs if you travel is effected by weather. The University of Iowa will not be responsible for paying any fees associated with your airline ticketing.

Does CISI Insurance Apply to Travel Delays?

Not entirely. While the CISI policy you will be enrolled in has robust coverage for medical and security emergencies, it offers only limited insurance coverage for travel delays. Under the Iowa Regents CISI insurance policy, some hotel stays and other costs resulting from a travel delay may be reimbursable to you if you file a claim with CISI insurance. You will be enrolled in this policy for the duration of your UI program in the U.K./Ireland. You can find a claim form and details about the trip delay coverage of the mandatory Iowa Regents CISI insurance policy

here: <http://international.uiowa.edu/study-abroad/prepare/health/insurance>

The CISI policy alone is not sufficient for these purposes. Additional trip insurance is extremely helpful for your financial protection given the chances of travel delays due to inclement weather during that time of the year.

Additional Flight Recommendations

If you travel to any other country on the way to the U.K./Ireland, be aware that you are responsible for meeting immigration requirements that apply in any country that you travel through. If you are travelling directly to your host country and you don't have any stops along the way, this will not be a problem for you.

However, if your itinerary has a stop in another other country on your way to your destination, it is important that you contact UI Study Abroad to ensure you are aware of any additional visa requirements that might apply in the country(s) you will be stopping in.

Visas/Immigration

Each of you will need to complete visa/immigration requirements to study in your host country.

You will receive information about the visa process by email in the coming weeks.

Packing

General Packing Advice

- **Emergency contact card**- The emergency contact card (found here: https://international.uiowa.edu/sites/international.uiowa.edu/files/emergency_card_4.2_7.15.pdf (also available at the front desk of the Study Abroad office) is a place for you to easily access local emergency contact information for

your host country, as well as the contact information for the Study abroad office. It is important that you keep this information with you at all times so you are prepared to seek help in an emergency situation.

- After verifying that any **prescription drugs** that you take are **legal** in your host country with your doctor, ensure that you enough medicine to last the entire time abroad, along with a **note from your doctor** indicating what the prescriptions is for, and that it is specifically for your use and will not be shared.

- **Your academic advisor's name, email, and phone number.** You can use this to get in touch with your advisor if you have any academic issues along the way.

- **Bring your U.S. driver's license or other form of government-issued ID.** You will not be able to drive while you're abroad, but your U.S. driver's license is a good alternative form of identification to have on you just in case.

- A **travel guide** from Lonely Planet, Let's Go, etc.

- You **CISI health insurance information.** You will receive information about this about three weeks prior to your departure. Be sure to understand your CISI health insurance policy, and how to use it while you're abroad.

- **Copies of your passport and visa**- you won't need to carry your passport with you while you're in the U.K./Ireland, so go ahead and keep it in a safe place in your apartment/dorm when you arrive. However, it is important to carry a copy of your passport and visa with you, so be sure to make a photocopy and keep it with you at all times. This can help with identification, and help speed up the process of replacing your passport if it gets lost or stolen.

- **Copies of your visa/immigration documents**- Ensure that you have all of the materials you

will need to get a visa when you arrive in your host country.

- **Voltage convertors**- Voltage in the U.K. and Ireland is different than it is in the U.S. Most laptops, camera chargers, cell phone charges, etc have a voltage convertor in the box-shaped gizmo on the power cord- something like this:



However, other appliances probably do NOT have this, so using them there will (at best) ruin them or (at worse) cause a fire.



For things like hair dryers, straighteners, beard trimmers, etc you'll need to bring a voltage convertor (found at any travel store, Target, Wal Mart, etc), or **just leave them at home and buy one when you arrive.**

- **Outlet adaptors**- These allow you to plug in your U.S. appliances into the outlets in the U.K. and Ireland. If you're planning to stay in the U.K./Ireland throughout the semester, you'll probably be fine sticking with one style of adaptor:



However, countries in Europe (and around the world) have different outlet designs, so most of our returnees recommend bringing a universal adaptor (or maybe more than one) so you're covered if you plan to travel. Something like this should do it:



- **Waterproof shoes/boots/rain boots**- It rains a lot in the U.K. and Ireland, so waterproof shoes/boot/good quality rain boots should be high on your list.

- **LAYERS!**- it is generally chilly (40 - 60 degrees for most of the semester) and rainy in both the U.K. and Ireland, so you will want to bring a lot of warm, layer-able clothes! Sweaters, scarves, warmer pants, etc will be essential.

- **Address for your accommodations and arrival instructions**- Bring a copy of your arrival instructions from your host university, and the street address for your accommodations. You'll want to know exactly where you're going when you arrive so you can get there easily on your own, or tell a taxi driver exactly where to drive. Remember, you'll be tired and jet lagged when you arrive and telling a taxi driver that you live "at the University of Strathclyde" isn't going to get you to your dorm!

- **24/7 contact information for the International Office at your host school.**

Having information about who you can contact anytime of the day or night at your host school will be helpful if you run into any problems with accommodation, transportation, etc when you arrive.

- Finally, it's easy to find these, and pretty much any other item you'll need while you're studying in the U.K./Ireland, **so if you forget something don't worry!** You can probably get it there. This goes for toiletries, clothes, etc... if you need it, you can probably get it there pretty easily.

- **Clothing-** In general, students in Ireland and the U.K. wear slightly more formal clothing than we do in the U.S. Avoid wearing sweat pants, leggings, yoga pants, shorts, Iowa sweaters, etc.

- **Unpacking tips-** Just a couple of tips on things you WON'T need while you're in the U.K./Ireland.

- **Unpack that wallet/purse.** If you don't need it while you're abroad (library card, CVS card, car keys, etc), don't bring it! The less you bring, the more stuff you can bring back home.

- In general, **pack fewer clothes!** It's easy to find cheap clothes in the U.K. and Ireland, and they tend to be a little more locally fashionable. Save the bag space for stuff you want to bring back home with you!

- **It is culturally inappropriate to wear sweat pants/yoga pants to class.** You can wear them in your accommodation, but please avoid wearing them to class.

Packing List

The following list of important items we suggest everyone travels abroad with. Each student will need to adjust the list based on his or her needs and preferences. Of course, you'll need clothes, too! :)

Carry-on Items (take these on the plane with you)

- Emergency contact card (found here: http://international.uiowa.edu/files/ip.uiowa.edu/files/emergency_card_4.27.15.pdf)
- Phone numbers, fax numbers and email addresses of local contact in at your host institution, and the Study Abroad office at the University of Iowa.
- Arrival instructions, and the exact street address of your accommodations
- Copies of the arrival/airport pick-up information you've received from your host institution or provider, if any
- Money belt with passport, cash
- Credit/debit cards
- CISI insurance information
- Prescription medications with note from your doctor, on their letter head, indicating what the medication is for and that it is specifically for you to treat your medical condition
- 2+ copies of passport and visa/immigration documents
- All documents required to complete visa/immigration requirements
- 1 copy of CISI insurance information (Including information regarding reimbursement of expenses abroad)
- 1 - 2 copies of your round-trip flight itinerary
- Contact numbers for all bank cards (In case of loss or theft, leave a copy of all cards at home)
- Valuables you do not want to lose (anything that is too valuable to lose is better left at home)
- 1 full change of clothes
- Sweater/Light jacket/Socks (the long plane rides can be chilly)
- Chewing gum
- Motion sickness aids: bands/medications
- Electronics- laptop, phones, tablets, etc
- Electronics chargers

- Earplugs/eye cover/small pillow etc. for sleeping
- A copy of your **Credit Approval Form (CAF)**. **If you don't have a copy contact Cory Petersen (cory-petersen@uiowa.edu or 319-335-0353) to request a copy.**

Toiletries and Health Items (*you can find many of these items in the U.K./Ireland, too, so you probably only need a small supply to get you by for a few days upon arrival*)

- Full supply of all prescriptions for the duration of the program, or a plan to get refills while you're abroad (**consult with safety-abroad@uiowa.edu for more information**)
- Toothbrush/Toothpaste/Floss (bring with you as they can be expensive in the U.K./Ireland)
- Condoms/preferred safe sex/birth control method
- Contact lens solution
- Anti-motion sickness armbands (Cory anecdotally swears by these- something like this: <http://www.sea-band.com>), patches, or medication
- Pain reliever
- Heartburn medication
- Anti-diarrheal medication
- Laxative medications
- Nail clippers
- Tweezers
- Razors
- Make-up
- Hairbrush/other hair needs
- Small first-aid kit
- Chap stick/lip balm

Personal Items

- Small bag for short trips
- Raincoat
- 1 towel
- Watch or small travel alarm clock
- Water bottle
- Sunglasses

- Flashlight
- Zip-lock or plastic bags (For organizing and storing, keeps contents dry)
- Earplugs
- Small notebook
- Thin cable lock/padlock or combination lock
- Small sewing kit
- Swiss army knife (Cannot be carried on planes, so be sure to pack in your checked bag!)

Electronics

- Outlet adapter
- Camera
- USB/external hard drive/other memory device
- Laptop/tablet
- Phone/MP3 player with ear buds/headphones

Phones/Communication

You generally have three options if you'd like to have a cell phone/smart phone while you're in the U.K. or Ireland.

1. **Use your current phone**, and purchase a SIM card in the U.K./Ireland that will allow you to access the network there. Check with your service provider to ask if your current phone is unlocked, and/or if it can be used abroad with another country's SIM card. If so, you will be able to purchase a SIM card and calling/texting/data plan abroad and use your U.S. phone as you would here.
2. **Purchase a cheap phone and calling plan abroad.** This is a good option if you don't want a smart phone or data plan, or if you'd like to purchase a cheaper plan and only use your smart phone over a WiFi connection. This is generally the cheapest option.

3. **Use your current phone and calling/text/data plan abroad.** Some U.S. service providers provide international calling plans, and in some cases this might be a good option for you. However, this is usually the most expensive option. The coverage is often limited and the fees related to going over the call/text/data limits may end up costing you several hundred dollars. Before committing to an international plan, it is important that you are aware of the requirements! Check with your provider for more information on pricing.

- Remember that if you have a smart phone/iPod/tablet/laptop/etc you can use services like Skype, What's App, Viber, Weibo etc through WiFi, so staying in touch with home can still be cheap and easy.

- **A couple of notes about using smart phone apps.** Smart phone apps can be extremely helpful when travelling abroad for making travel plans, purchasing tickets, avoiding getting lost, store personal information, etc. However, keep in mind that apps can often be easily hacked, or may be run by individuals who exploit the information users share on the app.

If you use apps for these purposes be aware that it is possible that this information could be acquired by hackers or criminals who could steal your personal information, or learn about your travel plans and make you a target you for crime. Use caution when sharing this type of information. **Be sure that the apps you are using are secure and trustworthy and be cautious about the information you share with them to create an account or use the service.**

- Relying on apps to navigate while you travel is helpful, but relying too heavily on these apps can make it difficult for you to have a clear knowledge and awareness of your surroundings. If you use apps for this purpose, it is wise to also make an effort to familiarize

yourself with your surroundings so you can navigate your way around without your phone in case your battery dies or you lose your phone.

- Finally, contact your provider to check into suspending your current phone plan. Since you won't be using your U.S. talk/text/data while you're abroad, if you can suspend or cancel your plan until you return you can save some money on the monthly charges.

Money Abroad

Here are a few tips for dealing with money in the U.K. and Ireland:

- You can use your U.S. credit cards and debit cards relatively easily in most of Europe, HOWEVER, it is **ESSENTIAL** that you contact your bank and credit card company to let them know that you'll be using your cards abroad. If you don't contact your bank to inform them that you're planning to use your cards abroad, they will assume your cards have been stolen and will lock access to your account. This means that you would not be able to use the card to access money or make purchases of any kind until you contact the bank to resolve the issue.

- Do this whenever you leave your host city/country to inform them of which locations you'll be travelling to.

- While you can use your cards abroad, some places may not accept them, so using **cash is preferable**, especially for smaller purchases, taxis, buses, etc.

- The **chip and pin** system (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EMV>) is much more common the U.K. and Ireland, and around the rest of Europe, than it is in the U.S. If your current debit/credit cards do not contain these security chips, contact your bank to ask if you

can request them. This will make it much easier to use your credit/debit cards abroad.

- **It is best to arrive in your host country with some cash in the local currency. You will NOT be able to use U.S. dollars in your host country.**

Check with your bank to get about \$200 - \$300 in pounds (for the U.K.) or euros (for Ireland) before you depart. If you can't get these before you depart, you can exchange money (**although at an unfavorable exchange rate**) at the airport.

- If you withdraw cash from an ATM, the current exchange rate will be used to withdraw the U.S. dollar equivalent of the pounds/euros from your U.S. account. So, if you were to withdraw 20 British pounds from an ATM in London today, the ATM would withdraw about \$28.00 from your U.S. account. **When you withdraw money from an ATM in the U.K./Ireland, it will take money out of your U.S. account, and give it to you in the local currency, NOT U.S. dollars.**

- Many banks in the U.S. charge **service fees** for international transactions, so check with your bank to find out how much you will be charged per transaction for any international charges. We recommend withdrawing larger amounts from ATMs less frequently to help reduce the cost of these international service fees.

- Always stay aware of the current **exchange rate**. While that 12 pound meal of a pint, chips, and a couple of scotch eggs might not seem like a lot, remember that the cost in U.S. dollars will be somewhere around \$18. Remember that the exchange rate can change drastically from day to day, so keep an eye on the rates!

- If possible, give someone you trust (family members, partner, close friend, etc) access to your bank accounts so they can help you work out any financial issues you might have in the U.S. You may be able to do this simply by contacting your bank and signing a few forms, but you may need to set up **Power of Attorney** for your loved one. Here's some more information on

that: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_of_attorney. This can usually be set up through a lawyer, but it depends on your circumstances.

- Finally, there's the option of setting up a bank account in your host country. **For students going to the U.K.**, since you can easily access your U.S. bank accounts while you're there, setting up a bank account in the U.K. is usually not worth the trouble. If you are interested in setting up a bank account in the U.K. check with the international office at your host school, or with your program provider.

For students going to Ireland, you may need to set up a bank account there in order to get your visa. Work with the international office at your host school, or your program provider to get this taken care of.

Restaurant/Pub culture/Social Life

- In restaurants, **you will have to ask for your check when you're ready to pay**. The wait staff will not bring it to you unless you ask. If you wait for them to bring it to you, you'll be waiting for a long time...

- At pubs, there is typically no wait staff. You'll have to pick your own seat, buy your own table, and order, pick up your order, and pay at the bar.

- Wait staff are paid a minimum wage and do not rely on tips, so tipping is not required, or even expected. If you receive outstanding service, **tipping 10% is sufficient**.

- Speaking of going out/drinking, there is less of a 'drink to get drunk, and fast...' culture in the U.K. and Ireland than there is in the U.S. Drinking there is more of a social event, like having coffee with a friend, and drinking too much will be looked down upon. Visibly drunk

students in the U.K. are **almost exclusively 18 year olds, tourists, and American study abroad students...** If you plan to drink keep this in mind and take it slow until you get a feel for how the locals do things. We advise against ending up with a reputation as 'The Drunk American'.

- Finally, the best way to meet people- based on what we hear from the host institutions and past program participants in locations all over Ireland and the U.K. - is to **join groups and societies/clubs on campus!** Society/club culture is a much more significant part of the university experience there than it is in the US, and there is a club for pretty much everything you can imagine. Join one (or five)!

Culture Shock/Cultural Resources

The best first step to adjusting to your new surroundings will be to learn as much as you can before you depart- read, watch documentaries, explore Instagram, and carefully read through all of the predeparture materials you receive from your host institution.

Once you arrive, the best advice will be to stay relaxed, take care of yourself (and each other!), keep an open mind, and learn as much as you can.

For more advice on adjusting to the cultural differences you'll find in the U.K. and Ireland, take a look at the **Prepare for Departure** (<http://international.uiowa.edu/study-abroad/prepare>) and **Living Abroad** sections of our website (<http://international.uiowa.edu/study-abroad/living-abroad>).

General Cultural Resources

- **What is the difference between the British Isles, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Great Britain (and England, Scotland, Wales, the Crown, Crown Dependencies, the Commonwealth Realm, and British Overseas Territories)?** Watch

this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNu8XDBSn10>

- **Anglophobia** is a great to get to know more about British culture- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOzpgwSVhD9VLZrOvume4YA>

- The **British Council** is a fantastic resource for cultural information about the U.K.: <https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/living>

- Ireland and Irish culture doesn't seem to be represented as well on Google or YouTube, although if you do some searches for **Irish Culture** you will find some useful videos.

- For historical context in Ireland try **The Story of Ireland** and, for the U.K., **The Story of Britain**. They're long, but well worth your time. You can buy them online, or you can try searching for them on the BBC website, YouTube, Netflix, etc.

- For some general **social media and travel** links for the U.K. and Ireland, including details about the locations you'll be studying at, take a look at the following links:

Ireland

[Ireland's official tourism page on Instagram](#)

Cork

[University College Cork on Facebook](#)
[UCC's International Office on Facebook](#)
[University College Cork's YouTube Channel](#)
[University College Cork on Instagram](#)
[University College Cork on Twitter](#)

Dublin

[Ireland's official tourism page on Instagram](#)
[The James Joyce Center](#)
[Dublin Writers Museum](#)
[IES Dublin Center](#)
[The Gate Theatre](#)
[The Abbey Theatre](#)
[The Gaiety Theatre](#)
[The Samuel Beckett Theatre](#)
[Dublin Castle](#)
[National Museum of Archeology & History](#)
[National Gallery of Ireland](#)
[Dublin city web site and information gateway](#)
[The Irish Times on the web](#)
[Trinity College Dublin](#)

Irish History & Culture links

[CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts](#)
[Historical Walking Tours of Dublin](#)
[The 1916 Rebellion](#)
[Kilmainham Goal](#)
[Irish Culture & Customs](#)
[Irish Culture Guide](#)
[The Irish Language](#)
[The Irish Traditional Music Archive](#)

Travel sites

[Lonely Planet: Ireland](#)
[Rick Steves' Ireland](#)
[Discover Ireland](#)

United Kingdom

[U.K.'s official tourism page on Instagram](#)
[Scotland's official tourism page on Instagram](#)
[Wales's official tourism page on Instagram](#)

Lancaster

[Lancaster University's International Office Facebook page](#)
[Lancaster University's Facebook page](#)
[Lancaster University's YouTube channel](#)
[Lancaster University International Office's YouTube channel](#)
[Lancaster University on Instagram](#)
[Lancaster University on Twitter](#)

Strathclyde/Glasgow

[University of Strathclyde's Facebook page](#)
[University of Strathclyde's YouTube channel](#)
[University of Strathclyde on Twitter](#)

Edinburgh

[University of Edinburgh on Facebook](#)
[University of Edinburgh's International Student Support page on Facebook](#)
[University of Edinburgh's YouTube Channel](#)
[University of Edinburgh on Twitter](#)

Swansea

[Swansea University on Facebook](#)
[Swansea University's International Office on Facebook](#)
[Swansea University's YouTube Channel](#)
An [introduction](#) to Swansea from the International office at Swansea University
[Swansea University on Twitter](#)
[Swansea University on Instagram](#)
[Wales' official tourism page on Instagram](#)

London

[City Tour: London](#)
[Time Out London](#)
[The Royal Shakespeare Company](#)
[London Theatre Tickets](#)

Accents

For being a relatively small part of the world, people from the British Isles speak in a surprisingly diverse array of accents. Take a look at the following videos to get a sense for how the various accents you'll encounter sound (and don't be embarrassed if you want to use them for practice... 😊)

First, a quick tour of the U.K. and Ireland and their accents-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8mzWkuOxz8>

A little more about

Ireland- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ee_N3g4ORLk

This one makes Cory laugh- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FyyT2jmVPAk>

Craic

What is the **craic**? Where is the craic? Cory, what are you talking about? If you're going to Ireland, you'll want to know.

Enjoy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qixmPYM1D_k

Apps

First, for those of you taking a smart phone, iPod, tablet, etc here are some useful links for apps that will be handy while you're abroad:

<http://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/best-travel-apps/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2016/jan/02/10-best-travel-apps-free-paid-for>
<http://www.lifehack.org/articles/technology/18-must-have-travel-apps-for-traveling-abroad.html>

Things to do

And, here are some ideas for places to visit in the British Isles:

https://www.buzzfeed.com/chelseypippin/25-wanderlust-worthy-day-trips-from-london?utm_term=.iqq7yEL51#.veeoznd9Z

https://www.buzzfeed.com/ailbhemaalone/putting-the-great-in-great-britain?utm_term=.frlvJyOn8#.syR5aJbDW

https://www.buzzfeed.com/vickinotaro/dublin-before-you-die-18q9i?utm_term=.swJyWP502#.sbJ9P67Qn

https://www.buzzfeed.com/ailbhemaalone/bel-eire?utm_term=.tp0Yd5w0B#.arWJKz3W9