England, Warwick
2010 – 11 ACADEMIC YEAR PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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

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

This program handbook contains the following information:

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Contact Information

ON-SITE PROGRAM INFORMATION
Your primary contacts will be:

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Visiting & Exchange Programme Assistant  
visitingexchange@warwick.ac.uk

Helen Johnson  
Program Manager for Exchanges  
h.j.johnson@warwick.ac.uk

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University of Warwick  
Coventry CV4 8UW  
United Kingdom  
+44 (0)24 7652 3706  
+44 (0)24 7652 4337 fax  
www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/international/  
int.office@warwick.ac.uk

UW-MADISON INFORMATION
International Academic Programs (IAP)  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
250 Bascom Hall, 500 Lincoln Drive  
Madison, WI 53706  
Tel: 608-265-6329, Fax: 608-262-6998  
Web: www.studyabroad.wisc.edu

Jessa Boche  
IAP Study Abroad Advisor  
(608) 265 8977  
boche@bascom.wisc.edu

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION
In case of an emergency, call the main IAP number (608) 265-6329 between 7:45 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday; after-hours or on weekends call the IAP staff on call at (608) 516 9440.

EMBASSY REGISTRATION
All program participants who are U.S. citizens must register at the U.S. Embassy before departure as this will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap. You can register on-line at https://travelregistration.state.gov. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at your home country’s embassy or consulate.

Mailing Address  
United States Embassy  
24 Grosvenor Square  
London, W1A 1AE  
United Kingdom  
+44 (0)20 7499 9000  
http://www.usembassy.org.uk

Physical Address
Program Dates

2010-2011 ACADEMIC YEAR

Arrival Date: TBA in your acceptance packet from Warwick (Orientation lasts for four days. Most likely your arrival will be around September 28.)

Autumn Term
Monday 4th October 2010 - Saturday 11th December 2010

Spring Term
Monday 10th January 2011 - Saturday 19th March 2011

Summer Term
Wednesday 27th April 2011 - Saturday 2nd July 2011

Preparation Before Leaving

IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

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

Visa
For students with US passports, there are two types of visas to study in the UK: the “Tier 4 General Student Visa” and the “Student Visitor Visa.”

Students studying in the UK for six months or longer must apply for the Tier 4 General Student Visa. This visa allows you to work (part-time), intern, and/or volunteer in the UK. It also allows you to extend your stay if you would like to remain in the UK after your program ends. In order to apply for this visa, you will receive a “Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies” once you have firmly accepted your offer from the university. Apply for this visa as early as possible as it can sometimes take 2-3 months for processing.

Students studying in the UK for fewer than six months are not required to obtain the Tier 4 General Student Visa. Students staying in the UK for fewer than six months may apply for the Student Visitor Visa upon arrival at the airport.

IAP has developed a presentation that gives a general overview of the application process for UK student visas:
http://studyabroad.wisc.edu/programs/UK_Visa.html

More information about the student visa process can also be found at:
http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/
If you are a non-US passport holder, please contact your Study Abroad Advisor.

HANDLING MONEY ABROAD

The official currency of Britain is the British pound sterling (GBP), with 1 pound equaling 100 pence. As of 03/2010, the exchange rate was $1 USD to 0.66 pounds sterling. You should bring some money with you in cash for incidental purchases as well as for bus and train fares. You will need enough money to cover your first few weeks in England.

**Banks:** Banking services in the United Kingdom and Europe are organized rather differently from those in the United States. Here are some general tips to remember:

1) Checking accounts are called current accounts in England.

2) You can open a bank account once you have arrived at Warwick. During orientation in Coventry, the International Office will be able to provide you with the necessary letters which you will need to open an account.

3) You may be eligible to open a current account in which you can keep money and draw it out when needed using a cash card (i.e. ATM card) and make payments to other people using a cheque book. Most shops in the United Kingdom however will not accept a cheque without a cheque guarantee card, which international students may find difficult to obtain. So it is wise to ask at several banks before you decide where to open your account. Bringing a letter of reference from your banker at home may help.

4) Opening a bank account can be problematic and may take up to 2-3 weeks. You should ensure that you have money available to you during this period. Make sure to read the information on banking provided in the Warwick Welcome Guide for the most recent information.

5) All U.K. banks, even those in small towns and villages, will change foreign currency and travelers checks and provide a full range of banking services. Charges for travelers checks are slightly higher, but unlike regular dollar checks are immediately negotiable.

6) If you plan to work in England, it is strongly recommended that you set up a bank account so that your employer can directly deposit the cash into your account. Most international students are allowed to work up to 20 hours a week during term time and full time during the vacations. Detailed information on working in the United Kingdom is available in the Warwick Welcome Guide. You can also visit [www.unitemps.co.uk](http://www.unitemps.co.uk) if you wish to get further information about temping jobs.

Three of the major British banks have branches conveniently located at the Student Union on campus. They provide specialist services for students and all are able to handle overseas funds. The banks are: Barclays, HSBC, and National Westminster (also known as Nat West).

**Traveler’s checks:** You may wish to take some U.S. traveler’s checks with you. Traveler’s checks will not only tide you over until you can establish a bank account in Coventry, but can be used if you travel outside England. If you are using traveler’s checks, it is essential to keep a record of the check numbers (in a separate safe place away from the checks) in case they are lost or stolen. The checks will not be replaced unless you have a record of the numbers.
Be careful where you cash your checks; most banks and bureau de change will charge a commission. American Express will cash American Express travelers checks free of charge and usually have a better exchange rate. You will need your passport with you when cashing traveler’s checks.

**ATM/Debit cards:** Program participants have commented that the easiest and most convenient way for students to obtain money is to use their ATM card overseas. Participants have been able to draw money from their banks in the United States by using their ATM cards in the large number of ATM machines in England which connect with systems such as CIRRUS and PLUS. You should check with your bank/credit union if your ATM card will function properly in the United Kingdom, identify the maximum amount you can withdraw in a day or one week, and learn about any withdrawal fees you may incur. Also, consider taking an extra ATM card in case your card gets demagnetized, lost, or taken by the bank machine.

There is a fairly wide network of ATM machines throughout Europe—ask for a “cash point” or a “bank machine.” The great advantage of ATM cards is that they allow you to get funds in the local currency right away. In addition, the exchange rate you get is better than the exchange rate you would get if you went to a financial institution to exchange your U.S. dollars.

**Credit cards:** Most major U.S. credit cards can be used worldwide and are extremely valuable in a financial emergency. It is highly advisable to obtain a major credit card in your name (not a parent) before studying abroad. Master Card and Visa are the most widely accepted cards worldwide. Be sure to record your credit card number and emergency card numbers in a separate place in case your card is stolen or lost.

- Not all merchants accept credit cards, regardless of the name brand. Visa and Master Card are the most commonly accepted cards. Past participants have found it difficult using a Discover Card or American Express as they are not as widely accepted.
- Be aware that credit card companies do charge a fee for “cash advances” if you choose to take money out of an ATM using a credit card. Be sure you know what these fees are before you leave the U.S. as well as the maximum daily withdrawal.
- Before you leave, make sure to get confidential four-digit international identification numbers to use with your credit card while you are overseas.
- Typically, the amount charged to your credit card bill is based on the exchange rate on the day that your bank or credit card company processed the transaction.

**Travel and Arrival**

Participants on this program make their own flight arrangements to England. You will either fly into London Heathrow (LHR) or Birmingham International Airport (BHX) (this is the closest major airport to the University). The majority of students fly into Heathrow Airport in London as the International Office arranges a coach “pick up” from London Heathrow Airport Terminal 3 for participants. Details on the pick up process are available at: [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/international/applicants/orientation/coachinfo/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/international/applicants/orientation/coachinfo/)  

Note: The pick up service is only available if you fly into Heathrow on arrival day between 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and for those students who book this service in advance.

If you decide to arrive to campus early, you must arrange your own travel to the city of Coventry (not the town of Warwick, which is 8 miles south of campus). However you decide to travel, you
must arrive in time for orientation. The University of Warwick provides participants with general arrival directions online at [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/international/offerholders/travel/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/international/offerholders/travel/).

**The Academic Program**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK**

Founded in 1965, the University of Warwick has developed rapidly into one of Britain’s leading teaching and research institutions. It is consistently rated among the top ten universities in the United Kingdom for academic standards. Situated on the edge of the city of Coventry on a self-contained campus, the University of Warwick is centrally located in England and only 80 minutes from London by train. The university has over 15,500 students studying in 30 different academic departments organized within four Faculties: Arts, Medicine, Social Studies and Science. In addition to academic departments, the university also has 49 specialized research centres and institutes.

![University of Warwick](image_url)

University of Warwick [www.warwick.ac.uk](http://www.warwick.ac.uk)

University of Warwick International Office [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/international/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/international/)

**THE ENGLISH ACADEMIC SYSTEM**

There are some important differences between the educational systems in England and the U.S. which you will need to understand as you approach your year of study at the University of Warwick. University students at Warwick are usually enrolled for a 3 year degree programme with Honours – just a few degree programmes last 4 years. Students are admitted specifically to study in a particular major and they concentrate in that subject area throughout all three years. As a Wisconsin student at Warwick, you will be free to select modules (courses) from a variety of departments, just as you do here, whereas other students will only take classes in a specific area.

Many terms are used differently from the way we are used to using them. "Course," for instance, means primarily one's whole program of study (or major) rather than a single academic course. The term “module” is the British term for class. Our term "humanities" is replaced in the Warwick terminology by "Arts." The British use "staff" where we use "faculty" and their "faculty" includes students as well as teachers. They use the term "marks" rather than "grades."

The pattern of teaching at Warwick, as at most British universities, aims to encourage and promote a high level of independent and self-directed study. Students attend a combination of:

**a) Lectures** – Held in one of our many and varied lecture theatres around campus, with anywhere from 30 to 200 people. Though classes vary in size, an integral part of the teaching philosophy is small-group instruction and an emphasis on independent study. Most courses in the humanities and social sciences involve both lectures and seminar sessions. The size of the lecture class varies, but few exceed 50.

**b) Seminars** – Where perhaps a dozen students meet with a member of staff to discuss and review a paper prepared by one of the group. Seminars typically meet once or twice a week (or once every other week) and are taught by regular members of the Warwick...
teaching staff, though not necessarily by the lecturer. Some courses include lectures by several members of a given department. Other courses omit lectures and are conducted entirely as seminars.

c) Tutorials – Offer individual contact between a small group of students and an academic tutor.

As well as these 3 “formal” teaching sessions, students are also expected to learn to work for themselves, advised by their subject tutors. Participants will need to read selectively from extensive reading lists – with guidance from course tutors – and to weigh up for yourself and present the different material and arguments presented. Students in the Faculty of Science may also have practicals or laboratory classes as part of their course.

Warwick does not have Teaching Assistants in large classes, and participants will have fewer formal contact hours than at UW-Madison. Students should expect to spend a lot of time reading outside of class and preparing for discussion and assignments independently.

Like all Warwick students, you will be assigned a Personal Tutor (Academic Advisor) who is a member of academic staff in the department in which the student is based. A personal tutor helps supervise and approve student’s module selection, and is available throughout your time at Warwick for help and advice on any aspects of your studies.

Some courses require or recommend one or more field excursions. These are apt to occur in subjects such as History of Art, Classical Civilization, theater or drama, Shakespeare, early Britain, etc. Such classes often provide an opportunity to see Britain under the guidance of extremely knowledgeable instructors. Even when such trips are optional, it is always advisable to take advantage of them.

ORIENTATION

Once you have been officially accepted from the University of Warwick, you will be sent a copy of the International Office Welcome Guide, which is available online at http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/international/offerholders/prepare/welcomeguide/. This welcome guide contains comprehensive advice on preparing for life in the United Kingdom and gives advice on how best to travel to the Warwick campus once you arrive at one of the United Kingdom's international airports. The Warwick Academic Office will also send you a Welcome Pack detailing how to enroll, how to get to the University, when you should arrive, and include a copy of the latest Student Guide.

The International Office runs a 4 day orientation programme for International students, which typically takes place the week before the start of term. This orientation session provides a great opportunity for international students to meet new friends and settle down before term begins. In addition, final module (course) selection and registration takes place during orientation.

UW-Madison students are required to participate in this orientation session. For exchange students, the orientation fee is included in your program costs. For non-exchange students (i.e. Junior Year Abroad (JYA) participants), you will need to pay for the orientation session which is about £90. This fee includes accommodation in University residences on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights, all breakfasts, evening meals and some lunches. All of the information sessions, social events, and most of the trips are also included in the cost. You should pay this fee when you book your place, either online by credit or debit card or by sending
Warwick a cheque or banker's draft by post. Detailed orientation information is available online at http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/international/applicants/orientation/.

All participants need to apply online to inform Warwick that you will be participating in the orientation process. You should apply online as early as possible starting July 2008 from the above website.

**COURSES**

While at Warwick, you will be based in a specific department though you will be allowed to take courses from other departments. If you are participating on this program as one of the History or Philosophy exchange students, you must take at least two year-long courses in your home or sponsoring department at Warwick.

Visiting students can select modules from those listed in the “Warwick Module Handbook for Visiting Students” available online at: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/international/prospective/visiting-exchange/visiting/modbook/.

At Warwick, modules coded “100” are usually taken by first year students, “200” by second years and so on. Because most British degrees only take three years and tend to be fairly focused, a second year module at Warwick is equivalent to a Junior level module in the United States, etc.

**Equivalents and Course Equivalent Request Form (CERF):** Each course you take abroad must be assigned a UW-Madison “equivalent” course in order for your grades and credits to be recorded on your UW-Madison transcript. In order to establish UW-Madison course equivalents for your study abroad courses, you will submit a Course Equivalent Requests through your My Study Abroad account. Detailed information on the UW course equivalent process that you will use through your My Study Abroad account is available in the IAP Study Abroad Handbook.

**Please note that Warwick year-long courses are worth two UW Madison course equivalents. Make sure to indicate on your CERF form two course equivalents for each year-long course.**

**CREDIT**

**Conversions:** One year long course worth 30 CATS points is equivalent to 8 credits at UW-Madison. Hence, satisfactory completion of four year-long courses (120 CATS points) will convert to 32 credits at UW-Madison and three year-long courses (90 CATS points) will convert to 24 credits. UW-Madison participants may not take fewer than the equivalent of three year long courses (90 CATS points). For "double-weighted" courses (i.e.: 60 CATS points), you would earn 16 credits at UW-Madison.

Other departments, mainly in the sciences, offer 5-week or other special types of courses. The UW-Madison Graduate Student Liaison in Warwick, in cooperation with IAP, can assist you with the conversion of credit hours.

**Limits and Load:** A full module (course) load for undergraduate students is normally 120 CATS points per year, consisting of four 30 CATS modules per year. The majority of modules at Warwick are single-weighted 30 CATS modules, and run for the full academic year. Visiting students are not able to take less than three single-weighted modules. Some departments may offer 2nd or 3rd year specialist “double-weighted” modules worth 60 CATS, in which case a full...
course load would be one 60 CATS module and two 30 CATS modules. Students in the Faculty of Sciences may find that a full module load is made up of a larger number of modules, each carrying a lower number of CATS points such as 6 or 15 per module, some of which will only be taught in one term.

PASS/FAIL/DROP/AUDIT

Please refer to the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for academic policies.

GRADES AND GRADE CONVERSIONS

Warwick grades ("marks") are derived in three ways: "assessed," "examined," or, more usually, a combination. If a course is "assessed," your grades are earned by the completion of one or more essays. The essays tend to be longer than the papers we are accustomed to here (5000 words is typical), though the length will vary from one class to another.

Instructors may also assign "unassessed essays." These are essays which one must complete and submit as part of the fulfillment of the course requirements--and as a learning tool--but which will not necessarily be given a mark by the instructor. Even if a mark is given, it is not formally used as a part of the calculation of one's final grade. However, be aware that if your graded work is borderline, your unassessed work may be taken into consideration to determine which side of the line your grade will fall.

If a course is "examined," this means the final mark for the course rests entirely on the results of a single examination given during the third terms. Exams are typically three hours long.

In every case, the method of evaluation is determined and published ahead of time; inquire specifically about this in each course when selecting a program of study. In most cases, it is advisable not to select a program involving only examined or only assessed courses. (A degree requirement at the University of Warwick is that at least half of one's courses must be examined. A half and half kind of balance makes for the most manageable program of study, though Wisconsin students are not required to have exactly this equal division.)

All exams take place during Term 3, even for one-term courses taken during Term 1. If you are being marked by examination only, you are likely to be given three hours to write on three questions chosen from a list. If you are being marked 50 percent by exam, you may get the same list of questions but select two and write for one and a half to two hours. Examination dates and due dates for assessed essays are fixed by departments and cannot be changed. Late and overly long essays are not accepted. There is no system of "incompletes." Exams and assessed essays are marked by two members of the teaching staff and results are not announced until mid-summer. Thus, credits and grades are not received in Madison until late summer to early fall.

As you can see from the above comments on methods of evaluation, a student's work is not evaluated as regularly or as often as in our semester system. Most instructors nevertheless take a personal interest in each student and monitor attendance at lectures and participation in seminars. An absence may result in a note in your "pigeonhole" (mailbox) asking you to see the instructor. Pay close attention to assignments, both reading and writing, is no less important there than here.
You will be assigned to a personal tutor in your "base" academic department. It is important that you discuss with your tutor issues surrounding the British class, assignments, and grading models. It is also important to keep current with assigned work and to pursue your subjects on your own in the library. Independence and specialization are a part of the English educational tradition and can be one of the most fruitful aspects of study there. You are always free to ask for help from your instructors or your personal tutor. The Warwick staff will usually leave you alone to pursue your work unless you ask for help. They know that U.S. and other foreign students may need extra advice. They are accessible and expect you to seek them out when you feel the need.

Note: Most students do not remain on campus during the 4-week Christmas break and the 5-week Easter Break. In fact, many residence halls do not allow you to stay in your room over the breaks (if this happens in your residence hall, storage space will be provided for you to store your belongings). You are free to use this time for travel. You may have assessed (graded) essays due very near the beginning of Term 2 or Term 3 soon after you return from break, so careful planning of your time and work load is essential. All exams and essays will be completed well before the end of Term 3 and you will then be free to leave. Do not make travel plans until you are certain of the specific date you'll be finished.

**Grade Conversions:** Grades at Warwick are numerical and follow English traditions. Below is the standard conversion scale for courses at Warwick.

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<tr>
<th>WARWICK</th>
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<tr>
<td>63-100</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>0-29</td>
<td>F</td>
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**Living Abroad**

**HOUSING**

Past participants have lived in Warwick on-campus accommodations. Housing applications and accommodation information are available on-line at [http://www.warwick.ac.uk/accommodation](http://www.warwick.ac.uk/accommodation). The deadline for applying for on-campus accommodations is the end of July, but early on-line applications are recommended. When you receive your Warwick official acceptance letter, you will be sent a Warwick student number which you will need to use to complete the on-line application process.

Read about the types of accommodation carefully before you fill out your housing application, as some residence halls are more suitable for sociable people, while others are more suitable for academic types. Also, you have the choice whether to choose either 30-weeks leases (term-time occupancy only) or 39-weeks leases (term-time and Christmas and Easter vacations occupancy). It is important to choose accommodation carefully, thinking about when you will be travelling or if you will need your room during breaks.
Upon arrival, you may be given a temporary dormitory room for the orientation period or you may be given your permanent room assignment. After the orientation you will be assigned a room for the year and will have a "home" address. Please make certain that your parents or other contact persons know this address as well as the address and phone number of the International Office in case they need to reach you in an emergency.

At Warwick, you will be housed with British and other international students in university dormitories (known as either a hall or a flat). All accommodations provide single rooms and shared kitchen facilities. Most students purchase groceries and cook their meals in the kitchens. A 24-hour Tesco supermarket is located adjacent to campus in the Cannon Park Shopping Center, and there is also a smaller grocery store located in the center of campus next to the Student's Union, called Costcutters. There are also many cafes and restaurants on campus.

Participants will need to provide their own towels and wash cloths. You can either bring them from home or buy them at Tesco (a major grocery store next to campus) when you get to the University. Bed linen and blankets, which they call duvets, are furnished. Kitchens are not equipped with pots, pans, or dishes. Most students purchase these items at the Tesco or Wilkinsons (Wilkinson’s is the cheaper option), which are both located in the Cannon Park Shopping Centre, although if you have extra space in your luggage, you may want to bring a couple of kitchen items from home. The University Chaplaincy, located in the heart of campus, also sells used pots and pans for an extremely reasonable price at the beginning of the year. Look for signs when you arrive on campus.

STUDENT LIFE

The University of Warwick is located at a fair distance from the city center. Because of this, much of student life centers on the campus, and at the Warwick Student Union in particular. The Union is just a 5 minute walk from student housing (depending on student housing, the Union is a 3-20 minute walk) and is known for its large number of student activities. The Union provides social and cultural activities for all tastes. A wide variety of music is available and there are more than 200 student clubs to suit virtually every interest. A full range of intramural and recreational sports facilities is also available on campus. During the first week of Term 1, "freshers" and other new students are invited to join the various societies.

You are highly encouraged to join student societies, as these groups are a great way to meet other students. If you are interested in playing sports, remember to sign up during the first week of the term.

The Arts Centre is an important focus of cultural life in the area, and is the largest center for the performing arts outside of London. It offers a broad spectrum of events. It is a combination of Madison's Memorial Union Theater, Civic Center, and Majestic Theater. The Music Centre offers practice rooms, an ensemble room, early music instruments, and other facilities for students to use.
Religious activities center around the University Chaplaincy, a building used by a variety of religious groups for services, fellowship, bible study and prayer. Jewish students make regular use of kosher cooking and eating facilities in the building. Muslim services are also available.

HEALTH

The University of Warwick Health Centre is open to students and includes physicians and staff to help with medical and paramedical problems. Participants have the opportunity to register with a Doctor during International Orientation, which is highly recommended. The Health Centre also includes dental and psychological counseling services, and a fee-for-service dental clinic.

Insurance: While in the United Kingdom, you will be covered by NHS (National Health Service) in addition to health insurance coverage through CISI as part of your IAP program fees. NHS will not cover you outside of the United Kingdom. Note that many health insurance policies operate on a "reimbursement" basis, so be ready to pay the doctor directly for services outside the United Kingdom or for services not covered by the NHS. Should you need to pay up front for medical services, be sure to collect an original receipt to submit to your insurance company.

COMMUNICATION

Telephone: When making calls, keep in mind time zone differences [www.timeanddate.com/worldclock](http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock). To make an international call to the United States, dial the access code for the country from which you are calling plus the United States country code (always “1”) followed by the appropriate U.S. area code and local number. To call internationally from the United States, dial “011”, the country code, city access code (if necessary) and the phone number. Country and city codes can be found online [www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/dialing.html](http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/dialing.html). Some of above steps can vary if you are using a calling card.

Public phones are located throughout the dormitories, but most rooms do not have their own phones yet. You must have a Warwick calling card or a University approved calling card in order to dial out of the dormitories. You can find these calling cards at Costcutters, which is located in the center of campus next to the Student Union. The “YES” card or “Swiftcall” phone cards are just for international students and offer competitive rates. Past participants highly recommend purchasing a cell phone in Warwick as well. If you decide to bring your cell phone (or “mobile”) from home, make sure that the SIM card is unlocked and purchase a new SIM card (approx. £5-£10) upon arriving in England. Texting is the most common form of communication between friends, so find a cell phone company with a good texting plan. Most cell phones in England are pay-as-you-go with a “top-up” card. The card is linked to your phone, so when your phone is running low on credit, you can take the card to any grocery store or cash point and “top-up.”

Another great way to keep in touch with people from home is to use Skype. You can download it onto your laptop for free and you can use it to call other people on their computers for no cost. You can also use it to call cell phones and landlines all over the world for a very low rate.

Mail: There are post offices on campus where you can mail letters, buy stamps, etc.
The University Post Office, newly located opposite STA in the Students' Union Building, offers a full range of international postal services and sells stationery and cards. A post box is located outside Costcutters.

Incoming mail for you will usually be delivered to pigeon-holes (a rack with small compartments) in your campus residence, to your off-campus house, or to your academic department. You should check your pigeon-hole regularly. Do not put outgoing mail in your pigeon-hole, as the British postal workers will not pick it up. Any outgoing mail must be placed in the large red post box outside of Costcutters. The International Office also has pigeon-holes for some incoming mail. If you are using the International Office to receive mail please ensure that it is addressed with the prefix of SM (for student mail), your name, c/o International Office, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 8UW, United Kingdom.

**E-mail:** Once you are registered and have your Warwick student ID card, you can sign up for an e-mail account. University residences are connected to Warwick Piazza, which provides free high-speed Internet access. There are computer stations throughout campus with Internet access, including: the Student Computer Centre, the Learning Grid, and the University Library. The computer centre and the learning grid are both open 24 hours a day; however, the library is often only open until Midnight, earlier on some nights. You will need your Warwick Student ID (which you will receive during orientation) to enter any of these facilities. Past participants who have brought a laptop found it very convenient to have. A computer fair at the beginning of the year offers used printers and laptops for sale at good prices, or computer facilities can be used just for printing purposes.

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

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

**WEBSITES OF INTEREST**

- International Academic Programs (IAP) at UW-Madison: [www.studyabroad.wisc.edu](http://www.studyabroad.wisc.edu)

- Warwick International Office [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/international](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/international)

- General Orientation Information: [www.worldwide.edu/travel_planner/index.html](http://www.worldwide.edu/travel_planner/index.html) (includes topics such as culture shock, international travel, etc.)

- U.S. State Department:
**Student Testimonials**

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

**PACKING**

I had a gazillion T-shirts, etc. that I did not really need there, or could have easily gotten and not had to carry.

I wish I had brought my piano music since Warwick has piano/instrument rooms for students.

Bring a laptop!

Bring some pictures to put on your wall. Most rooms have a big bulletin board you can cover with remembrances of home.

A lot of things can be purchased upon arrival—you don’t need to bring large containers of shampoo, conditioner, etc. They are heavy and take up a lot of space in your suitcase. Only bring the things you need or won’t be able to find in the UK.

Don’t forget an electrical adapter!
TRAVEL AND ARRIVAL

If you are in England prior to the orientation start date, plan to stay in London or in Coventry, since there will not be anything going on at the University of Warwick. If you want to stay at the University a day or two before orientation, you will need to book a vacation room, which will be described in your Welcome Guide from Warwick University.

My most memorable times from the last three months shine from the photographs I took while I traveled around England and Northern Ireland. Traveling is expensive sometimes, you will start to look for less expensive places to sleep and you will remember that “take-away” food is the best deal in town.

Travel and Arrival: The International Office organizes several day trips to places around Britain. These trips are easy and affordable. Check the International Office’s website to see what they offer.

Trains are more comfortable, but plan ahead if you get a Europass – a lot of places require reservations in addition to the pass. Pack LIGHTLY for backpacking – you will be glad you did.

If you decide to get an Inter-rail pass to travel around Europe during the five week spring break, wait until you are in England to do so. Once you’ve been in the country for six months (which usually hits right around the start of spring break) you qualify for a discounted Inter-rail pass that is much more affordable than the one you would buy in America. You can buy the rail pass earlier, you just won’t be able to use it until you’ve been an England resident for at least six months.

In Britain, do not assume that the bus is the cheapest. A little research can save time and money on travel. In many cases taking a “cheap” airline is actually less expensive than the trains!

Look for cheap flights on budget airlines! RyanAir, BMI Baby, and Easy Jet are all affordable airlines that will fly you to different parts of Europe for incredibly low rates, especially if you are traveling at off-peak times. I flew roundtrip out of Birmingham Airport to Dublin for £12!

If you plan on traveling a lot around the UK, I highly recommend buying a Young Person’s Rail Card (also known as the 16-25 Rail Card) when you arrive in England. It’s good for a year and it will save you one third off the price all your train tickets within the UK, including Scotland and Wales. The amount of money it saved me for one trip to Edinburgh alone more than paid for the cost of the rail card. It’s a great way to save some money while traveling!

When you are traveling around the UK and Europe, always bring your Student ID (preferably your Warwick ID). It will save you a lot of money, as most museums and attractions in the EU give students huge discounts, and in some cases, free entry. As a student in an EU country, your discount will be even better than if you use your UW ID card. For instance, when I was traveling in Greece, I found that since I attended a European university, I could go the Acropolis and Ancient Agora for free.

ACADEMIC

Class time in Warwick is generally less than at UW. Students are expected to do much on their own. It is about 10-20 hours a week of homework if you want to get A’s and AB’s. Prepare for weekly seminars and then your essays will come much more easily. Get to know your professor or tutor.
It takes a while to get your schedule and feel settled in your classes. Be patient and flexible, and do not be afraid to ask questions. You may not know the details of your classes until the second week, but everything will work out.

At the beginning of the first term, make sure you know all of the class expectations. Some papers and some class attendance might not be included in the grade but are still part of the course. Others might be factor into your grade.

Third term is intense! Prepare yourself well!

Obviously I would have made friends anywhere, but in addition to that, the professors and staff here are both outstanding academically but very helpful as well.

Explore your options for assessment (exam, paper, etc.) Some courses do offer options; choose the one that’s best for you.

Different classes have different percentages of how you are graded (i.e. 50% graded on exams, 50% assessed essays). In some cases, as an international student you may be able to request that your percentages be changed (i.e. 100% assessed essays). You must speak to the Instructor of the class and your personal tutor in order to do this.

HOUSING

The students living in Rootes Hall – a hall of first year students – have had slightly more difficulties adjusting than those living elsewhere. They have noticed a big age/maturity difference between themselves and the first year students, have had difficulty with the cleanliness of the kitchens (kitchens are shared amongst the students), and noted that the halls are very loud.

On the other hand, Rootes is known as being by far the most social of all the residence halls and is in the best location on campus (only about a 2-3 minute walk from the Union, student laundry facilities, the post office, Costcutters, STA, the banks, the bus stop, and the Health Centre).

Jack Martin and Arthur Vick, while being nice, clean residence halls with their own private bathrooms, are typically less social and it’s harder to meet people there. Westwood is nice because it has a 39 week lease (meaning you are able to keep your room on campus during your winter and spring breaks so you don’t have to store your belongings) but it is a long distance from the heart of campus, so expect a long walk to the union, grocery store, and to classes. Claycroft is close to Tesco, but far away from everything else and is filled with a lot of graduate students, as are the residence halls by the lake.

STUDENT LIFE

I would say that the students who are happiest are the ones who are involved in a society - you can join these anytime during the year but it is much easier to join the first few weeks. During orientation I would encourage the students to think about joining.
I acted and directed several plays, worked at the Students’ Union, and just went to every campus event they had – you get to see a lot of people.

Joining clubs and societies at the Union was the best way to meet other English students because these clubs are very popular and most students are involved in some way.

If I could have stayed at Warwick, I would have. It was that amazing. I joined the volleyball team and we beat Cambridge. I became great friends with students from all over the world, traveled throughout the UK and Europe, and the emphasis on independent study shaped me into a better student. I’m very glad I took the opportunity to study abroad.

You’ll meet people through halls (your dorm), especially if you are living with First Years (freshman). A lot of people from UW found their core group of friends through the people living in their flats. So, make an effort those first few days, “flatmates” are awesome!

If you play sports, or if you’ve always wanted to try one, pick one from a variety of different ones on campus. They don’t have university sponsored teams, so anyone can join! I joined Ladies Cricket and met some of the most fun and welcoming people I could imagine! I not only learned a new sport, but I also got to participate in all of the social activities they had, such as formal balls, dinners, themed fancy dress nights (costume dress-up) and Wednesday night socials (which are always followed by Score! at the union, a club featuring eighties classics!). Be impulsive— join and make a commitment to a couple of clubs! A great way to meet friends!

Take advantage of the Student Union! It’s the main social spot on campus and is filled with restaurants, clubs, and bars. Each night has a different theme and is usually packed with students—make sure to queue up early for Top Banana on Monday nights!

HEALTH

I would strongly suggest registering with the doctor when you arrive on campus. It is essential in case you ever got sick or run out of prescriptions from home. It doesn’t cost anything to go to the doctor, and almost all prescriptions (you can get recurring ones) can be bought for about £7. I got really sick for two months while I was abroad, and if I wouldn’t have been registered with the doctor and gone to the clinic right away, my situation would have been much more serious. Also, women: birth control is free in England. Therefore, you might want to consider getting your prescriptions abroad while you are there in order to save money.

OTHER

From start to finish, all of the energy and time is worth the cherished memories that you will bring back home with you. Before I left for England my emotions were changing more than ever before. I knew the challenge I was up against: not seeing my family, learning to adapt to a new academic system, meeting new people and the list goes on. I adjusted to my new environment, or home-away-from-home, after the first month. I learned about when was the best time to do laundry, when to use the phone on the ground floor of my flat, and where the nearest food store was.

Stay flexible, be impulsive, and try new things—it will be one of the most challenging yet best years of your life!
I feel I’ve definitely grown to love English culture and have certainly grown as a person and intellectually.

Keep a positive attitude, even when things don’t always go the way you want them to. In the beginning, I had some difficulties adjusting, as British people tend to be a bit more reserved than Americans, especially at first. Keep trying though, because once you’re friends with them, they are hilarious and will probably end up being your life-long friends.

By the end of the year, I knew that I had two homes—America and England. I had such a fantastic year abroad—I’m already looking for ways to go back again!