England, University of Westminster
Fall/Academic Year 2010-2011
IAP Program Handbook

The Westminster, England program is offered by International Academic Programs (IAP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in conjunction with the University of Westminster. This IAP Program Handbook supplements handbook(s) or materials you receive from the University of Westminster 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 International Academic Programs at UW-Madison.

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Contact Information
On-Site Program Information
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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
Tel: 608-265-6329
E-mail: 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.-4:30 p.m. Monday-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
24 Grosvenor Square
London, W1A 2LQ
United Kingdom

Program Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMESTER 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Accommodation Check-in</td>
<td>Saturday 18 September (from 2pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation/Registration Week</td>
<td>Monday 20 September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes Begin</td>
<td>Monday 27 September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes End</td>
<td>Friday 17 December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Vacation</td>
<td>Monday 20 December - Friday 7 January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 1 Ends (Assessment Deadline)</td>
<td>Friday 7 January 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final University Accommodation Check-out</td>
<td>Saturday 8 January 2011 (by 10am)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note: Students studying in Semester 1 only will be set Alternative Assessment for any modules with formal examinations normally sat at the end of Semester 2. This means it may be possible to complete all assessment before the start of the Winter Vacation. Students staying in University accommodation may therefore be able to check out as early as Saturday 18 December 2010 at the end of teaching.

Please note: Some coursework deadlines may be set in the first half of January (final coursework deadline Friday 7 January 2011). Students with deadlines after the Winter Vacation but who have to leave London before these deadlines should endeavor to complete all assessment before they leave.
SEMESTER 2
University Accommodation Check-in Saturday 8 January 2011 (from 2pm)
Orientation/Registration Week Monday 10 January 2011
Classes begin Monday 17 January 2011
Easter vacation Monday 11 April - Friday 29 April 2011
Exam period begins Tuesday 3 May 2011
Exam period finishes Friday 27 May 2011**
Semester 2 finishes Friday 24 June 2011
Final University Accommodation Check-out Saturday 25 June 2011 (by 10am)

**You should not make any travel plans to return home before the end of the examination period. The University of Westminster cannot stress enough that students are expected to be at Westminster until the end of the examination period. Students will be informed of when their examinations are to take place when the official examination timetables are released in early March 2011.

Preparation Before Leaving
Refer to the Pre-Departure Checklist on pages four and five of the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for essential information.

Immigration Documents

Visa
All non-EU nationals studying in the UK MUST apply for and obtain a student visa before arriving in the UK. 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 of Westminster. **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, unless they are participating in the internship program. Students staying in the UK for fewer than six months (not participating in an internship) may apply for the Student Visitor Visa.

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

University of Westminster Visa information:
http://westminster.ac.uk/study/international/immigration-and-visas

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

**Proof of Health Insurance**
As a participant on an IAP program, you have medical and emergency evacuation insurance through Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI). Please make sure that you are familiar with the coverage provided and carry the insurance card with you.

**Medications**
Please bring all needed prescribed medications since you will not be able to get them in England. Carry them in your carry-on in their original containers. If you wear contact lenses, also bring glasses in case you lose your lenses. Your U.S. prescription(s) will not be accepted and, if you were to need new lenses, you would have to have an eye exam in England.

**International Student ID Card (ISIC)**
This card will be useful to you in Europe, entitling you to a number of reduced student rates in fees and ticket including museums, concerts, movies, and rail and air travel. Information on the card is available on-line at http://www.isiccard.com. ISIC cards can be purchased at STA Travel on State Street. *You are not required to purchase the card.*

**Handling Money Abroad**
The official currency of Britain is the British pound sterling (GBP), with 1 pound equaling 100 pence. As of 8/12/09, the exchange rate was $1 USD to 0.606 pounds sterling. There are many options for handling money abroad, and it is difficult to say which one is the best. General tips for study abroad students are listed in the IAP Study Abroad Handbook. The tips below are suggestions for ways to handle money.

**ATM/Debit Cards**
By far, the easiest and most convenient way to draw money from a U.S. bank is by using an ATM card. There are a large number of cash (ATM) machines in London (and throughout Europe) which connect with systems such as CIRRUS and PLUS. Usually, the exchange rate at ATM machine is as good if not better than at a bank. It is important that you talk to your bank in advance. You should check with them to see if your ATM card will function properly in the UK, if you need to use a different PIN abroad, and if there will be any fees and service charges while you are abroad. Also, check the maximum amount you can withdraw in one day or one week as this can vary from bank to bank. You may want to consider taking an extra ATM card with you in case yours gets demagnetized or eaten in an ATM machine. Always leave the extra ATM card in your flat. And once in London, do not ask for a Tyme machine - they do not exist! Ask for a cash or ATM machine instead.

Similarly to an ATM/Debit card, traveler cards may be another option to consider. A traveler’s card works like a debit card, in that you can make purchases and receive money from ATMs, and is refundable if lost. Money can be added to the card via email or phone using a credit card, debit card, or funds from a savings account (although they may only allow this transaction to take place with cards from the same travel card company, so be sure to check). This card has to be ordered in advance, and not all banks provide this service. Although a few companies have cards like these, past
participants recommend using the Visa TravelMoney Card and the American Express Traveler’s Cheque Card.

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. In general try not to let your card out of your sight during any transactions to reduce chances of fraudulent copying.

Important Tips:
- 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 for London, 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.

Banks
The four main banks in the UK are National Westminster, HSBC, Barclays, and Lloyds. Their services are very similar and they have branches all over the UK.

If you can show that you will be in the UK as a student for one year, you should be able to open a student bank account. If you will be in the UK for less than one year, you might not be able to open a student bank account, but you may be able to open an ordinary cash account at certain banks.

For more information about how to open a bank account in Westminster, visit: [http://www.wmin.ac.uk/page-5520](http://www.wmin.ac.uk/page-5520)

Transferring Funds From Home
To ensure that you will have enough money while abroad, plan ahead by preparing a budget calculating how much you will need and then adding some for a cushion and emergency situations. Money orders and banker drafts from U.S. banks can take up to 4 weeks to clear in a UK bank account. In the event that you do need money transferred to you, consider the following options:

- **ATM/Travel Card:** If you have an ATM card or a travel card, have a family member of friend deposit funds into your U.S. bank account.
- **WESTERN UNION:** Information on how Western Union transfers money worldwide can be found on-line at [http://www.westernunion.com](http://www.westernunion.com). Western Union does charge a fee for this service based on the amount of money sent.
• **AMERICAN EXPRESS MONEYGRAM:** This is an immediate cash transfer, where neither sender nor receiver needs to have an American Express card. Call the Moneygram Information Line at (800) 543-4080 to find the nearest participating office from which money can be sent. Transactions must be initiated at an American Express office in the U.S. and completed at one of their branch offices abroad. Fees vary according to the amount of money sent.

**Packing**

Effective packing is a refined art. The following tips are suggestions which might help when you are packing:

Ensure that every bag is marked in capital letters with your name, address and final destination both inside and outside of the bag. Be warned that both trains and planes place additional charges on extra or overweight luggage. Please check with your airline for the most recent regulations on check-in procedures and carry-on baggage. Do not bring a piece of baggage that is so heavy that you cannot lift or move it without help. A good test is to pack everything you want to take and see if you can walk around the block.

**Avoid overpacking!** If you look at any experienced traveler, the first thing you will notice is how little luggage s/he has with them. The more clothes you pack, the more you will have to take care of, and the heavier your suitcase will be. Make sure that everything you pack is essential. Also, you will probably accumulate quite a few gifts and souvenirs so it is a good idea to leave space in your suitcases. Plan accordingly and pack lightly.

**Take Practical Clothes – avoid bringing clothes that need dry-cleaning (expensive...).** Clothes that require minimal care, are comfortable to travel in, and can be layered are best to take. These items include T-shirts, lightweight sweaters and sweatshirts. Layering is the best way to combat the unpredictable British temperature both inside and out as you may find houses are not heated to the same degree that they are in the States. Casual clothing is the most comfortable for day-to-day British life. But if you plan on going clubbing, out to dinner, or to the theatre at night, dressier clothing would be best.

**Roll Your Clothes.** The fashion industry uses this method of packing as you can fit more in your suitcase and have fewer wrinkles in your clothes upon arrival.

**Take a Backpack or a Side Pack.** Backpacks are easier to carry than suitcases on longer trips. Internal frame packs are comfortable to carry, but can be cumbersome on trains and buses. A small travel bag is convenient for weekend trips and a day pack (like a messenger bag) is handy for around town or day trips.

**Essential Extras:**

- Comfortable shoes (make sure you break in new ones)
- Strong umbrella and raincoat or waterproof parka
- Wind-up or battery-operated alarm clock
- Washcloth and 2 bath towels (bed sheets will be provided in the flats)
- Travel purse (one that you wear around your neck) or money belt for passport, ID, and money
• Small sewing kit and scissors (be sure to pack these in your suitcase, not your carry on)
• Digital camera or film (film is less expensive in the U.S.)
• Batteries (in U.K. they are weaker and more expensive)
• Shower shoes (for youth hostels)

Electrical Appliances
Electrical service is not identical throughout the world. English electricity runs on 240 volts, while U.S. runs on 110 volts. Hence, if you plan to bring any electrical appliances (hairdryer, electric razor, radio, etc.), you will need to purchase in the U.S. both a converter for the voltage and an adapter to fit British sockets, both of which are different from those in Europe. IAP advises students against bringing any appliances from the U.S. Instead, we recommend that you purchase an inexpensive hairdryer, curling iron/straightener or radio in London – the money you spend will save you from blown fuses in your flat and fried converters. In the past, roommates have often split the cost of these small appliances and then shared them for the semester.

However, if you do decide to bring electrical appliances from the U.S., make sure the converter (transformer) is suitable for the appliance. Radio Shack, Best Buy, or another appliance store can help you find what you need. Make sure that you purchase both a converter and adapter. Be aware that sockets vary from country to country.

Computers
Many students ask if they should take a computer with them overseas. Some past participants had found it useful to have a personal computer, while others were glad they didn't have to worry about a valuable possession abroad. They can be a high-risk theft item, so if you do bring one make sure it is insured.

If you plan on bringing a laptop, make sure that it can run on dual voltage. The US typically runs on 110 V and England runs on 240 V. If your computer is unable to handle the increased voltage, it can cause damage to your computer and cause electrical shorts in the flats. However, almost all newer laptops have built-in converters in their power supplies that will allow you to switch between the different voltages. Therefore, all you would need is a plug adapter to fit your American plug into an English socket. This can be found at most travel stores in the U.S. or can be bought for about £3 once you get to London. Be sure to check if your computer has duel voltage capabilities, because if not, you would need to buy a voltage converter which can often be expensive and cumbersome.
Travel and Arrival Information

Participants on this program make their own flight arrangements to England.

Traveling to Westminster
From the Airport
Once you have completed your journey through immigration control and customs, you will want to make your way to the place you will be staying. Travelling in London is very easy as London has a very good bus, train and underground tube train system.

We recommend that you study the tube map (http://www.tfl.gov.uk/) carefully, working out where you are going to and then plan your route, using the information provided.

- Don't worry about asking people for information or for directions - look for signs at the airport. You will probably have to take a black cab (taxi) for part of the journey.

Travelling to central London from Heathrow Airport
If you are coming in to central London from Heathrow you have the option of travelling by tube train, bus or rail links. By tub, take the Piccadilly line (blue) into central London. By bus take an Air-bus to either Victoria train station, Russell Square or Kings Cross. By rail link, you can catch the Heathrow express into Paddington train Station. The cost and ease of travel is variable but the rail link takes 15 minutes and costs about £10. The bus and tube take longer but cost less.

To get a black cab (taxi) from Heathrow to central London, takes 45 minutes-60 minutes and cost around £35

Travelling to central London from Gatwick Airport
If you are coming to central London via Gatwick airport, you can take the Gatwick Express train or the coach/bus. By train a single costs around £10 and takes 30 minutes to reach Victoria Coach Station.

To get a black cab (taxi) from Gatwick to central London, takes 60-75 minutes and costs around £65.

Travelling to the Harrow campus from Heathrow
The quickest and easiest way to get to the Harrow campus is by black cab (described later). You can pick up a cab from the airport. To go by tube, go to the underground station catch a train on the Piccadilly line (blue) to Acton Town. At Acton Town you will need to change to another branch of the Piccadilly line to Rayners Lane. At Rayners Lane you change trains for a second time and take the Metropolitan line (maroon) to Northwick Park.

The local bus 140 runs from the central bus station at Heathrow to Harrow on the Hill and costs £1. The journey normaly takes around one hour. From Harrow-on-the-Hill you will need to take a black cab or a tube train to Northwick Park.
Travelling to the Harrow campus from Gatwick

Despite some trains going from Gatwick to Harrow Weald it is easier for you to come into London on the Gatwick express - travel across London on the underground to either Baker Street or Kings Cross tube station, and catch a Metropolitan line tube to Northwick Park tube station. Alternatively, you could take a Thameslink train (they leave approximately every half an hour) to Kingscross and then catch the Metropolitan line to Northwick Park. The campus is very close to the tube station.

International Westminster (http://www.wmin.ac.uk/PDF/INTERNATIONAL%20prf4.pdf) gives more detailed information about travelling from the airports to individual halls of residence. There is also a meet and greet service (http://www.wmin.ac.uk/page-18369) for students attending the International Student Welcome Programme and staying in Welcome Programme accommodation.

On arrival, the Study Abroad and Exchange Unit Hosts an orientation day, which aims to give you a good background to life in London and the University of Westminster. Information will be provided on the university’s facilities, student services, health, personal safety, cultural differences, UK higher education system and the University’s regulations. At the orientation you will be given a comprehensive Orientation Pack which will include, as well as many other leaflets and information, a copy of the Programme Handbook and Essential Westminster. These two documents include essential information on making the most of your time at Westminster.

The Academic Program

General Information
Across its sites in central and north-west London, the University of Westminster teaches more than 22,000 students undertaking degrees, Masters, research, professional programmes and short courses.

Since its foundation in 1838 as Britain’s first polytechnic, the University has been closely involved in the business, professional and academic life of London.

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 Westminster. Many terms are used differently from the way we are used to using them. The term “unit” and “module” is the British term for class. 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."

Good academic study does not differ much from country to country, but there is difference of emphasis. A key difference between the learning methods of the American and British degree systems is the extent to which British students are expected to plan and carry out their own work. Particularly in the Arts, the amount of classroom contact is less than in some other systems, with a correspondingly greater reliance on independent study, in the form of directed reading and essay writing. Most units (courses) consist of formal lectures as well as tutorials and seminars (which vary in size from perhaps three to a dozen students and require active participation), but there are great variations between departments. Each department is responsible for both its own curriculum and for the form in which it is delivered, which can range from small seminar groups to
computer-assisted learning. Acquiring this level of responsibility and adjusting to a
different academic system presents a challenge, but it makes for a rewarding
experience. It is also an excellent preparation for graduate study, since it provides an
introduction to the self-discipline skills required of a good graduate student.

Units are normally taught as a mixture of lectures, tutorial or seminar classes and
practical laboratory work (where appropriate). Attendance at classes is compulsory for
credit earning purposes. Assessment is normally by written work, project or laboratory
work (where relevant) and examinations, which usually come at the end of the semester
in January and June.

Course Information
Courses (Modules)
Information for students regarding module selection can be found here:
http://westminster.ac.uk/study/international/study-abroad/semester-school-study-
abroad/what-can-i-study/module-catalogue

When selecting modules, make sure that you are qualified for those that you intend to
apply for. Certain modules have pre-requisite conditions that must be met before the
module may be studied. This may be defined in terms of a certain level of
knowledge/competence or evidence of previous study in the subject, or the study of a
particular lower level module.

Module Levels
At the University of Westminster, modules are validated at a level corresponding to a
particular year of study (with the exception of modules from the Department of Polylang
graded in accordance with language advancement). The levels used are:

• Level 4, which is equivalent to the 1st year of an undergraduate degree
• Level 5, which is equivalent to the 2nd year of an undergraduate degree
• Level 6, which is equivalent to the 3rd year of an undergraduate degree

The levels used at the University of Westminster may be different to the overseas
systems used to define levels that you are used to and should be taken into
consideration when making module choices.

Some overseas institutions (e.g. US and Japanese universities) consider the first year of
their undergraduate degrees to be the equivalent of the foundation year of UK university
undergraduate degrees. Therefore, University of Westminster modules at Level 4 may
be considered to be the equivalent of classes taken in the second year of undergraduate
degrees in the US and Japan, and so on.

For Further Information
If you have any further queries relating to the Module Catalogue and/or the process
involved in making module choices, you can email study-abroad@wmin.ac.uk or visit the
Study Abroad Unit directly, located in the International Education Office, 2nd Floor
Copland Building, 115 New Cavendish Street, London, W1W 6UW.

To find a step-by-step guide to online enrollment:
http://www.wmin.ac.uk/pdf/STEP%20BY%20STEP%20GUIDE%20TO%20ONLINE%20
ENROLMENT%20FOR%20NEW%20STUDENTS.pdf
Internship Program
As part of the Study Abroad Programme at the University of Westminster, students have the opportunity to undertake an academically assessed internship. The internship is coordinated by the Business Experience and International Unit and all students are entitled to apply. Applications for fall semester internships are due May 1st; spring semester applications are due October 15th.

The internship is the equivalent of one module (15 Westminster Credit Points/ 4 UW Madison Credits). It is taken alongside three other academic modules and "The Internship Toolkit" module at the University. Students can apply for an internship as part of a single semester or year-long study abroad program at the University of Westminster.

Students normally work between 15 to 20 hours per week in the workplace combined with time in the classroom. The maximum duration of the internship is one semester. For more information, please

For more information, and to download an application pack, visit:
http://westminster.ac.uk/study/international/study-abroad/semester-school-study-abroad/what-can-i-study

Alternative Assessment
Students studying in the Fall semester only are entitled to take a piece of Alternative Assessment in place of the formal closed book examination element of a module (which has a closed book exam as a component of the overall assessment, this may not apply to all modules). This means you will be free to return home after teaching has finished in December even though the official end of the semester is January 7\(^{th}\) 2011.

Please be advised that the Alternative Assessment and other coursework submission deadlines may be set for early January. It is in your best interest to complete the coursework before you return home. However, if this is not possible, you will be able to courier their coursework to the appropriate undergraduate office before the deadline.

Information about Alternative Assessment will be provided at your on-site orientation when you arrive in London. Questions after that can be directed to the Education Abroad Team (study-abroad@westminster.ac.uk).

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.
Registration
As part of the application process, you will select modules you would like to take while at Westminster. Following orientation, you will attend an individual registration appointment to finalize your schedule for the semester.

Credits
The following is how your credits will be transferred back to UW-Madison:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Westminster Credit Points</th>
<th>UW Madison Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
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Limits and Load
Students are normally required to take the equivalent of 60 UK credits in one semester. This means that students normally take 4 modules per semester. In order to qualify as a full-time student, the minimum number of credits that must be taken in one semester is 52.5 UK credits. As a participant on an IAP UW Madison Study Abroad Program, you are required to take no less than 12 UW Madison credits and no more than 18 UW Madison credits.

In order to avoid disappointment due to timetable clashes, classes filling up, last minute changes to module offerings, etc., you must make at least 8 module choices per semester: 4 preferred module choices and 4 alternative module choices

Pass/Fail/Drop/Audit
Please refer to the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for academic policies.

Grades and Grade Conversions
The following is how your grades will convert back to UW-Madison:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Westminster Grade</th>
<th>UW- Madison Equivalent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57-62</td>
<td>AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48-56</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42-47</td>
<td>BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-41</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-29</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Living Abroad
England
It is sometimes confusing to understand the difference between England, Great Britain and the United Kingdom. England is located on the island of Great Britain, which also consists of Scotland and Wales. Great Britain then, is part of the United Kingdom, which consists of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
England is the largest and most populous country of the UK, and it ranks as one of the most influential countries in the world. Perhaps most interesting is their cultural mix of old and new. As a country formally founded in 886, the English have a rich history with cherished traditions and customs. However, they are also a modern society with constant contributions to the fashion, music and political realms. Comparatively, America is a very young country without the same interesting mix of traditional and modern. Therefore for American students, England is an especially fascinating place to study and live.

**London**

First-time visitors to London are often dazzled by its diversity, if slightly overwhelmed by its size. However, if you view London as the sum total of all its smaller parts you will find it easier to explore and to discover its many hidden treasures for yourself. Whether exploring the markets in Camden, the museums of South Kensington, or the performing arts scene on the South Bank, London can yield a pearl in each small area of the city. London offers more than the guidebooks can show you. While tourist spots like Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament should not be missed, London will be more thoroughly enjoyed if you venture down side streets and mingle with the locals in their own neighborhood haunts. Strive to make London your home: you will look less like a tourist and be well received.

**Housing**

The University’s Student Accommodation team provides a comprehensive service to University of Westminster students. If you are coming to study at the University of Westminster, or you are a continuing student, they can give you free help and advice on finding a suitable place to live.

The Accommodation team is responsible for allocating rooms in the University’s Halls of Residence and can assist you with making an application. If your halls application is unsuccessful or you would prefer to rent privately they can also offer advice in seeking alternatives within London’s extensive private sector.

For more information, visit: [http://westminster.ac.uk/study/student-accommodation](http://westminster.ac.uk/study/student-accommodation)

**Student Life**

For more information on student life, visit: [http://westminster.ac.uk/study/ug/student-life](http://westminster.ac.uk/study/ug/student-life)

**Safety**

London is still regarded as one of the safest cities in the world, but it is important to take sensible steps to help ensure your safety during your time abroad.

Should you require any emergency services (Fire, Police, Ambulance) simply dial “999” from any telephone. The service is free.

**Insurance**: If you’re staying in London for more than 6 months, 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
When making calls, keep in mind time zone differences (www.timeanddate.com/worldclock). To make an international call to the United States, dial the access code for the country from which you are calling plus the United States country code (always “1”) followed by the appropriate U.S. area code and local number. To call internationally from the United States, dial “011”, the country code, city access code (if necessary) and the phone number. Country and city codes can be found online (www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/dialing.html). Some of above steps can vary if you are using a calling card.

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

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

University of Westminster
http://www.wmin.ac.uk/page-0

University of Westminster for international students
http://www.wmin.ac.uk/page-18076

U.S. State Department Students Abroad site:
http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov/

UW-Madison International Academic Programs
http://www.studyabroad.wisc.edu

U.S. State Department:
http://travel.state.gov

Center for Disease Control
http://www.cdc.gov/travel/

Current exchange rates
http://www.oanda.com

Lonely Planet
http://www.lonelyplanet.com