University of Edinburgh
Orientation Booklet
2018-19
This document represents the most accurate information available at the time of publication. Statements contained herein are not contractual obligations, and verbal or other representations that are inconsistent with or not contained within the document are not binding. The University of Richmond reserves the right to change without specific notice programs and the conditions under which they are offered.

Students must be aware that not all circumstances are predictable and that one must take self-responsibility very seriously. The University, its agents, and employees cannot be held responsible for the actions of the host institution or of the student.

A WORD ABOUT UR’S APPROACH TO STUDY ABROAD

UR follows a philosophy of study abroad that demands a lot of our participants and also provides deep benefits. We send most of our students on exchange programs, which provide you with the experience of learning and living in the way that the people of your host country do. By taking classes meant for local students, arranging your housing the same way as local students, and interacting directly with the governmental and university administration of your host country, you are gaining substantially greater insight on the workings of the world than if you were taking part in a more American-directed program abroad. Our model requires students to be highly organized and responsible; high standards are part of any aspect of a UR education. Other benefits of exchanges are that they last for a full semester or year, allowing you time to experience more aspects of your host country than if you were going abroad for a shorter term, and they bring international students to UR, enhancing the internationalization of our campus.

CONTACT INFORMATION

University of Richmond Contact:
Amy S. Bergmann, Study Abroad Advisor
Office of International Education
Carole Weinstein International Center
University of Richmond, VA 23173
Tel: (804) 289-8817  Fax: (804) 289-8904
E-mail: abergman@richmond.edu
Web: http://studyabroad.richmond.edu/

University of Edinburgh Contacts:
Rachel Martin, Study Abroad Officer
Primary Edinburgh contact for Richmond students
Tel: +44 131 651 5086  Fax: +44 131 668 4565
E-mail: studyabroad@ed.ac.uk

International Office
33 Buccleuch Place
Edinburgh EH8 9JS
Web: www.ed.ac.uk/international-office or http://www.ed.ac.uk/study-abroad
Hours: Monday-Friday 9 AM-5 PM

College of Humanities and Social Science (Visiting Student Office)
55-60 George Square
Edinburgh EH8 9JU
Email: HSSvisitingstudents@ed.ac.uk
Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/arts-humanities-soc-sci/international-and-study-abroad/visiting-student-office
Tel: +44-131-651-1700
**Program Dates**

The authoritative source for the dates of your program is the acceptance letter you receive from your host institution abroad and/or the website of your host institution’s international office. UR lists our best understanding of these dates under “Dates and Costs” on the page for your program on the study abroad website, [https://studyabroad.richmond.edu](https://studyabroad.richmond.edu).

The exact date by which your program ends, and by which you can plan to leave your program site, depends on your exam schedule. You will not know this until you have arrived on-site and finalized your schedule of classes for the semester. You must not plan to leave your program site until after you have finished your last exam. If you leave your program site without taking exams required for your classes, you will not earn any credit for those classes.

**Edinburgh Pre-Arrival Guides/Information**

Edinburgh has very comprehensive getting started & arrival guides and websites -- see links below. These guides will contain information about orientation, how to get to Edinburgh, airport welcome service, accepting your accommodation offer, paying your rent, matriculation/registration, sports facilities, food, a campus map, and useful addresses. If you do not read the guides, you will risk missing some essential information as no one will remind you of important dates.


[https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/new-students/welcome-week](https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/new-students/welcome-week)

**Arrival**

As stated above, Edinburgh will include detailed arrival information in your pre-arrival guide (such as bus/train information, etc.). In the meantime, you should consult the ‘Getting Here’ section of the Edinburgh website: [http://www.ed.ac.uk/maps/getting-here](http://www.ed.ac.uk/maps/getting-here). You should carefully consider your arrival plans and we want to emphasize that you need to be sure to also look up directions to your accommodations and keep them in your carry-on luggage. This is especially important if you miss the welcome service due to a delayed flight or confusion in the airport, for example. You don’t want to be wandering around aimlessly on arrival (carrying your luggage, no less), so it is important to plan ahead. Many students have reported that for their initial arrival (when they have all their luggage), they prefer to either take a taxi ($$$) all the way from the airport to their housing (about 30 min.) or take the AirLink bus or a tram ($) between the airport and the Edinburgh city center. The tram is very convenient and will take you to Edinburgh city center rather easily, but reaching your housing from there may be difficult. If you arrive in the city center, make sure you have directions to your housing, or plan to take a taxi from there.

**Orientation**

Fall

Upon arrival in the fall, Edinburgh organizes a week-long orientation called Freshers’ Week, and new international and visiting students are included. This entire orientation is mandatory for UR students. The exact time and location will be included in the packet received from Edinburgh. Freshers’ Week is one of the biggest events organized by the Students’ Association and aims to provide an introduction to the 4,000 or so students that join the university each year. It is a great chance to join clubs and/or sports teams, and to meet both local and international students.
Spring
For students beginning their studies in January, there will be a 3-day Orientation so you will have the opportunity to tour the university campus, gain some practical advice about life in Edinburgh, and meet other students and staff. Your acceptance letter from Edinburgh will tell you when to arrive.

COSTS
You pay tuition to Richmond for your semester abroad, but not room & board.

This payment includes:

- A $600 credit on your UR account intended to help with your international flight costs
- Advising and orientation at Richmond before departure and after return
- A health insurance plan through ACE Travel/AXA while you are abroad (non-immigrant students retain Trawick coverage if returning to their home country)
- Reimbursement for the cost of a joining a gym (up to $200/semester—receipts must be submitted to OIE)
- Reimbursement for academic/cultural excursions (up to $500/semester—receipts must be submitted to OIE)
- Reimbursement for normal costs of passport and visa (receipts must be submitted to OIE)

Note: All reimbursements must be requested within 60 days of incurring the expense, and a reimbursement form must be submitted as described on the Richmond study abroad website http://international.richmond.edu/semester/finances/index.html (see “Financial Matters”).

This payment DOES NOT include:

- Housing and utilities abroad
- Food
- General start-up costs for linen, kitchen, utensils, telephone connection and bills
- Books and school supplies
- Local transportation
- Personal entertainment
- Travel expenses (beyond the travel allowance)
- Medical expenses (beyond those covered by the insurance plan; does not cover £150 insurance surcharge for students who apply for the full Tier 4 visa)


Personal travel
Expenses for personal travel and entertainment are not included in the cost estimates in this booklet. Be aware that this is the single greatest discretionary expense for students on study abroad. You should make deliberate decisions about where and how you will travel in your free time. Many students succumb to peer pressure and make a lot of short, impromptu and superficial trips while on study abroad (“Come on, you have to hit Prague with us this weekend!”). People often come home saying they have been to 10 new countries, but have not really learned anything about any of them, and have incurred thousands of dollars in debt. OIE suggests that you take just a couple of well thought out, longer trips during your semester abroad...you will learn more and spend less.
FINANCIAL AID

Merit and need-based scholarships are applicable to your semester abroad if you qualify. Check with UR’s Financial Aid Office (289-8438) for more specific information. It is essential to understand when and how your funds will be disbursed, as aid for room and board is disbursed in a different manner than if you were on campus. See here for more information: http://financialaid.richmond.edu/undergrad/study-abroad/index.html.

REIMBURSEMENTS AND ALLOWANCES FROM UR

The UR’s program of providing travel allowances and reimbursements for passports, visas (when applicable), gym memberships, and cultural excursions to study abroad participants is unique; few if any other universities provide this benefit. Processing requests and inquiries about allowances and reimbursements is a substantial part of our office’s administrative workload; please become familiar with our policies at http://international.richmond.edu/semester/finances/index.html (in the “Finances” section) before asking procedural questions. Travel allowances, reimbursements, health insurance premiums, and other payments above tuition costs paid by Richmond on behalf of its semester/year abroad students are available only to Richmond degree-seeking students accepted to participate on UR-affiliated abroad programs.

HOUSING AND MEALS

Your acceptance packet from Edinburgh will contain information about accommodation. Further information can be found at the following web site: www.accom.ed.ac.uk/. You are responsible for paying for your own housing fees directly to Edinburgh and you will choose either self-catered (buying your own groceries and cooking on your own) or catered (meal plan) living. You must live in Edinburgh-arranged housing (whether residence hall or university flat). Finding your own apartment via Airbnb or other means is not allowed.

IMMIGRATION

The follow guidelines explain immigration and visa requirements for the UK. Please note that these criteria are subject to change. You should check https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa for the most up-to-date information.

If you are a U.S. citizen whose period of study will be LESS than six months (1 semester programs):

You do not need to apply in advance for a visa (“entry clearance”) and instead can enter the UK with no fee as a “short term student” via the Short-Term Study Route. If you enter the UK in this way, when you arrive at the airport you will need to show proof that:

- you are over 18 years old
- your visit will not last longer than 6 months
- you have accepted an unconditional offer on your course of study
- you intend to leave the UK at the end of your studies
- you do not intend to work/intern
- you have enough money to support yourself while in the UK
- you can pay for your return journey home

Therefore, you will need to bring the following documentation in your hand luggage (carry-on):

- a valid passport that will not expire during your time in the UK
- a letter of acceptance from your host institution
- proof of onward travel (return plane ticket, most commonly, but could be train ticket to another country, for example, if you plan to travel afterward, etc.)
- proof of funding for your period of study (e.g. documentation of scholarship funding, federal financial aid, private loans, or personal or joint bank account (Edinburgh recommends showing £1000/month for living expenses for the duration of your program abroad; the amount needs to have been in your bank account for 28 days minimum and
not dipped below the required amount on any day in the 28 day period; bank statement must be dated no more than one calendar month before you enter the UK)

- All one-semester students will need a tuition-exempt letter as part of their "evidence of funds." This shows that you are not responsible for paying tuition to your host school (since you pay UR tuition here) and therefore they will not expect you to show evidence that you have paid the host school tuition costs. The Office of International Education provides those letters for students (distributed at or shortly after country-specific orientation).

**It is important to understand that if you enter the UK in this way (without a visa):**

- You cannot work or take an internship (paid or unpaid)
- You must not arrange your flight via Ireland, which is in the Common Travel Area with no immigration control between Ireland and the UK, so you would not receive the appropriate visa stamp in your passport
- You cannot extend your period of study from the UK (so if you decide you like studying abroad and want to extend for a year in the UK, you cannot do so; extending to other locations is fine, like fall at Edinburgh and spring at Konstanz in Germany, for example)
- You must be prepared to present your passport (with the Short Term Study stamp) and your acceptance letter to immigration authorities upon entering the UK and re-entering (from weekend travel outside of the UK, for example)
- You may only arrive in the UK a maximum of 7 days before the study program begins

**NOTE:** If you intend to work or intern while you are abroad (such as students accepted to the Edinburgh Parliamentary Program) or if you think you will extend your stay in the UK to the year, you should apply for the full Tier 4 student visa (see below for instructions), but be aware that the process is very complex and time-consuming, so only students very certain they need the full visa should go this route. Please contact the OIE to get a new letter for the full visa if you were originally granted a ‘short term study’ letter.

**If you are a U.S. citizen whose period of study will be MORE than six months (1 year programs):**
You must apply for a UK visa under the category of "General Student." See below for instructions on applying. The cost is currently £348. Yearlong students will also need to obtain a UK national identity card and pay the £150 insurance surcharge (Note: The regular cost of the visa is refundable via the OIE, but the insurance surcharge is not refundable since we already purchase insurance for students).

**Applying for a Tier 4 student visa (if necessary based on above criteria)**
You must obtain a Tier 4 general student visa in advance of your arrival abroad (remember to save receipts to be submitted within 60 days to the Office of Intl. Education for reimbursement for the regular cost of obtaining a visa). You should apply no more than 3 months prior to your departure and no less than 6-8 weeks prior.

You will see that your host institution must be on a certain approved list of education providers. All of Richmond’s partner institutions are fully approved.

- You must apply via the British embassy or consulate nearest you. Check the UKVisas website (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration) to find the one that has jurisdiction and to complete the online application.
- Each individual consulate makes its own rules regarding things like:
  - Do you have to apply in person or may you send your application materials via courier?
  - How long will it take to process the visa?
  - What form of payment is accepted (money order, credit card, cashier’s check)?
  - If a personal appearance is required, do you need an appointment?
  - How many photos do you need?
  - What form of return postage is accepted (pre-paid courier or ExpressMail envelope? an additional fee?)

Read the information on your consulate’s website to answer the above questions and telephone them if you have questions.

**IMPORTANT:** All applications for UK visas will require 'biometric' information as part of the visa application process. Visa applications will not be processed until the applicant has provided the necessary biometric information.
The required biometric information consists of digital scans of all 10 fingers and a full-face digital photograph. Applicants will be required to submit biometrics at visa application support centers located across the United States. While the actual process will take no more than five minutes to complete, students will need to plan accordingly for travel to the visa application support centers. To find the nearest center, use the zip code locator service on this website (scroll down to the map): https://egov.uscis.gov/crisgw/go?action=offices.type&OfficeLocator.office_type=ASC. Students need to bring their printed visa application, original passport, and barcode-printed appointment sheet. Nearest support center to Richmond is in Norfolk or Alexandria. The OIE does not reimburse for travel expenses to/from the visa support center.

NOTE: Once you have your biometrics done, when sending your materials (which will include your passport) to the consulate for your visa, never ever use regular U.S. mail. Use a courier service such as FedEx, UPS, or DHL, or use U.S. ExpressMail, whichever is recommended or required by the consulate (for example, the New York office no longer accepts Fed Ex return labels; you can ship to them using Fed Ex, but your return label must be UPS or USPS). No matter which service you use, make sure you can track your shipment and be sure to write down the tracking number before you enclose the return label.

Once you have your visa you will be able to:
- work part-time while in the UK (although we do not guarantee you can find employment) or intern
- extend your course of study beyond six months (if desired), if not already planning to be abroad for a year
- Students getting the full Tier 4 visa who want to arrive early may arrive 1 week early if they will study 6 months or less and may arrive up to 1 month early if they will study more than 6 months.
- Once you get overseas on a Tier 4 visa you will have one month to go to a Post Office to collect your Biometric Residency Permit (yearlong students only). You will receive instructions for this when you receive your visa.
- Periodically after your arrival in the UK you may also need to go to census points, which is essentially a 5 minute task to check in at Student Administration (Registry) on three occasions through the year.

British Council USA Website
The British council website (http://www.britishcouncil.us/study-uk) is a great source of information for anyone planning to study in the UK. You can view or download an immigration guide here: http://www.educationuk.org/usa/articles/student-visas/.

VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR CITIZENS OF OTHER COUNTRIES

If you are an EU citizen:
EU citizens are not required to obtain a student visa in order to enter the UK.

If you are a non-U.S. citizen studying abroad for any period of time:
Citizens of other countries (called “visa nationals”) studying abroad for any length of time should consult the website of the British Embassy or Consulate in their home country for information on their requirements. See https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa. If you do need a visa, see above for instructions on applying. Note that visa nationals applying for the short term study visa will likely need to apply for it in advance, rather than receiving this upon entering the UK (see https://www.gov.uk/study-visit-visa for more information).

YOUR HOST INSTITUTION

- The University of Edinburgh was founded in 1583 and is ranked within the top ten universities in the UK.
- It has a student population of approximately 20,000 full-time undergraduate students (31,000 total). As opposed to a campus setting, the city of Edinburgh is the campus.
- Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland and is located approximately 393 miles (4.5 hours by train) from London.
- It has a population of approximately 500,000 and remains a compact city with libraries, museums, theatres, shopping, and business areas in close proximity.
- It is a great place to live and study as it contains an enormous number of historical and cultural sites.
ACADEMICS

Course load and credits

At Edinburgh, a full year’s worth of credit is equal to 120 Edinburgh credits; one semester equals 60 Edinburgh credits. The normal course load consists of three 20-credit courses per semester. However, certain faculties (departments) have begun offering 10-credit courses, so students should adjust their course load accordingly. The minimum course load for a Richmond student is 50 Edinburgh credits per semester.

However, it is not recommended that students register for a minimum course load as this will leave you in a bad position if you later need to drop a class (you cannot be registered for less than a full-time course load), or if you get a grade lower than C in one of your classes (leaving you with less than a full semester’s worth of credits at the end of your program).

Credit conversion to units

The chart below shows how Edinburgh credits are converted to Richmond units.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edinburgh</th>
<th>Richmond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one 10-credit course</td>
<td>0.8 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one 20-credit course</td>
<td>1.5 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one 40-credit course</td>
<td>3 units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course level

Students who want to take Edinburgh honours courses must be majors in that subject area and must have completed at least three-four major courses with a grade of B or better. The 100 and 200 levels at Edinburgh are generally more advanced than first- or second-year courses at UR. A greater emphasis is placed on independent study. Very often there is no detailed schedule or syllabus, but a reading list from which the student must choose what to read. Keep this in mind as you register for courses.

Assessment

You must take your courses for a grade and earn the equivalent of a C or better in order to receive transfer credit on your Richmond record. No transfer credit is awarded for courses taken on a pass-fail basis. Although grades earned abroad are not calculated into your GPA at UR, they remain part of your permanent academic record.

Grading scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edinburgh</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>UR Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70-100</td>
<td>An excellent performance-very rare</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>A very good performance</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>A very good performance</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 – 59</td>
<td>A good performance</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>A good performance</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>A satisfactory performance</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maintain your high standards
Though your study abroad grades will not appear on your UR transcript, you should plan to work hard and get good grades while abroad for several reasons. One is that if you ever apply to graduate school, medical school, law school, etc., the institutions to which you apply can require you to submit transcripts from all of the places at which you have taken classes, including any at which you studied abroad. The same is true of potential employers. Another reason to work hard is that you will not get any transfer credit for classes in which you get grades lower than the equivalent of a C; if you do not earn a full semester’s worth of transfer credit, you may fall behind in your progress toward graduation and you may put your financial aid status in jeopardy. And a third reason to work hard is that if you do not, you will tarnish the reputation of UR and of the people of your home country.

Important note regarding grading
At Edinburgh, each course is comprised of at least two if not three or more course components, and each component must be passed successfully in order to receive a passing grade for the entire course. For example, if a course has 10% of the grade for class assignments, 20% for a paper (essay), and 70% of the grade for the exam, each of the three components must be passed successfully in order to receive a passing grade (equivalent to a ‘C’ or better) for the course and to achieve transfer credit. This is regardless of the overall mark. Therefore, even if a student receives a perfect score in two of three course components, if the third component is not successfully passed, the student will not receive academic credit.

TRANSCRIPTS
Your host institution will send one official transcript to Richmond’s Office of International Education after you have taken your final exams and your grades have been reported. We suggest that, before you leave your program site, you should arrange for your host institution to send you one or two extra copies so that you can use them to apply for graduate school, law school, fellowships, etc. This will involve paying a fee and providing an address to which they should send it. When you receive it, note that opened transcripts become unofficial transcripts, so be cautious.

Specifically for Edinburgh: You should contact the college (Humanities & Social Sciences or Science & Engineering) in which you are/were enrolled. You can do this while you are abroad or after you return home, but for the latter you will incur additional mailing costs. If you are requesting a transcript after you’ve returned home, you should refer to your matriculation number, semester and year of your study abroad, and your home university (University of Richmond, USA).

REGISTRATION WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Registration at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the country you are visiting makes your presence and whereabouts known, in case it is necessary for a consular officer to contact you in an emergency. During a disaster overseas, American consular officers can assist in evacuation, should that become necessary, but they cannot assist you if they do not know where you are.

You can register with the appropriate U.S. Embassy or Consulate by following a link on Richmond’s study abroad website. Go to http://studyabroad.richmond.edu > Health and Safety > and then find the box that says “Register with the Embassy.” Alternatively, you may go directly to the relevant website: https://step.state.gov/step/. In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare or whereabouts may not be released to inquirers without your expressed written authorizations. Registration through the website is not considered proof of citizenship. Remember to leave a detailed itinerary and the numbers or copies of your passport or other citizenship documents with a friend or relative in the United States.
HEALTH INFORMATION

CDC health information

Study abroad insurance
University of Richmond students are automatically enrolled in a health insurance plan called Ace Travel/AXA, for which the costs are paid by UR (see http://international.richmond.edu/semester/health-safety/insurance.html for exclusions and details). Your Ace/AXA insurance card is available to you on your Gateway Abroad file, in the ‘Insurance/Emergency Cards & Letters’ (IECL) section. The policy wording, instructions on how to use the insurance, and a claim form are all online at the above web address. The study abroad insurance covers you worldwide except in the USA.

It is important for you and your family to understand how your health insurance works before you need it. Read the policy description closely before you depart. It is difficult to absorb detailed information when you are sick, injured, or upset, and it is easy to make expensive mistakes when you are trying to make important decisions under such circumstances.

Health care in the UK
Exchange Students whose period of study lasts less than 6 months are not eligible for free primary health care at the University Health Center, however you may still be seen as a temporary patient. Check the following web page for the latest health updates concerning the United Kingdom and Western Europe: http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/.

Medications
Some students may need to bring medications with them overseas or may need to fill a prescription while they are abroad. Here is important information: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/your-health-abroad.html.

SAFETY RESOURCES

A safe trip abroad
The Department of State urges American citizens to take responsibility for their own personal security while traveling overseas. For general information about appropriate measures travelers can take to protect themselves in an overseas environment, see the Department of State’s website: http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/checklist.html

Visit the Department of State web site frequently for updates and changes:
Main site: http://travel.state.gov/

Travel Advisories and Public Announcements:
https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html

Worldwide Caution Public Announcements:
https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/worldwide-caution.html

Emergencies in a Foreign Country: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies.html


Read the brochure about alcohol & drugs abroad to learn what your responsibilities are and what the U.S. Consulate can and cannot do for you: https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/students-abroad/pdfs/alcohol.pdf http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/emergencies/crisis-support.html
Phoning the Department of State
Up-to-date information on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S., or for callers outside the U.S. and Canada, a regular toll-line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

Road Safety
Traffic and road conditions abroad are quite different from those in the U.S. and are a major cause of accident and injury to visiting students. The University of Richmond advises you not to rent or purchase a car while abroad. It’s your responsibility to inform yourself about driving and conditions in the host country:

- Driving abroad (see http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/safety/road.html)

Water Safety
Be especially careful in and around the ocean, lakes, ponds, rivers, canals, pools, ponds, and beaches. Even when a body of water appears calm and harmless, there may be hidden objects, swift currents, and other dangers lurking.

Fire/Natural Gas Safety
Students need to be aware of safety in their residence. As one would do in the U.S., be sure to locate the nearest fire escape route and know the phone numbers of emergency services in case they are needed. It is a good idea to take a battery operated smoke detector with you abroad since many buildings are older and may not have smoke detectors or sprinkler systems in place. See this website to learn more about fire safety abroad: http://www.firesafetyfoundation.org/.

As in the U.S., natural gas may be used to provide heat as well as to provide hot water. Be aware of the heating situation provided by your host institution and host residence. For locations where carbon monoxide-producing appliances may be present - i.e., any appliance that burns fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal – be sure to ask for detailed information on usage of these appliances in order to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. For further information, please visit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website at http://www.epa.gov/iaq/co.html.

SAFETY IN THE UK

Pub life
Being in bars raises safety issues. If you choose to drink, do so in moderation. Avoid traveling home alone if you have been drinking because you could become an easy target for thieves and you may become disoriented on the public transport systems. Please be aware that beer in the UK has much higher alcohol content.

Geopolitical terrorism
Due to the possible threat of terrorism, please read all travel alerts sent to you from OIE while you are abroad. In addition, to help prevent terrorist acts involving airplanes, increased restrictions concerning carry-on luggage have been put in place in the UK and are strictly enforced. American citizens are advised to check with the UK Department for Transport (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport) regarding the latest security updates and travel updates or restrictions.

Vigilance urged
Americans are reminded to remain vigilant with regard to their personal security and to exercise caution. For more information about UK public safety initiatives, consult the UK Civil Contingencies Secretariat website at http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience.aspx.

Northern Ireland and terrorism
The political situation in Northern Ireland (which is part of the UK) has dramatically improved since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and the announcement by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) on July 28, 2005, that it would end its armed campaign. Within Northern Ireland, flash-points for sectarian confrontations still exist, but they are generally removed from areas where tourists congregate. The potential remains for sporadic incidents of street violence in isolated
areas in Northern Ireland during the summer marching season (April to August), with tensions heightened during the month of July, especially around the July 12th public holiday. As a result, American citizens traveling in Northern Ireland could experience delays and disruption.

CRIME IN THE UK

Crime rate
The United Kingdom benefits from generally low crime rates; however crime, including violent crime, has increased over the last few years, especially in London (if you are traveling through London on your way to/from Edinburgh, this is good information to know). Incidents include pick pocketing, mugging, “snatch and grab” theft of mobile phones, watches, and jewelry, and theft of unattended bags, especially at airports and from cars parked at restaurants, hotels, and resorts. Since 2007, there has been an increase in the number of muggings involving knives. Avoid walking alone late at night, avoid isolated areas, and avoid intoxication to reduce the chances of becoming a victim.

Pick pocketing and other crime
Pickpockets target tourists, especially at historic sites, restaurants, on buses, trains, and, if you are traveling in London, on the London Underground (“Tube” or subway). Thieves often target unattended cars parked at tourist sites and roadside restaurants, looking for laptop computers and hand-held electronic equipment. Walking in isolated areas, including public parks, especially after dark, should also be avoided, as these provide advantageous venues for muggers and thieves. In London, travelers should use only licensed “black taxi cabs,” or car services recommended by their hotel or tour operator. Unlicensed taxis or private cars posing as taxis may offer low fares, but are often uninsured and may have unlicensed drivers. In some instances, travelers have been robbed and raped while using these cars. Travelers should take care not to leave drinks unattended in bars and nightclubs. There have been some instances of drinks being spiked with illegal substances, leading to incidents of robbery and rape. In Scotland, these incidences are reduced significantly.

Protecting your passport
Due to the circumstances described above, visitors should take steps to ensure the safety of their passports. Visitors in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Gibraltar are not expected to produce identity documents for police authorities and thus may secure their passports in hotel safes or residences.

ATM fraud
ATM fraud in the UK is becoming more sophisticated, incorporating technologies to surreptitiously record customer ATM card and PIN information. Travelers should avoid using ATMs located in isolated areas. In addition, the traveler should not use the ATM if there is anything stuck to the machine or if it looks unusual in any way. If the machine does not return the card, it should be reported to the issuing bank immediately. Common sense personal security measures utilized in the U.S. when using ATMs should also be followed in the UK.

Drug Use and Laws
Although a survey conducted in Scotland shows a decrease in the number of people taking illicit drugs (http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2010/01/26105559), Scotland continues to experience some drug-related problems. From marijuana to ecstasy, so-called “recreational drug use,” particularly among club-goers, can be a problem. When clubs and night spots close, there are often problems with the resultant foot and vehicular traffic on the streets. Petty crimes (theft, robberies, etc.) may be committed by drug-users to support their habit. According to the World Factbook of Criminal Justice Systems, in Scotland the “[p]roduction, supply, possession, possession with intent to supply, and offenses related to the importation and exportation of controlled drugs are illegal.” Do not turn your study abroad experience into a nightmare—do not participate in drug activity of any kind.

SOME THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Telephone numbers given on emergency cards are usually provided in the format used by one particular country; it is not possible to provide all of the possible telephone number formats on one card. For example, you cannot usually make an 800 call from a country other than the U.S. or Canada. When you get your health insurance card, you should check to see
if/how you need to modify the phone numbers provided on it so you can reach the insurance company from the country where you will study. The same applies with phone numbers for cancelling credit cards & ATM cards.

Also be aware that many countries do not have one emergency phone number, like 911, that can be used in any emergency. Many countries have separate phone numbers for calling the police, ambulance, & fire services.

Also be aware that in some countries, the emergency service numbers are different if you are dialing from a land line or a cell phone.

**Emergency numbers in the UK:** AMBULANCE or POLICE: 999

**SCOTLAND, ENGLAND, AND THE UK**

You need to know the difference. Ethnic identities are very strong in the British Isles. It would be worthwhile to read about the history of the region so that you can speak intelligently on these matters.

**VOCABULARY**

It may take a few weeks to get used to the accent, but even longer to get used to the jargon. So be prepared to listen carefully and don’t be surprised if they do not understand you at first either. Many first-time visitors to the United Kingdom find that there is more of a communication problem than they expected. This is especially the case for Americans confronted by familiar words used in unfamiliar ways. The mini-dictionary below should help you to prepare for your time abroad.

**BRITISH**

- bathroom
- bin
- bloke
- brolly
- Cheers
- chips
- cinema/the pictures
- crisps
- Continent
- chemist/pharmacist
- duvet
- fag
- fortnight
- ground floor
- hire
- lager, bitter, “real ale”
- lemonade
- let
- lift
- loo/WC
- LV’s
- lorry
- mate
- mind
- pissed
- postbox/pillar box
- restroom
- rubbish

**AMERICAN**

- exactly that; where one bathes
- trash can
- a fellow, guy
- umbrella
- like goodbye, used at the end of a conversation, or used to mean thank you
- French fries
- movie house/theater
- potato chips
- Europe
- drug store
- comforter
- cigarette
- two weeks
- first floor
- rent (goods)
- beer
- like 7 UP
- rent (real estate)
- elevator
- toilet
- Luncheon Vouchers
- truck
- friend, pal
- look out for (as in danger)
- drunk
- mailbox
- where one takes a rest (not a toilet)
- garbage
queue  waiting line
quid   pound sterling
reverse charges  call collect
ring  to call on telephone
rubber  eraser
salad cream  salad dressing
sorry  pardon me
spirits  liquor
stone  equal to 14 pounds of weight
surgery  doctor's office; a period when doctor sees patients
telephone or ring up  call
trunk call  long distance
tube/underground  train, subway, metro
wally, divvy (Liverpool)  nerd, dork

*The British tell time differently than Americans. For example, half six is 6:30. Brits generally do not say it is “ten of six;” rather they would say it is 5:50 p.m. or ten till six.

MISCELLANEOUS

Weather
The weather in Scotland is fairly moderate year-round, with typical highs in the spring semester ranging from 42-55°F and typical highs in the fall semester ranging from 43-59°F. Annual rainfall is said to be on par with New York. Bringing a sweater or dressing in layers is wise, as the weather can be changeable throughout the day.

Banking
Some students open a bank account in the UK, but most returned study abroad students report that they managed very well by using ATMs. If you have a debit/credit/check card for an account in the U.S. that has the Cirrus, Plus, Visa, or MasterCard symbol on the back, it is usually possible to withdraw money from your account in the States while abroad. Your parent or guardian could deposit money to your account so that you can access it while abroad. Check with your bank for details and ask whether your ATM card can be used in the place where you are going. In particular, read up on the “Chip and PIN” system [here](#).

If you bring a credit/check/debit card with you, remember to call your credit card company to inform them that you will be traveling and living abroad temporarily. Some companies do not accept international purchases unless they are given advance notice and could lock or freeze your card as they might think the transactions are fraudulent.

Other Financial Advice
Remember that you will need money immediately on arrival for meals, etc. Your requirements will depend on your port of entry and how long you expect to spend between arriving in the UK and your arrival at Edinburgh (and therefore might include money for overnight accommodation). Travellers’ cheques can be cashed at airports and at Bureaux de Change, though beware of the fee for cashing them in. Currency: One pound Sterling (£1.00) is divided into one hundred pence (100p). The coinage is 1p, 2p, 5p, 20p, 50p, £1, and £2; the notes are in denominations of £1, £5, £10, £20, £50, and £100. If you are carrying a credit card, please make sure that you sign it before you begin your journey. The UK has moved over to the Chip and PIN security system (see above), which means you will need to know your PIN number to make purchases using your VISA or Mastercard. American Express and Diners Club cards are not widely used in the UK; you may find that retailers charge a surcharge for their use.

USEFUL WEBLINKS

ABOUT THE UK
Greater Britain Travel – [http://www.travel.org/britain.html](http://www.travel.org/britain.html)
BritRail Web Site – [http://www.rail.co.uk/ukrail/planner/planner.htm](http://www.rail.co.uk/ukrail/planner/planner.htm)
ScotRail Web Site- [https://www.scotrail.co.uk/](https://www.scotrail.co.uk/)
SAFETY & HEALTH
Safety advice from the U.S. Dept of State – http://travel.state.gov/
Health advice from the Centers for Disease Control – https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list

NEWS
BBC – http://news.bbc.co.uk/
Reuters – http://uk.reuters.com/

MONEY
Currency converter – http://www.xe.com/ucc/

TIME ZONES
Make a personal, multiple time zone clock – http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/setpersonal.html

HAVE A GREAT ADVENTURE!