



Welcome!

Your upcoming study abroad experience may well change your life. It will certainly change your perceptions and lead you to new thoughts and directions.

Most of us at AIFS have studied abroad. We are here to help you plan for your overseas study and to make your transition abroad as easy as possible. Please call us if you have any questions concerning your program.

As you prepare to leave the U.S., take some time to consider your plans and expectations. It is interesting and fun to compare them before your departure and after your return. Many come true. Others are tempered by the reality of your experience abroad. Flexibility in attitudes and expectations will enhance your ability to enjoy a new culture and to experience another country's lifestyle. Try to be open-minded and don't compare everything to what you are accustomed at home. Sure, life may seem less luxurious and comfortable, but there are many other things to compensate for this.

What you get from your time abroad will depend on how much effort you put into breaking away from your American group and meeting new people in the communities you're visiting. AIFS will do everything it can to provide you with advice, information, resources and suggestions on how to do this. Make the most of this assistance and get out and see Britain and Europe.

You are sure to have many questions and concerns before the start of your program. You will be able to answer many of your own questions if you take the time to review this handbook and do a little extra research before your departure. This will enable you to leave feeling more confident and prepared.

The most important thing to take with you is a positive attitude! It will help you adjust and enjoy life overseas more fully.

Please do not hesitate to contact AIFS for assistance, advice or guidance. The Stamford, CT, office can be reached at (800) 727-2437, and the London Student Services staff can be contacted by e-mail at studentinfo@aifs.co.uk.

Enjoy your adventure!

The Partnership Programs Staff

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THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU GO ABROAD

PASSPORTS

Students planning to study abroad need a valid passport for the duration of their stay overseas.

Please note that AIFS does not issue passports, nor can we request them on your behalf. If you do not possess a valid passport, you must obtain one well in advance of any proposed study abroad program. Please read the following information carefully.

If you have a passport that is scheduled to expire during your program or within four months after the end of your program, **renew it now**.

You will not be able to embark on your flight without a valid passport in hand.

If you are applying for your first passport, you must present in person a completed Form DSP-11, "Passport Application", at one of the passport agencies listed on the next page. Several thousand Federal and State courts and U.S. post offices also accept passport applications. Check with those closest to your home. If they do not accept the applications, they will be able to recommend a place in your area that does. Otherwise, you should call or write to the passport agency nearest your home address. (See "Passport Agencies" on the next page for the agency nearest you.)

To obtain a passport you will need:

- I. A properly completed Passport Application (Form DSP-11)
- II. Proof of Citizenship, including:
 - A. A previously issued passport or one in which you were included (e.g., family passport). If you are applying for your first passport or cannot submit a previous passport, you must submit other evidence of citizenship.
 - B. If you were born within the United States: A birth certificate that must show that the birth record was filed shortly after your birth and which must be certified with the registrar's signature and raised, embossed or multicolored seal. ("Notifications of Birth Registration" and "Birth Announcements" are not normally accepted for passport purposes.)
 - C. If you were born abroad:
 - i. A Certificate of Naturalization
 - ii. A Certificate of Citizenship
 - iii. A Report of Birth Abroad of a Citizen of the U.S. (Form FS-240) or a Certification of Birth (Form FS-545 or DS-1350.)
- III. Two recent identical photographs. They must be signed on the reverse side and the signature must agree with that on the application. The photos must be 2" x 2" and must be in color.

When you receive your passport, be sure to sign it and fill in the personal notification data. If your passport is lost or stolen within the United States, report the loss or theft immediately to Passport Services, Department of State, Washington D.C. 20520, or to the nearest passport agency. The loss or theft should also be reported to the local police authorities.

IF YOUR PASSPORT IS LOST OR STOLEN WHILE YOU ARE ABROAD, CONTACT THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE CLOSEST AMERICAN CONSULATE IMMEDIATELY.

Passport Agencies

The automated appointment number for all passport agencies is (877) 487-2778.

BOSTON PASSPORT AGENCY

Thomas P. O'Neill Federal Building
10 Causeway Street, Suite 247
Boston, MA 02222-1094

CHICAGO PASSPORT AGENCY

Kluczynski Federal Building
230 South Dearborn Street, 18th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604-1564

COLORADO PASSPORT AGENCY

Cherry Creek III
3151 South Vaughn Way, Suite 600
Aurora, CO 80014

CONNECTICUT PASSPORT AGENCY

50 Washington Street
South Norwalk, CT 06854

HONOLULU PASSPORT AGENCY

Prince Kuhio Federal Building
300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 1-330
Honolulu, HI 96850

HOUSTON PASSPORT AGENCY

Mickey Leland Federal Building
1919 Smith Street, Suite 1400
Houston, TX 77002-8049

LOS ANGELES PASSPORT AGENCY

Federal Building
11000 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1000
Los Angeles, CA 90024-3615

MIAMI PASSPORT AGENCY

Claude Pepper Federal Office Building
51 SW First Avenue, 3rd Floor
Miami, FL 33130-1680

NEW ORLEANS PASSPORT AGENCY

One Canal Place
(corner of Canal and North Peters Streets)
365 Canal Street, Suite 1300
New Orleans, LA 70130-6508

NEW YORK PASSPORT AGENCY

376 Hudson Street
(between W. Houston & King Streets)
New York, NY 10014

PHILADELPHIA PASSPORT AGENCY

U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street, Room 103
Philadelphia, PA 19106-2970

SAN FRANCISCO PASSPORT AGENCY

95 Hawthorne Street, Fifth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

SEATTLE PASSPORT AGENCY

Henry Jackson Federal Building
915 Second Avenue
Suite 992
Seattle, WA 98174-1091

WASHINGTON PASSPORT AGENCY

1111 19th Street, N.W.
First Floor, Sidewalk Level
Washington, DC 20036

For general passport information, you may dial the Federal Information Center at (800) 688-9889, or visit the State Department's website at www.travel.state.gov.

VISAS & ENTERING OTHER COUNTRIES

A visa is an endorsement stamped into your passport by a foreign government allowing you to enter that particular country for a specific purpose and period of time. Visas are valid from the date on which they are issued.

Every country has its own immigration policies for students. Please make sure you have fulfilled all the necessary requirements before your departure. When entering other countries, prepare to be asked to explain why you are there, where you are staying and how long you will stay. As a study abroad participant you have a legitimate reason for entering the country as long as you have obtained the appropriate visa documents.

Entering England

U.S. Citizens

No advance visa is required for U.S. citizens intending to study in Great Britain. Visas are not required for any of the countries visited on the optional tour of Europe.

AIFS will provide an immigration letter with your airline ticket or Own Travel information. Keep it with your passport. Expect to show this document to British immigration officials upon arrival to London. If you do not have it, you are likely to face a long interview with the immigration officials.

When entering Great Britain, advise the immigration officer of your intended length of stay (one semester or quarter), and show the officer your letter from AIFS. You will then be issued with a six-month *Student Visitor Visa* (this will be stamped into your passport). Double-check this stamp for accuracy.

Please note that the Student Visitor Visa does not give you the right to work or to undertake an internship in the U.K. **If you intend to work part-time, or to intern, you will need to obtain a *Prior Entry Clearance (INF-5) visa*.** This visa must be obtained before you depart the U.S. To obtain this visa, you must submit an application form, your passport, and documentation to your nearest British Consulate (Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco or Washington, D.C.). The visa costs \$208, and your application must be filed at least four weeks in advance of your departure date from the U.S. Please note that you must have a valid passport before applying for the visa. You will also be required to provide biometric data (10-finger scans and a digital photograph) when applying for a visa. This will involve visiting one of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Application Support Centers. A list of Application Support Centers is available on the USCIS website at www.uscis.gov. For more information about how to apply for this visa, see www.ukvisas.gov.uk or www.britainusa.com/visas/visas.asp.

If you are planning on undertaking voluntary work/community service, you do not need to obtain an INF-5 visa

Non-U.S. citizens

If you are not a U.S. citizen, it is your responsibility to obtain all necessary documentation:

1. Check to see if your passport is still valid.
2. Contact the embassy in Washington or nearest Consulate of the countries that you plan to visit or travel through (e.g., if you have a connecting flight into and out of a country) to learn if visas

are necessary. **Please note that you may require a visa if you are only changing planes in a certain country, even if you will not be exiting the airport.**

3. Apply for all necessary visas at once. Note that if you are participating in the optional orientation tour of Europe, you will be visiting France and Belgium.
4. If you are a permanent resident of the U.S., take your green card abroad with you. You will be asked to show it to U.S. Immigration Officials upon your return to the U.S.

If you plan to travel to other countries during breaks or at the end of your study abroad program, it is your responsibility to find out what documentation is necessary for those countries.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

Check with your physician or student health service regarding immunization requirements for the countries you plan to visit. Make sure that your childhood immunizations (measles, mumps, rubella; diphtheria-tetanus; etc.) are up-to-date.

Students, particularly those living away from home for the first time, have shown a marked vulnerability to meningitis Group C. As a result students are strongly encouraged to receive an immunization against both Groups A and C prior to departure from the U.S. Check with your physician for specific details.

Be sure to schedule an appointment for a complete physical examination with your physician prior to departure. You will receive a Medical Examination Form from AIFS that must be completed by your doctor and returned to AIFS two weeks before you depart.

Use common sense when it comes to your health while you are abroad. The stress of travel and time change combined with a new daily routine can be unsettling at first. Be sure to eat well, drink plenty of fluids and get enough sleep. This will help you get through the adjustment phase at the start of your term abroad.

Always travel with any medications you use on a regular basis, as well as copies of your prescriptions. It is especially important to have a prescription on hand if you will be carrying insulin, syringes or narcotics. Make sure that all medications are carried in their original containers and that your name appears clearly on each label. Be sure you have the generic name of any prescription medication as brand names can vary between countries. Do not assume that prescriptions can be filled as easily overseas as they can be in the U.S. If possible bring enough medication to last the entire trip. Those with chronic medical problems should have their physician fully document their case, listing any necessary medications. Carry this documentation with you and be sure to inform the AIFS staff in case there is a problem.

If you wear eyeglasses or contact lenses, be sure to take an extra pair of glasses and a copy of your prescription with you. It is also helpful to leave an extra prescription with someone at home so that s/he can send you a replacement pair in an emergency. Contact lens wearers will want to bring their care products (solutions, tablets, eye drops, etc.) with them abroad, as the cost of these products is very high overseas.

MONEY

ATM cards, traveler's checks and credit cards are the safest and simplest ways to carry money. Information on various currency options follows.

ATM Cards

Perhaps the most efficient method of accessing your money is the use of cash dispenser networks. The American Plus, Cirrus and Star networks can be accessed from the cash dispensers of several of the high street banks in Britain, allowing cash to be withdrawn from a U.S. bank account if you have a card that is linked to one of these systems. Students should check with their local banks for ATM capabilities in Europe. Make sure you get a four-digit PIN code from your bank before leaving the U.S., and be sure it doesn't start with a "0." Those with PIN codes beginning with a "0" often have trouble withdrawing money once in Europe.

Traveler's Checks

The best-known traveler's checks are American Express, Bank of America, Barclay's and Thomas Cook. Most banks charge a commission for issuing traveler's checks. Always keep a written record of the traveler's check numbers and purchase agreements in a place other than where you carry your checks. In the event the checks are lost or stolen, this will greatly facilitate obtaining replacement checks. It is also a good idea to obtain approximately \$100 worth of foreign currency (British pounds sterling) prior to your departure from the U.S., especially if you will be arriving overseas on a weekend or are not purchasing the AIFS Transportation Package. You can use this currency to pay for your transportation to your residence.

You may purchase your traveler's checks in British pounds sterling or in U.S. dollars. Be sure to have your passport with you when you exchange your traveler's checks. If using those in U.S. dollars, avoid exchanging them for cash on weekends or at hotels or restaurants — you will pay a big premium for the convenience. Places such as these are not obligated to charge the daily exchange rate and often charge a high commission. Wait for the banks to open.

Credit Cards

It is strongly recommended that you get a credit card if you do not already have one. Major credit cards — VISA, MasterCard and American Express— are widely accepted in Britain and Europe. Discover and Diner's Club are not accepted. Remember that although credit cards are accepted in most parts of the world, they aren't accepted everywhere. Before entering any establishment where you plan to charge your purchase, be sure to verify that credit cards are accepted.

You must obtain a four-digit PIN code for your credit cards. This code will be required for every purchase made. (In the U.K., customers are required to input a PIN code rather than sign a receipt.)

MasterCard and VISA will allow you to withdraw cash against your credit card. An American Express card will allow you to cash your personal checks at their office. American Express offices are also able to access extra funds from your bank account at home.

Be aware of restrictions, transaction fees and service charges on the above.

Banking

The four largest banks in Britain (all reputable and recommended) are National Westminster, HSBC, Barclay's and Lloyds TSB. Large U.S. banks (e.g., Bankers Trust, Chase Manhattan,

Citibank, First National City Bank of Boston, Bank of America) have branches in London, though they are often inconveniently located in the London financial quarter.

First Interstate Bank of California, Bankers Trust and Bank of America unfortunately no longer cash checks for account holders in London.

Chase Manhattan will cash checks but only for holders of the Chase Convenience Card.

Only American Express cardholders can cash checks at American Express offices in London. American Express also has cash dispensers for cardholders.

Please note that you find it extremely difficult to open a bank account in London.

Receiving Money from the U.S.

Wire transfers should only be used as a last resort; they vary in effectiveness and you often need to have a bank account in your host country in order to receive the wire.

Personal checks drawn on U.S. bank accounts are generally not accepted abroad. If they are, it may take at least 6 to 8 weeks for the check to clear, often longer. The European bank will send the personal check back to the U.S. for collection and you will have to wait for clearance to receive the funds. It is a lengthy, inconvenient way to receive money while abroad.

Emergency Money Transfers

If you need to have money sent to you from the U.S. while studying abroad the best service to use is Western Union's MONEY IN MINUTES. By contacting Western Union you can send money from the U.S. to any Western Union Office worldwide using a U.S. debit or credit card. Sending \$500 from California to Paris will cost the sender approximately \$43.

You can use this service online at www.westernunion.com and click on MONEY IN MINUTES. You can also send money over the phone by calling 1-800-CALL-CASH or by visiting any Western Union office.

For more information on this service and transferring money abroad please visit www.westernunion.com.

Handling Foreign Currency

- Go to major local banks or to national banks in cities to exchange currency rather than to small banks or money brokers. *Avoid the Bureaux de Change in Britain.*
- Use banks and the exchange offices at airports.
- Exchange traveler's checks instead of cash. You will get a better exchange rate for traveler's checks.
- Buy a small amount (\$50-60) of British currency before departure to have handy upon arrival for taxis, buses and tips. Buy more if you arrive on a weekend. Do not bring a lot of dollars with you.

- Do not keep a lot of local currency when you depart a country. Exchange it at a bank or at a departure terminal. It may not be easy to exchange foreign currency when you return home as only bills may be exchanged, not coins.
- Don't overtip. The standard tip in Europe is 10%. In some places, tips may already be included in your bill so check your bill carefully.
- Never exchange your money in hotels, restaurants, bars or shops. They can and will charge high commissions and are not obligated to charge the daily exchange rate.
- Never carry large sums of cash with you. If it is lost or stolen, there is no way to replace it, and it is not covered by insurance.

"Funny" and Counterfeit Money

You must always be on guard for restaurants and storekeepers who try to pass you "funny money." Many try to unload old bank notes of no value. This is not overly common but happens occasionally. The best thing to do is to thoroughly acquaint yourself with the currency of the country you are visiting so that you can recognize legal tender.

Also be aware of counterfeit money. You might notice shopkeepers holding money up to the light to check whether it is authentic or not. Keep in mind that most bank notes in Europe are watermarked. There is usually a portrait of a national hero or monarch in the blank spot, which is visible when held to the light. In England, you can see a strip of silver foil running vertically through the note.

BUDGETING AND SPENDING MONEY

London can be an expensive city and there are many temptations. You will need to plan carefully. The AIFS social calendar will provide a range of subsidized activities, and London offers many free events published in the weekly *Time Out* guide that is available at the Student Center. Many galleries and museums are also free.

AIFS recommends students budget £420 (\$800) per month for the basic extras and day-to-day needs. This will not cover extensive personal travel and expensive gift buying. It is advisable to have a credit card in case of unexpected expenses.

You know better than anyone else what your spending habits are. Take some time to think about your daily expenses. Ask yourself some of these questions:

If you smoke, how much per day? Cigarettes can be very expensive at \$11 per pack.

A beer costs about \$6. The legal drinking age in Europe is 18.

How much traveling are you planning on doing? Don't forget mid-semester break. Plan for trips and excursions.

When budgeting, remember to include weekend trips outside the city and any additional cultural and social activities you might want to pursue that are not offered as part of your program.

Plan your budget carefully and stick to it. As a rule, it is better to bring too much money and not spend it all than not to have enough and miss opportunities.

How can I calculate the total cost for the semester?

The program can be divided into four cost areas: AIFS program fee, flight cost, home institution's tuition fee and spending money.

BAGGAGE TIPS

It is important to use luggage that is durable, easy to pack and easy to carry. Check the handles and seams to make sure they are secure. Soft luggage with zippered openings is lighter and easier to pack than a hard case. You will find backpacks useful to bring for weekend trips. They are easy to carry and many convert into suitcases.

CHECK YOUR AIRLINE'S WEBSITE CLOSE TO DEPARTURE AS INFORMATION IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING.

Here are some additional tips:

Pack only what you can carry. Porters are scarce abroad and luggage carts are prohibited in some parts of the airport, so do not rely on them for assistance. Do not rely on family or friends either — they will not be with you when you arrive at your overseas destination. You will be responsible for carrying your own luggage throughout your journey, until you return home, even if you are on the AIFS flight.

Pack categorically. Put clothes, toiletries, maps and guidebooks into separate compartments so that you can find them easily. Take along copies of all medical prescriptions, including eyeglasses and/or contact lenses, in case you need a refill.

Be careful what you pack in your carry-on. Any liquids packed in your carry-on must measure 3 oz. or less per container, and all such containers must fit in a quart-sized zip-top clear plastic bag that you will remove when going through security. This bag will be screened separately, apart from your luggage, so be sure it is easily accessible. For the most updated information on packing, as well as airport security, check <http://www.tsa.gov>.

Identify your luggage. Each piece of luggage, including your carry-on, should be identified with a tag showing your name and address at home and abroad. Also, put a slip of paper with your name and home address inside your luggage in case your outer tags come off during handling. Always remove old, incorrect address and airline tags to avoid confusion. As an extra precaution, you may want to put a ribbon or a piece of brightly colored tape on your luggage to help you identify it easily in the baggage claim area. If you will be taking the AIFS flight, be sure to use the baggage tags we send you. These make you easier to identify both to each other and to the AIFS representatives meeting you in London. Airport security also advises that you not lock your luggage. Airport security personnel will remove locks from any bags that require inspection.

Never leave your bags unattended at the airport. Keep an eye on your bags at all times. Airlines will not accept luggage that was not packed by its owner, or that was left unguarded.

Pack a few essentials in your carry-on. Unfortunately, some students have had to start their study abroad program without their luggage. Just in case the airline should lose your luggage,

pack your toothbrush, any medications you need to take, an extra set of underwear, etc., in your carry-on.

Also, if your baggage does go astray en route to your overseas campus, file a claim with the airline upon arrival. Inform your Program Coordinator about the claim; s/he may be able to assist you. Most airlines require that you make your lost luggage claim within four hours after arrival and before you leave the airport.

Be sure that your luggage and its contents are insured against theft or loss. Personal effects insurance coverage is not included in the AIFS program fee. If you purchased the AIFS Personal Effects Coverage, you have personal effects insurance, but there are exclusions and per-item limits, so check your insurance brochure carefully. Leave expensive and valuable items at home. If you must bring such items with you, make sure they will be covered, either by AIFS' insurance or by your own. If you need to file a claim during the program, complete the *AIFS Personal Effects Claim Form* and give it to your program coordinator.

Only students who purchased the AIFS Personal Effects Insurance Coverage have personal effects insurance coverage and may use the Personal Effects Claim Form.

Transatlantic Baggage Regulations

Airlines flying between the United States and Europe will expect you to follow these regulations concerning baggage allowance. Study the specifications below and abide by them. The less you bring, the happier you will be.

International, economy class baggage restrictions follow. These are general guidelines and may not be specific to your flight. It is always advisable to check with the airline if you have a question. You may be charged a penalty if you exceed the allowance. Please note that these are baggage regulations of the airlines and not of AIFS.

Checked baggage:

2 Pieces — The dimensions (sum of linear measurements: L + H + W) of either piece may not exceed 62 inches. The sum of the two pieces may not exceed 107 inches. No bag may exceed 50 lbs.

Carry-on baggage:

1 Piece — Must fit under seat or in overhead compartment. Carry-on luggage may not exceed 45 inches or weigh more than 13 lbs. Liquids can only be carried in containers smaller than 3 oz. and must be presented at security in a quart-size transparent resealable plastic bag .

Note: While traveling in Europe, you will be held to a 44-lb./20 kg. limit for baggage. Some student charters allow even less.

At the airport, it is your responsibility to see that your bags get checked through properly. Make sure your claim stubs have the correct destination on them and keep them until you have collected your luggage. **These stubs are your receipts.** Airlines will refuse luggage that is improperly tagged.

Put your name and the address of your overseas destination on your baggage tags in case your bags go astray and have to be forwarded to you.

European Baggage Regulations

When flying between countries within Europe (e.g., between London and Dublin), baggage allowances are extremely restrictive. This will affect anyone who intends to travel before or after an AIFS study abroad program. We advise you to store any excess, bulky luggage items at the storage facilities located at airports and train stations throughout Europe.

Many budget airlines operate in Europe offering no-frills flights at bargain rates. While most of these airlines have similar baggage allowance guidelines (as detailed below), it is always advisable to check restrictions with individual airlines before you travel. You will be charged a penalty if you exceed these allowances. Again, please note that these are baggage regulations are enforced by the airlines and not by AIFS.

Checked baggage:

Most intra-European flights allow a maximum weight of 20 kg (44 lbs) for any one item of checked baggage. Generally, checking heavier bags involves a fee of approximately \$9 per kg. Many budget airlines impose a fee to check bags.

Carry-on baggage:

Each passenger can carry one small piece of hand baggage on board. The carry-on bag must not weigh more than 5 kg (11 lbs), and must measure less than 22" by 17.7" by 9.8" in dimension. You must be able to stow it securely on board.

WHAT TO PACK

Deciding what to bring and what to leave behind is a difficult task. Students always find that they brought more clothing than was necessary. Bring as little as you possibly can and do not bring more than you yourself can carry easily, especially if you plan to travel on your own during or after the program. Closet space in rooms is limited. Remember to leave room for souvenirs and gifts to take back home.

The clothes students wear in Europe are generally the same as those found in the U.S. Clothing with easy care instructions is advisable as dry cleaners are very expensive.

Here is a list of clothing and practical items you may want to consider packing. Also listed are clothing and items you should not bring.

Clothing

Do bring:

- Clothing that can be worn in a range of different temperatures and without frequent washings. "Mix and match" items like jeans, T-shirts (long- and short-sleeved), sweatshirts, turtlenecks,

sweaters, button-down shirts, etc., can be worn in layers when it is cold and alone when it is warmer.

- Plenty of socks and underwear
- Comfortable walking shoes — waterproof them to extend their wear
- Flip-flops (for the hallways and bathrooms)
- A durable coat
- Raincoat and umbrella, and windbreaker or anorak with a hood
- Gloves, a hat and a scarf
- Bathing suit

Do not bring:

- Too many dressy outfits. Generally, you only need to bring one pair of dress shoes and one dressy outfit for special occasions.
- Clothing with special washing instructions (i.e., "lay flat to dry" or "dry clean only")
- Clothes you *might* wear. Only bring things you are sure to use.

Practical Items

Do bring:

- Basic toiletries — shampoo, moisturizing lotion, toothbrush/toothpaste, dental floss, shaving cream, deodorant, comb, brush, tissues, lip balm, etc.
- Soap and plastic soap dish that closes
- Battery alarm clock
- Your favorite cosmetics, perfume or cologne — they may not be easy to find abroad
- A basic medical kit containing any pain relievers you typically use (American brands such as Tylenol are difficult to find overseas), cough/cold medicine, Band-Aids, something to counteract an upset stomach, something for motion sickness, antibiotic cream, etc.
- Prescription medication — bring enough to get you through the program, and bring a copy of the prescription with you
- Contact lens supplies, extra eyeglasses, a copy of your eyeglass prescription
- Sunglasses
- Plenty of batteries, which can be very expensive abroad, or an extra memory card for your digital camera

- Plastic bags and a box of Wash 'n' Dri towelettes
- Photos of your family and friends
- Journal and address book
- Bath towels, a hand towel and washcloths (these are not provided)
- ATM Card, Traveler's Checks and a credit card
- Extra passport photos
- Disposable or miniature flashlight
- Camera
- iPod/ MP3 Player and a charger
- Electrical converter and adaptor set, if you are bringing any small electrical appliances
- Passport pouch / Money belt
- Photocopy of your passport (kept separate from your passport – very important). Also leave a copy at home.
- This *London Student Handbook* to use as a reference
- A guidebook for London and Britain

Do not bring:

- Bed linens or a pillow — these items will be provided
- Large or heavy electrical appliances
- School supplies. Loose-leaf paper and notebooks are not necessary since British brands will not fit into American binders and vice-versa. Although British paper and notebooks are different from what you use, they are easy enough to find.
- American stamps. They have no value outside the U.S. You will be able to buy stamps from the post office and newsagents overseas.
- Precious, valuable or expensive items.

DO NOT PACK YOUR PASSPORT. KEEP IT WITH YOU AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE.

EUROPEAN TOURIST OFFICES

A wealth of informative and practical literature may be obtained for free from the member national tourist offices of the European Travel Commission. The tourist office brochures often include maps

and information on weather, hotels, restaurants and sports. AIFS also offers a wide range of fact sheets on various European cities – e-mail studentinfo@aifs.co.uk for information.

Austrian National Tourist Office	http://www.austria.info/
Belgian National Tourist Office	www.visitbelgium.com
British Tourist Authority	www.visitbritain.com
Czech Tourist Board	www.czechtourism.com
French Government Tourist Office	www.franceguide.com
German National Tourist Office	www.germany-tourism.de
Greek National Tourist Office	www.greektourism.com
Irish Tourist Board	www.tourismireland.com
Italian Government Travel Office	www.italiantourism.com
Board of Tourism, Netherlands	www.holland.com
Tourist Office of Spain	www.okspain.org
Switzerland Tourism	www.myswitzerland.com

YOUTH HOSTEL CARDS

You may want to consider purchasing an International Youth Hostel Card before you leave the U.S. This is ideal if you will be doing a lot of traveling as youth hostels are widespread throughout Europe and are usually clean and inexpensive. Hostels are simple, dorm-style lodgings where you may be able to cook your own meals, bathe, sleep and get to know other travelers from around the world. One night at a hostel usually costs between \$25-30. There are 6,000 hostels worldwide. Quality varies so ask to see the room before paying any money. Once you have registered and paid for the night you may not be able to get your money back, even if the conditions are unacceptable. In general European youth hostels offer clean and very affordable accommodations.

If you want to purchase a card, you will need to contact Hostelling International — American Youth Hostel Association. To receive an application and booklet, write to:

Hostelling International - American Youth Hostels
National Administration Office
8401 Colesville Road, Suite 600
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-495-1240
Membership department e-mail: members@hiosa.org
Website: www.iyhf.org

Alternatively, you can purchase this card in London for approximately \$20 by applying directly to the Youth Hostels Association, 16 Southampton St. London, W1. However, this card will not be valid in U.S. hostels.

AYH also publishes the *International Handbook, vol. 1 (Europe and the Mediterranean)*, which lists European hostels. This may be useful to you during your travels. Specify when writing for your card that you would like a copy.

Youth hostel cards are valid for one year.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTITY CARD (ISIC)

Acquiring an ISIC is advisable. The discounts to which it entitles you are numerous — museum admission, theater tickets, local transportation, movie tickets, etc. If you get into the habit of asking, you will be surprised by the number of reductions that are available. To obtain the card, check with your home campus' travel or study abroad office first. If student travel services are not offered on your campus, you can call STA Travel at 1-800-2COUNCIL for information, or visit the ISIC website at www.isic.org.

You can also purchase the ISIC in London at the STA Travel office directly opposite the AIFS London Student Center, for £9 (\$17.50 versus \$22 in the U.S.).

PERSONAL SAFETY ABROAD

Foreigners need to take certain safety precautions abroad. Here are some points to remember:

Blend in. It is not a good idea to stand out or attract undue attention to yourself. Giving the appearance of being a local student will help you to integrate into the host culture. Leave your school sweatshirts, baseball caps and any decidedly American clothing at home.

Women will ultimately face more safety concerns abroad. Dressing conservatively is advised. In some situations, if the perception is that you are inviting attention, you may be harassed by unwanted male followers, pinched or even grabbed. Be reasonably cautious without being so paranoid that you avoid all locals, male or female. Observe the strategy of local women for fending off unwanted attention. It also helps to use common sense: do not go out alone at night and if you have to, be sure to stay on well-lit, main streets.

Be aware of different cultural behavior. What is customary in the U.S. may send the wrong signals in another country. Think about your behavior and be attentive to how the locals behave in your new culture.

Drink wisely. Drinking makes you vulnerable. Good judgment should prevail in all circumstances where alcohol will be available. The attitudes towards liquor are different in Britain than in the U.S.; wine or beer is often consumed with the evening meal and the public drinking age is 18 years. If you are going to drink, only do so with trusted friends, and be sure at least one friend remains sober.

Be careful with your belongings. Carry a money belt or neck pouch securely inside your clothing, and be aware of your surroundings. Pickpockets are numerous in busy cities. They are most often found in front of hotels and near flea markets, train stations and food markets. Do not carry large sums of cash or credit cards. Bags or purses should be strapped across both neck and shoulder. Never leave them hanging on the backs of chairs in public places. Instead, keep them on the floor between your feet. Men should carry their wallets in their front pockets. Never tell strangers where you are staying, what your travel plans are, etc.

Be careful of *where* and *how* you buy. It is easy to become distracted while making a purchase and get cheated. Be sure that the goods you buy are the ones you actually get. A deal that seems too good to be true probably is. Do not exhibit all of your cash during a purchase. Additionally, it is not wise to display the location of your money, passport or any other valuables. Never opt for convenience over safety, and do not allow yourself to be rushed during a purchase.

Choose vehicles wisely. Use only official taxis. Before you get into any cab, make sure that the driver is willing to take you where you want to go. It is also wise to agree on a fare beforehand to avoid any complications when you arrive at your destination. Never get into a cab that already has a passenger.

Use the buddy system whenever possible. If you are out at night, stick to the main avenues and take along a friend or two. Stay away from parks after dark.

If you plan to jog, do not do so after dark. Be careful of local drivers who may not be used to people running along the road.

If you ever feel you are in a dangerous situation, head for the nearest hotel or restaurant and ask for help.

DRUG ARREST

Almost half the Americans jailed abroad are arrested on drug charges. Despite repeated warnings, drug arrests and convictions are still on the increase. If you are caught with either soft or hard drugs overseas, you are subject to local, not U.S., laws. Penalties for possession or trafficking are often the same. If arrested, you will find that:

- few countries provide a jury trial;
- most countries will not accept bail;
- pretrial detention, often solitary confinement, may last months;
- prisons may lack even minimal comforts such as beds, toilets and washbasins;
- diets are often inadequate and require supplements from relatives or friends;
- officials may not speak English;
- physical abuse, confiscation of personal property, degrading and inhumane treatment and extortion are all possible.

If convicted, you may face a sentence of:

- two to 10 years in most countries;
- a minimum of six years hard labor and a stiff fine in some countries;
- death in countries such as Turkey, Algeria, Iran and Thailand.

Do not get involved with illegal drugs overseas.

Students should be aware that AIFS takes an extremely serious view of drug use on the program. Action in such cases will involve instant dismissal from the program, and the student's home institution and parents will be informed. Such disciplinary action will be initiated for any student involved in drug use.

It is essential that British laws regarding drug use be understood fully. Possession of any drugs, including marijuana, is punishable by law, and the penalties are severe. Overseas visitors convicted of drug-related offenses face enormous fines and deportation from the country. Convictions are frequent for possession of drugs. It is particularly dangerous to purchase from dealers or at clubs, as these people are often police informers. You could be followed home and arrested after purchasing drugs, or your building could be raided by the police after a tip-off.

Smuggling drugs into Britain from abroad is illegal. There is an extremely high chance of being discovered and penalties are very severe, including possible imprisonment.

LEGAL AID

If you have difficulties with the local authorities abroad, remember that you are subject to local laws. Unfortunately, the assistance that American officials can offer is limited by foreign laws, by U.S. laws, and by geography. The U.S. government has no funds for your legal fees and other related expenses.

You should consult a consular officer if you find yourself in a dispute that could lead to legal or police action. Although U.S. consular officers cannot serve as attorneys or give legal advice, they can provide lists of local attorneys and help you find adequate legal representation. It should be noted that the consular attorneys' lists, although carefully prepared, are compiled from local bar association lists and responses to questionnaires. Neither the Department of State nor U.S. embassies nor consulates can assume any responsibility for the caliber, competence or professional integrity of the attorney.

Consular officers will do whatever they can to protect your legitimate interests and ensure that you are not discriminated against under local law. However, they CANNOT get you out of jail. If you are arrested, ask permission to notify the consular officer at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Under international agreements and practice, you have a right to contact the American Consulate. If your request is denied, keep asking politely and persistently. If unsuccessful, try to have someone get in touch with the consulate for you.

When alerted, American officials will visit you, advise you of your rights according to local laws, and contact your family and friends if you ask them. If your prison facilities are inadequate (as is often the case), consuls can transfer money, food and clothing from your family and friends to the prison authorities. They will try to get relief if you are held under inhumane or unhealthy conditions or treated less favorably than others in the same situation.

CULTURE SHOCK

Culture shock is a general term used to describe the feelings of anxiety, frustration, fear or loneliness which people often experience when leaving a familiar socio-cultural environment and moving into a new one. It varies in degree from one individual to another. It occurs in young and old alike, and it can happen within one's own country (for example, a move from Iowa to New York City).

London will not have the family, friends and familiar places to which you are accustomed. You will be leaving a climate, geography, eating habits and social behavior you understand well. All of these things will be different in Britain, and this will almost inevitably result in some degree of culture shock.

It is not uncommon to have problems adapting to a new culture. Most people start to experience culture shock after several weeks. The symptoms vary from person to person. Some people find they suddenly become short-tempered and annoyed with certain behavior that characterizes the new culture. Others feel tired and lose their enthusiasm to experience new things. They want familiar, comfortable surroundings and habits. Some become depressed and miss very specific people or things from home. Students feel somewhat overwhelmed by the newness of it all during this stage. It is important to remember that this is a stage, and that it does go away.

Symptoms can also include fatigue, homesickness, sleeping long hours, preferring to be alone instead of with people, boredom and irritability. You may notice others going through this before you realize that you feel it yourself. Talk about culture shock with your friends, roommates or classmates and compare your feelings and impressions. This helps you understand and adjust to cultural differences more quickly. If you experience any of these symptoms, try to control the situation by taking positive steps. Sometimes it is helpful just to know that these feelings are normal, but it also requires effort on your part to turn the situation around. Feel free to talk to the AIFS staff. They are experienced in dealing with the symptoms of culture shock and may be able to offer some useful advice.

During the culture shock stage you need to find ways to take care of yourself and the feelings you are experiencing. Past study abroad participants recommend the following:

- Write home instead of calling. Contact old friends, professors and family in the U.S. Ask your family to send clippings from your home newspaper. This will help you feel connected to people at home.
- Keep a journal tracking your journey from start to finish.
- Try to identify particular things you miss. Decide whether they are things for which you can find similar replacements in the new culture or whether they are unique to home. Whenever possible, try to find and enjoy the replacement.
- Do not cut yourself off from people in your host culture. It makes it harder to adjust if you isolate yourself or spend time only with Americans. Try to involve yourself with new friends, teachers and activities. Remind yourself of what is interesting and rewarding about these people and events. Do not focus on the differences between them and the U.S.
- Establish a routine as quickly as possible. Plan your study hours and the days you'll spend exploring and visiting the city. Your time abroad will pass quickly and there's a lot to do.

Students generally pass through a number of phases while working to adapt to a new culture:

- **Initial Excitement:** At first, everything is new and exciting. This phase can last anywhere from one week to two months depending on the person. It is characterized by a sense of enthusiasm for the new culture and the feeling that it is not all so different and difficult.
- **Adjustment:** After a while, you will adapt and get used to your new surroundings. The most frustrating part of the adjustment process has ended. It no longer seems exhausting to get through each day struggling with new customs.
- **Unresolved problems:** Everyone reaches a point of frustration with adjustment. You may feel overwhelmed and wish to return home (Thanksgiving is a key time for homesickness). **Do not hesitate to see the AIFS staff.** They are more than willing to listen, help and offer advice. Never feel that you are the only student to experience these emotions.
- **Acclimation/Integration:** Things begin to improve and you feel that you belong. For visiting students, this acclimation is a merging of both your old culture and the new culture. You have not lost American values or habits, but you have integrated them with new customs.
- **Departure Concern:** You begin to feel apprehensive about returning home and readapting to your culture. You have changed as a person and have mixed feelings about going home. You will begin to wonder whether your family and friends can understand the tremendous growth you have experienced. Will you be able to reconnect? These concerns are very real

and you will find you have them even after you return to the U.S. There is even something called "reverse culture shock," which is the adjustment to reassimilate when you return home.

Big City Life

If you are not used to living in big cities, London may well be intimidating, confusing and frustrating at first. Try not to get overtired at the beginning, and if you are used to the countryside, plan occasional weekends outside the city. The AIFS Student Services staff will be able to help provide suggestions for such outings.

Cultural Overkill

You may dream of being "Shakespeareed out," but the profusion of cultural events at reasonable prices in London makes this a very real possibility. You will need to learn to pace yourself and use opportunities well.

ADVICE FROM FORMER AIFS PARTICIPANTS

Here are some tips and suggestions that may make your term abroad run more smoothly:

- Pack light! You may get sick of wearing the same outfit, but you'll thank yourself when it's time to pack up and go home.
- Casual clothes are of greater necessity than dress clothes.
- Don't pack your suitcase completely full because you will bring home a lot more than you took with you.
- Overestimate the amount of money you will need.
- Keep a journal, diary or travel log and keep notes on everything. It will help record memories and help identify photos later on.
- Bring photos of family, friends, etc.
- Mail is extremely important. Be sure to write to people. A letter is more valuable than an e-mail.
- Bring a guidebook; it will be indispensable.
- Read about all the places you are going to visit. Get maps for each place and mark 10 to 15 things you want to see or do in each place.
- Travel as much as you can, but don't move around so much that you don't get a feel for each country.
- Bring comfortable, sturdy shoes for walking/hiking, and break them in before you leave the U.S.
- Keep in mind that some places, like cathedrals, will not admit you sleeveless, in shorts, or in a backless or halter top. Be considerate of these requirements.

- Ask AIFS staff, locals and experienced travelers for recommendations on places to go and things to see, from sites to restaurants, bars and clubs.
- Keep your overseas address with you in case you get lost.
- Bring an extra copy of your birth certificate, two additional passport photos and a photocopy of your passport, just in case the original is lost or stolen.
- Purses and bags should have shoulder straps and zippers to deter pickpockets.
- Bring lots of film or extra memory cards, and batteries — they are *very* expensive in Europe.
- Know that you won't find all the luxuries of home, but you will find the necessities.
- Don't expect to find water fountains, and don't expect to get ice in your drinks.
- Think of every new food as a new dining experience.
- Bring an iPod/MP3 Player and a charger. These are necessities for those long, overnight bus rides.
- Budget your money! You can't afford to spend it all in one place, so plan ahead. Major cities cost more than the countryside.
- Write down everything you buy and its price.
- You will need to be well organized if you wish to claim back the Value Added Tax (VAT) on goods purchased in the U.K.
 - 1) When making a major purchase, you will need to check that the merchant selling the item is a member of the VAT Refund Scheme (although not required). If s/he is a member, ask for a Retail Export Scheme VAT form. The merchant must complete the first part of the form for you, and you must complete the rest of the form.
 - 2) When you enter the airport, prior to checking in, present the form and the relevant merchandise to a customs officer at the VAT desk (which should be clearly marked), and s/he will stamp your form.
 - 3) You will need to mail the stamped form back to the merchant to receive your refund.

Be honest when you go through customs upon your return home. Fines are heavy.

- Buy your traveler's checks primarily in \$20 and \$50 denominations. Don't carry too much cash with you at one time.
- In Britain, the bathroom or public restroom is called the *loo* or *WC*.
- Bring a roll of toilet paper or mini pack of tissues when you travel around to other regions.
- Always be aware of the time differences when telephoning the United States from abroad.

- Most importantly, go with an open mind and expect differences.

IN LONDON

GETTING FROM THE AIRPORT TO LONDON

Students selecting the AIFS flight will be met upon arrival in London by a member of the AIFS staff. This person will greet you and direct you to the transportation provided to your accommodations. If you are traveling independently, read the following directions carefully:

From Heathrow Airport to the AIFS Student Center in Dilke House

The Tube from Heathrow is the most reliable way of getting into central London. However, it is not the easiest if you have several bags. Heathrow Airport is at the end of the Piccadilly line, which will take you directly into the center of London.

Take the Piccadilly line eastbound to Russell Square station. This will take approximately 50 minutes, and an adult single one-way fare will cost £4.00. You **MUST** buy a valid ticket before attempting to board an underground train, or else you risk paying a fine of at least £10.

Exit the Russell Square Tube station, and turn left, walking past a mobile newsstand, with STA Travel on your right. You will see Russell Square (a park with many trees) to your left at the corner of the block. Cross the road towards the Post Office and walk straight on, with Russell Square to your left. At the far corner of the square turn right into SOAS (the School of Oriental and African Studies), then immediately left and straight through some gray gates. Continue until you walk through another large set of gray gates, then turn right onto Malet Street (a 10-minute walk).

Dilke House is at the end of Malet Street just before you get to Waterstone's Bookstore, opposite the University of London Union building, and the Student Center is situated in the basement. Go down the black iron stairs to the right of the building.

Alternatively, you can take a taxi from Russell Square station to the Student Center, which should cost about £7.

From Gatwick Airport to the AIFS Student Center in Dilke House

The easiest way into central London is to take the Gatwick Express train from the airport to Victoria Station. This takes about half an hour and a single ticket costs £16.90.

From Victoria Station, take the Victoria line of the Tube northbound to the Warren Street station. As you exit the station, turn right and walk down Tottenham Court Road. Turn left onto Torrington Place when you see Barclay's Bank, and then turn right past Waterstone's Bookstore onto Malet Street. The Student Center is in the basement of Dilke House on the right-hand side of the street opposite the University of London Union building. Go down the black iron stairs to the right of the building.

Alternatively, you can take a taxi from Warren Street station to the Student Center, which should cost no more than £7.

National Express Flightline Coaches are a slightly cheaper method of traveling from Gatwick and will cost about £10 to take you to Victoria Station. The journey may take quite a bit longer and can be subject to traffic delays.

Don't take a taxi from Gatwick into Central London. It can cost £80 or more.

ORIENTATION

When you arrive in London, you will be directed to your housing. Waiting for you will be a packet of orientation materials. Among other things, this will contain another Student Handbook fully outlining the facilities available to you while you are in London and giving details of the orientation program.

The orientation program has been designed to help you settle in and acclimate to your new environment as quickly and painlessly as possible. Typically, it includes the following activities:

- half-day sightseeing tour of London by coach;
- orientation meeting followed by a short academic meeting with your own school's faculty;
- ride by tube to a popular play in the West End theater district of London;
- welcome reception to meet the other participants in the program.

MEETING THE BRITISH

American students coming to England often ask, "How can I meet the British? How do I become part of the community, especially when I'm living with other Americans?"

The English are initially reserved and may appear "frosty." If you can try to participate in an activity (such as volunteer work) at a church or class, you will realize that "the sun never sets on a British friendship!"

There are many ways of meeting the British. It may seem difficult to begin, but remember that it's up to you to take the initiative and make the effort. Meeting new people and discovering new places will prove to be exciting, challenging and rewarding.

Here are a few suggestions to help you:

- Wherever possible, try not to go around in groups of more than two or three Americans. These groups can be "off-putting" to the British.
- Try to meet the British by sharing in a joint activity. Several ways to do this include:

Volunteer Work

Undertake some kind of volunteer work. Previous students have become involved in various forms of community work including helping in local schools, looking after handicapped children, visiting older people, assisting with playgroups, caring for people in hospitals and assisting in hostels for young offenders. Volunteer work is an excellent way of meeting and getting to know the British, as well as making a valuable contribution to the community during your stay. It does, however,

involve a serious regular commitment to work, which may not always be easy. If you are interested in making such a commitment while in London, ask for further details in the AIFS Student Center.

Students are given membership to the University of London Union and can join any of the special interest groups organized by the British students. These include chess, jazz dance, drama, opera, scuba, soccer, religious societies, literary groups and political interest groups. Many students in the past have found this an excellent way to meet British students with similar interests.

Evening Classes

Join one of the thousands of subsidized classes taught in many local institutes and schools. They are a good value for the money and an excellent way to meet and mix with British people. Subjects are wide ranging and include arts, languages and musical instruction. Further details are available at the AIFS London Student Center.

HOUSING AND MEALS

Accommodations

Students usually are not housed exclusively with members of their home campus. It is AIFS' policy to mix students from all our participating institutions in the accommodations whenever possible. This gives students the opportunity to meet people from other states and with other academic interests.

Student accommodation options available are: (1) apartments, and (2) homestays. You have already indicated your preference on your application. A small number of students make their own housing arrangements. Typically, these are students bringing small children or who have family in London with whom they will live.

Various kinds of accommodations meet differing needs and wishes of students. A description of each is provided in your program brochure. Living space in London is very limited and you should not be surprised if at first you feel a little cramped. Londoners make the best of small spaces. Remember that you are not in London to spend all your time in your room.

More than 95% of students on the program live in AIFS housing. A resident staff member lives in each building accommodating more than 30 students and is available to assist students with all aspects of their daily lives, and to maintain expected standards of behavior. The staff works to create a safe, pleasant and friendly place to live. However, this is dependent on cooperation from each student.

A considerable amount of time is spent on the housing of each student and it is, therefore, essential that all questions on the AIFS program application be answered honestly and fully, and that you specify any preferred roommates and any special medical conditions. If you feel you did not fully state your needs, please submit any additional information in writing to AIFS. The application housing questionnaire must be returned to AIFS with the passport-sized photos as instructed. The Program Coordinator reserves the right to change room assignments during the program. AIFS staff also reserves the right to enter students' rooms. However, every effort is made to do so in the presence of the students or with students' permission.

Important points to note are:

Apartments

Shared apartments consist of a lounge, several shared bedrooms (twin and triple with some bunk bed accommodations) and a shared kitchen and bathroom.

Shared one-room studios

Each has kitchen facilities and private or shared bathroom facilities. The studio rooms usually accommodate two or three people, some with bunk beds.

Single rooms

We are unable to guarantee placement in single rooms, and applications are prioritized on the basis of age and special medical needs. A supplemental fee is charged.

Please submit all housing requests in writing to AIFS.

Number of people per room

The rooms are mostly doubles and triples, although a few singles may be available for a supplemental fee. Married couples may be accommodated in a twin studio or in a flat with other students. You must specify on the application if you are married and bringing your spouse (note your spouse also must be a participant on the program). If you have a young child accompanying you on the program, it is in the best interest of the child and the other students in the residence that you arrange an "own living" situation for a reduced program fee.

Curfews, noise and quiet hours

Each student receives his/her own key and is free to come and go as s/he pleases. London is a city in which space is at a premium, and housing units are much smaller than in the United States. Noise carries very easily. In Britain, there are legally enforced quiet hours between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. It is essential that students respect this law and show consideration for those around them. Students who fail to do so may be asked to leave the AIFS housing and will be responsible for their own accommodation for the remainder of their program.

Maintenance

Any general, minor maintenance requests should be entered into the building's maintenance book so that they can be dealt with quickly. If an emergency arises, i.e., a leak or loss of electricity, contact the AIFS staff immediately.

Overnight guests

For security and insurance reasons, only official AIFS participants will be allowed to use the residences. Students who are expecting visitors in London should check at the AIFS Student Center for details on inexpensive hotels where their guests can stay.

Linen

Clean linen is provided weekly, but students are responsible for changing their own beds. Blankets are also provided. Towels are not provided. Rooms will be cleaned and trash bins emptied weekly. Students should keep their rooms as tidy as possible to assist the cleaning staff.

Sports facilities

Nearby parks have playing fields, running paths and tennis courts. For an additional fee, there is a pool and additional sports facilities at the University of London Union, across from the Student Center.

Age limit

There is no age limit placed on students. They need only fulfill the entrance requirements of their home institution. Older students should note that the program is planned for basic student needs. Facilities are clean and comfortable but not luxurious.

Laundry facilities

Laundry facilities are not provided in the residences, but all neighborhoods have a number of Laundromats for student use. The average cost per load is approximately \$6. Try to bring clothes that wash easily and drip dry.

Cooking facilities

Apartments and shared studios are equipped with cooking facilities. Students in homestays will have access to the kitchen in their home.

Separate living arrangements

It is possible to make your own living arrangements instead of using the AIFS housing. However, the program coordinator from your home school must be consulted and must give approval. Generally, approval is granted only if the student has relatives in London or other special circumstances. There is a reduced program fee for students who arrange their own housing, however, the money saved typically is not adequate to pay for the housing you will find on your own. Any student choosing this option must notify AIFS on the application and provide AIFS with a contact address and phone number in London in case of emergency. Students providing their own living accommodations will receive a Tube pass good for travel within the Central Zone only.

Roommates

Students wishing to be roommates must both indicate their preference on the AIFS program application. You must request each other. If you decide that you would like to room with someone after you have completed your application, write a letter to the AIFS Partnership Registrar at River Plaza, 9 West Broad Street, Stamford, CT 06902, and have your prospective roommate do the same.

Homestay or Apartment accommodations?

This is a matter of personal preference. However, there is one fundamental difference between the two: students living in apartments and shared studios do not receive breakfast. Homestays provide a continental breakfast consisting of tea or coffee, fruit juice, cereal, and toast and jam.

Do's and Don'ts for Homestay Students

For most students choosing the homestay option, this will be a new experience. You may not know what to expect or how to behave. Below is a list of suggestions compiled by the AIFS staff on each campus to help your adjustment.

DO:

- Buy a plant or a box of chocolates for your host a week or so after you arrive. (Don't spend a lot of money — it is the gesture that is appreciated.)
- Become aware of the household's daily routine (for example, don't monopolize the bathroom when the head of the household routinely uses it).
- Remember that many European homes have fewer conveniences than American homes (heat and hot water may be available only certain hours of the day).
- Try to keep your room neat and clean, even if you are not tidy by nature.
- Remember that living in someone else's home is an adjustment for them also. Be patient, flexible and as cooperative as possible.

DON'T:

- Be insensitive in your behavior in the home (for example, don't put your feet on furniture, wear skimpy outfits, play music loudly or leave the bathroom untidy).
- Help yourself to food or drink unless you have been invited to do so.
- Arrive home in the middle of the night (you will disturb the family's sleep and cause worry about your safety).
- Spend an excessive amount of time on the telephone (use for incoming calls only) or watching television, especially late at night.
- Lose track of your house key. (If you lose it, your host will be concerned that someone else may find and use it.)

Rules for Apartment Students

While we want you to feel as comfortable as possible during your stay in London, we must stress that certain rules and standards of behavior must be observed. These rules are for the safety and well-being of everyone and students who break them may be removed from AIFS housing facilities.

- No one other than the authorized occupants may sleep in the rooms.

- Visitors should not arrive before 8 a.m. and must leave by 11 p.m.
- Noise levels must be controlled and individual privacy respected.
- Strangers are not to be admitted into the residences — security for each house is everyone's responsibility.
- Doors should be kept locked at all times.
- Don't be a careless smoker — never use a wastepaper basket as an ashtray, and be careful with carpets and furniture.
- Use only materials permitted in your residence to hang posters, etc., on the walls (consult AIFS staff).
- You are responsible for making your own bed and keeping rooms tidy. Rooms will be cleaned weekly.
- At the request of landlords and home campuses, parties are not allowed in any of the residences.
- Non-prescription drugs are strictly forbidden, and their possession will result in immediate dismissal from the program and possible criminal prosecution.
- Excessive use of alcohol is forbidden.
- Students will be held financially responsible for any damage to their room during the course of the program.

Meals

As indicated in the London program brochure, meals are not included in the program fee. It is important that you budget a realistic amount for meals while you are on the program. Those students who have been placed in a homestay will receive breakfasts with their family.

Upon arrival in London, you will be provided with full details of a variety of student restaurants which you may use and which represent very good value for the money. In recent years many new restaurants have opened in London contributing an ethnic diversity to the city's menus. The secret is to try everything.

We strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself early in the program with the recommended student restaurants where you can obtain a substantial, healthy meal for approximately £3.00-4.00. The added attraction of eating at these restaurants is that you will mix with British students. If you eat in ordinary restaurants, your money will not stretch very far. At local restaurants, you can expect to pay £5 and up for lunch, and £10 for dinner.

All students who are living in AIFS housing will have cooking facilities. You will find that buying food from local supermarkets and cooking it yourself is much cheaper than eating in restaurants.

Students who take advantage of student cafeterias and also cook some meals at home should budget a minimum of £40 per week for food.

Budget Plan for Your Meal Money

AIFS is able to help you budget your meal money during your stay in London. This arrangement is entirely voluntary and is operated as follows:

- A budget account will be set up in your name in the AIFS Student Center in London.
- If you wish to participate, you will be asked to deposit £350 (approximately \$625) during the first two weeks of the program. This sum represents the minimum recommended amount for meals of £35 per week for 12 weeks. (Meal money for the first two weeks of the program is not included in the budget plan.) **Quarter students** will be asked to deposit £245, which represents the minimum recommended amount of £35 per week for nine weeks.
- The money you have deposited will be returned to you every two weeks in installments beginning the third week of the semester. Every two weeks you will be able to collect £60 from the AIFS Student Center. We regret we cannot accept money after the first two weeks of the program, and we can only accept the recommended amount of £360.

Please note that money will be accepted in sterling cash, sterling travelers' checks and British checks only. We cannot accept funds in the form of dollars, U.S. checks or U.S. travelers' checks. We are unable to accept payment by credit card.

Payments will only be made as scheduled (on set days to be announced), and once you have agreed to participate, you will only be able to withdraw your money from the budget plan at the scheduled times.

Please note that the budget plan is entirely voluntary, but it will help you budget your meal money throughout your stay.

COMMUNICATIONS

There are many public telephones close to the student residences, but most of them do not accept incoming calls. We advise you to obtain an international calling card from your phone company before leaving the U.S. to use with either public phones or, if given permission, the telephone in your homestay.

Parents and friends who want to call you should call the AIFS Student Center at a pre-arranged time during office hours when you will be there. Since there is a heavy demand on this phone line, you must arrange to receive these calls in advance with AIFS.

The telephone number at the AIFS Student Center in Bloomsbury is: 011 44 20 7636 0761

If you are not in the Student Center when a call comes for you, a message will be taken and left in your mailbox at the Student Center.

If a parent or friend calls the Student Center when it is closed, he or she will be able to leave a recorded message on the answering machine. Messages are transcribed each weekday morning and left in your mailbox.

When the Student Center is closed, a member of staff is always on duty at his or her home in case of emergency. There is a single emergency telephone number, and calls are automatically transferred to a message machine that is checked at regular intervals. **If dialing from the U.S., the Bloomsbury emergency number is 011 44 20 7603 1747. This number is for emergencies only.**

Be sure to give the emergency number to your parents or guardian.

Relatives or guardians needing to reach you can also call the AIFS office in Stamford, Connecticut, during office hours (Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time) at (800) 727-2437. If the emergency occurs outside of regular office hours, they should dial the same number. The message will prompt them to hold for the AIFS answering service that will take a message and contact the College Division duty officer on call.

Written messages may be left for friends at the AIFS Student Center.

Your mailing address will be:

Name of Student
AIFS Student Center
Dilke House
Malet Street
London WC1E 7JN
United Kingdom

Be sure to leave this address with family and friends and to use it on your baggage tags.

You are advised to bring an AT&T, MCI or Sprint calling card with you. Be sure to obtain your phone company's access number to dial from the U.K. and any specific dialing instructions before you depart the U.S. Also bring with you the access codes for any other countries you plan on visiting.

ACADEMIC LIFE

Classes are normally scheduled Monday through Thursday between 9 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. However, some Friday classes are possible. Classes normally are held at the University of London Union Building on Malet Street, across from the Student Center.

There will be an academic orientation at the start of the program that will cover such topics as classroom and course information, and library opening hours.

Quarter Program Students

Students enrolled on a quarter program in London with their university should note the following differences from the semester program:

- London University student activities are often limited in the late spring and summer periods;
- As this program lasts nine weeks, you should carefully consult your school's program materials for course load information;
- Some spring quarter programs are preceded by an orientation tour of England instead of the optional orientation tour of Europe.

AIFS-Coordinated Courses

Two courses are currently provided and coordinated by AIFS: the *British Life and Culture* course and the *European Business Environment* lecture series, which is open to business programs only.

British Life and Culture

On a semester program, this course has 12 hours of lectures by British guest lecturers and a number of supporting field trips relating to some of the lecture topics. Quarter students will have 8-9 hours of lectures. Topics may include: the history of London, British theater, Parliament, education, the welfare state, class system, European union and the monarchy. Organized field trips have included visits to the Museum of London, the Tate Gallery, British Museum, Inns of Court and Houses of Parliament.

Textbooks and reading materials for the course will be assigned in London at the start of the semester. For those wishing to undertake some background reading, the following texts are suitable:

A Visitor's Britain – Martin Upham, 2001. AHA International.

Britain 2000: An Official Handbook, HMSO 1999 — an overview of Britain, dry but with useful facts and statistics.

Britthink/Amerithink by Janet Walmesley, Corgi, 1988 — a light-hearted and humorous but sometimes shrewd look at the cultural differences between the British and the Americans.

Culture Shock: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette — Britain by Terry Tan, Times Editions Pte Ltd. 1992; a look at the British way of life by a long-established immigrant.

Notes from a Small Island by Bill Bryson, Black Swan/Doubleday 1995 — analyses of Britain's culture and customs from the point of view of an American who lived in Britain for 20 years.

European Business Environment

Several schools offer a Business Studies program in London. A key feature of this course is the opportunity for semester Business students to attend an integrated lecture series on the European business environment, coordinated by AIFS and given by British academics. Lecture topics include Introduction to Western Europe, Political Trends in Europe, the European Consumer, Institutions of

the Economic Union, European Monetary Integration, and the Economic Union and Eastern and Central Europe.

In addition to formal class work, students visit sites of interest such as the London International Financial Futures Exchange, the Bank of England and Lloyds of London, among others.

Special Adjunct Courses

By advance arrangement with your school, AIFS can arrange intensive semester-long courses taught by local qualified lecturers to supplement the available course offerings of visiting institutions. You will need to obtain advanced credit approval from your home institution. Students may share these courses with students from other U.S. institutions. Examples of courses that have been offered in the past include: Art of the Last Hundred Years, Contemporary British History, International Political Economy, and U.S./U.K. Political Systems.

Evening Classes

Thousands of subsidized classes are taught in many local institutes and schools in London. For a small fee it usually is easy for students to enroll in such classes. Subjects vary greatly and include arts, languages and musical instrument instruction. These classes are a wonderful value for the money and provide an excellent opportunity to meet and mix with British people. Information on all classes available in London is available at www.floodlight.co.uk

Libraries

London has a wealth of libraries and research centers and students on a London Partnership program have reference or borrowing rights (up to four books at any one time) at several of these. Libraries in London are open for fewer hours and have more limited access on the weekends than libraries in the United States. *Please check your program application cover page for details about the libraries to which you will have access.*

University of London Library — Senate House, Malet St., WC1, is available to some students. It houses an excellent general collection of books and periodicals on all subjects, particularly humanities.

Kensington Public Library, Philimore Walk, W8, is a public library with an excellent reference room. It is open 9:30 a.m. until 8 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday; and 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

Holborn Public Library, 32-38 Theobalds Road, WC1, is the closest public library to Dilke House. It is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday and Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays.

Students living in other areas of London will have access to public libraries nearer to their accommodations.

Textbooks

Arrangements for obtaining course textbooks for the London program's courses vary according to the program. Your campus coordinator can provide further information.

COMPUTERS

Internet/E-mail Access

There are two computer rooms containing 27 machines in the AIFS Student Center in Dilke House where students can access e-mail and the Internet free of charge during regular office hours, Monday through Friday. You will need to sign up in advance for half-hour time slots.

The AIFS Student Center is wireless enabled, so students bringing laptops with wireless cards will be able to access the Internet from their own computers. The network is password protected, and students will be able to obtain the password, free of charge, from AIFS staff.

Students can also access the Internet from many Internet cafés across the city.

TRAVEL

Within London

London has an excellent public transportation network and we advise you to acquaint yourself with it as soon as possible. All students will be given a travel pass for transportation to and from their housing and the AIFS Student Center. The London transit map in the orientation materials you'll receive in London will give details of the underground network and the bus system in central London.

The Underground (Tube)

The Tube is the fastest way to travel around the city, and there is usually only a short distance between stops in the center of the city. There is a flat fare for journeys anywhere in the Central Zone (the Circle Line and everything within it) that is £4. Outside the center fares can be higher but are still reasonable, especially when you buy a *one-day travel card*.

Tube services operate from around 5:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. In central London Tubes don't run on a timetable, but on some of the suburban routes out of the city there is a published timetable.

Buses

London's famous red buses have the advantage over Tube trains of offering a view of your surroundings as they pass. Consequently, they are a much better way of getting to know your way around. This is their only advantage, however. During busy periods, buses to the center of London take a very long time. They tend to be more erratic than Tubes and most don't seem to run on a timetable. Occasionally it is necessary to catch a bus when traveling away from London because there may not be a convenient Tube line. Bus and Tube fares are comparable, although bus fares have a lower flat fare of £1.50

Note: Prices are subject to change.

Optional European Tour

While you are in London there will be many opportunities to travel further afield into the rest of Europe. One opportunity is the optional European orientation tour. This tour allows you to travel at ease as a group before your program begins, providing valuable insight into European life. If you have opted to take the tour, it is wise to pack two pieces of luggage — one for those belongings which you will not need on the tour and can leave in London, and the other for items needed on the tour.

AIFS will store luggage only for students who will be participating in the optional orientation tour prior to the start of the program. We request that you pack accordingly.

AIFS is unable to store any excess luggage for students who plan to arrive in London prior to the optional orientation tour or the regular program.

If you are seeking accommodations in London prior to the start of the tour or the regular program, we suggest you refer to *Let's Go: Britain and Ireland*, a travel guide published by Harvard Student Services that lists many inexpensive bed-and-breakfasts and hotels.

AIFS-organized optional weekends

If you are participating on a semester program, and if there is sufficient demand, AIFS will be arranging optional weekends to Scotland and Switzerland.

Travel Out of London

Many students have asked us about the advantages of the various travel passes available for travel within the UK and Europe. Please find below a list of the options available to you. It is up to you to decide whether a rail pass is the answer to your travel plans while abroad.

Eurail Youth Passes

The Eurail Youth Pass is good for unlimited second-class travel in 18 countries in Europe (except Great Britain). This pass is available to registered full-time students between the ages of 11 and 25. Eurail passes should be purchased in the United States as they are not widely available in Europe. For information on fares and timetables, check their website at www.raileurope.com.

Eurail regular passes

These are good for unlimited first-class or second-class travel as above. There is no student status required or age limit.

BritRail Youth Passes

These are good for unlimited travel in England, Scotland and Wales. Youth passes are valid for people between 14 and 25. A "Flexipass" can be used eight, 15 or 22 days of a given month. These passes should be purchased in the United States as they are not widely available in Europe. Further information on fees and application forms may be obtained from your local travel agent. For information on fares and timetables, check their website at www.railpass.com.

British Rail Young Person's/Student Railcard

This card costs an initial £24 and entitles you to a reduction of one-third off all rail travel in Great Britain and reductions on the Sealink Shipping and Ferry services to Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. This card will give you considerable savings after a few journeys, especially if you plan to travel around the country on weekends. The application for these cards may be obtained from the AIFS Student Center in London.

InterRail Card

This card, valid on rail transport across Europe, is only available to people under age 26 who have been in residence in the U.K. for six months or more or are British citizens. It allows for fee reductions for rail travel in Europe. For information on fares and timetables, check their website at www.inter-rail.co.uk.

Coaches (Buses)

National Express buses run throughout the United Kingdom and now provide "rapide" services in modern buses equipped with video, toilet and refreshments. Bus travel is usually more time-consuming but much cheaper than rail travel, especially if you purchase a National Express Students Coach Card that costs approximately £11. This will earn a discount of one-third off normal fares. To avoid waiting in long lines, book by phone with a credit card. You may then pick up your pre-paid ticket at the station.

Please contact the AIFS Student Center in London for details on travel discounts available to you.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE

Most medical treatment, including hospital and private consultation, has to be paid for privately, apart from certain exemptions such as casualty and emergency treatment. Students are eligible for free treatment under the National Health Service only if they reside in Britain for six months or longer.

These charges can, however, be reclaimed through the AIFS group insurance plan which covers all students on the program, subject to the conditions of the policy. Students must pay a \$50 deductible for each covered injury or illness. Detailed listings of doctors in your area are available from the AIFS Student Center. The Center can make appointments for you and will provide you with a *Medical Claim Form* for the doctor to sign. **Be sure to bring the *Medical Claim Form* with you to the doctor as it must be completed in order to file an insurance claim.** Keep all receipts from any doctors visits or for any medications, and submit them with the claim form. Refunds can only be processed with a completed form and accompanying receipts.

Details of other medical services, e.g., dentistry, family planning, homeopathy, chiropractic, etc., are available upon request from the AIFS Student Center.

Please note that pre-existing conditions are not covered by the medical insurance provided by AIFS. Students should make arrangements with their own insurance company if they will require treatment for such a condition while abroad.

Counseling

Some of you may be away from home for the first time, and even if you are used to living in a dorm, adjusting to life in a new city and a different culture can be very tough at first. During the first few days, it's natural to feel a little strange, disoriented and homesick, especially if also suffering from jet lag. If you feel any of these symptoms when you arrive or experience any other kind of problem during your stay in London, whether personal, practical or academic, do not hesitate to seek help and support from the AIFS staff. AIFS is concerned about student welfare and can help when individual problems occur.

CLIMATE

The weather is always a topic of conversation with the British, mainly because it is so unpredictable. It is best to be prepared with raingear and, if you are in London between November and March, warm clothing, since temperatures may drop below 40°F.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
°F	43	45	49	55	62	68	71	70	65	56	49	45
°C	6	7	9	13	17	20	22	21	18	13	9	8

ELECTRICITY

Electrical currency varies throughout the world. Appliances designed to operate on U.S. electricity (110/120 volts) will not operate overseas where the electrical power is twice that found in the U.S. (220/440 volts).

Purchase an electrical converter and adaptor set before you depart the U.S. This will protect any electrical appliances you bring with you and will allow you to operate them on European voltage.

Q & A

Will I meet British students?

Only if you want to. Your membership in the University of London Union provides the opportunity to meet British students.

Will there be field trips?

Many! Check with your campus program coordinator. Some schools offer a cultural program as an optional component of the program. Others have it included in the program fee. The cultural program includes regular weekly events such as opera, ballet, theater, walks, visits and traditional London events. Most trips are offered on Fridays, after the four-day course schedule. Typical daytrips are to Stonehenge, Brighton, Oxford, Stratford-Upon-Avon and Bath.

Can I work while in London?

No. You will be entering the U.K. on a tourist visa, which does not entitle you to undertake paid work in the U.K.

Unpaid volunteer work is widely available to those who wish to become more fully integrated into British life or wish to gain career experience. Please contact the AIFS Student Center upon arrival for information about these opportunities and to arrange for a meeting with the AIFS Internship and Volunteer Placements Coordinator.

Must I fly with AIFS?

No. However, if you purchase the AIFS Transportation Package, you will be transferred from the airport to your residence as part of the package. If you make your own flight arrangements, you will be responsible for arranging your own transfer, and for any costs involved.

If you will be providing your own transportation be sure to complete and return to AIFS in Stamford, CT, the *Travel Information Form* that will be sent with your acceptance materials.

Can I change my return flight?

Maybe. For a fee and subject to airline approval and availability, you may try to change your return flight date only. You must e-mail the ticketing agent via the AIFS website at www.aifsabroad.com/login. Only date changes are allowed; there can be no changes to the routing, and there will be agent- and airline-imposed change fees that could be as high as \$350 or more. Additionally, if you have a connecting flight in the U.S., you must check whether you are able to change that U.S. domestic flight, since some cannot be changed.

How long after the program ends will my damage deposit be refunded?

Your damage deposit refund will be processed approximately 8 to 10 weeks after the end of your program and mailed shortly thereafter, to the address we had on file for you prior to your departure. Be sure to send us your new address if your old address is no longer valid.

Do I get a refund if I change my mind and decide not to go on the program?

Carefully read the AIFS refund policy on the program application. When you sign your application, you sign a statement indicating your understanding of the refund policy and your compliance with it.