



BOSTON COLLEGE
OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL
PROGRAMS

Durham University **2011-2012** **Program Guide**

Durham University
<http://www.dur.ac.uk/>

Preparing for Study Abroad

- Students can maximize their study abroad experience by learning about their host country, its history, and culture. Students may want to go to Encyclopedia Britannica <http://www.britannica.com/> for a summary of Durham and the United Kingdom (Durham and the United Kingdom are the best search terms). Another useful site is: www.economist.com/countries. Please refer to the suggested readings and websites provided at the end of this document for additional information
- Students should know what is happening in the news in their host country by reading the local newspaper at: <http://www.durhamtimes.co.uk/>
- Encountering and adapting to a different culture is an intricate component of studying abroad. Students are strongly encouraged to use the following websites to learn about intercultural communication before you leave home: <http://www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/> and <http://www.peacecorps.gov/wvs/educators/enrichment/culturematters/index.html>.
- Customs and traditions in Great Britain will be different than the ones found in the United States and at Boston College. To learn a little about the local customs and traditions you may want to consider the following questions: What type of government does Great Britain have; who is the Prime Minister; what are the national sports; what are some of the popular TV shows; who are some of the biggest celebrities in Great Britain; what music is currently popular; how do you order food in a pub; what is the policy regarding tipping?

In addition, students should review the below site for information regarding British customs and traditions:

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/UK.html>

- Students and their parents/legal guardian should refer to the Office of International Programs website for more information regarding the abroad experience: www.bc.edu/international. In addition, all students will be given the Boston College Study Abroad Handbook prior to departure. Students are expected to attend the mandatory pre-departure orientation held at Boston College. At the orientation, students will have a chance to learn more about their host country/city from their advisor and former study abroad students. Finally, additional student and parent information can be found at: <http://www.studyabroad.com/guides/index.html>

Contact Information

- Exchanges & Study Abroad Officer
LLP/ Erasmus Institutional Coordinator
Durham University
International Office
44 191 3346328

Travel Information

- Students are responsible for making their own travel arrangements. There are numerous travel sites that can aid students in finding flights. STA Travel is popular among students (www.statravel.com). The closest airport to Durham is Newcastle International Airport. Most likely, students will need to take a connecting flight to Newcastle from another destination (for example, London). From Newcastle, students will need to make their way south to Durham. Students can travel via metro, bus or taxi.

Durham will provide additional details regarding arrival and orientation.

- Passports: Students traveling to Great Britain need to have a valid passport that will not expire while abroad. Passports should be valid for at least 6 months after the last day in Great Britain. Students can find more information about passports here: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html
- Visa Information: The below information has been compiled from multiple sources. It is meant to work as a guide for students. There are two routes to enter Great Britain: as a **Student Visitor** or on a **Tier 4 (General) Student Visa**.

For the most up-to-date information, students should use the information contained on these websites:

- Home Office: UK Border Agency:
<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk/> The two most relevant links are under, “Adult Students” and/or, “Student Visitors.”
- Official British Government Website for Visa Services:
<http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/>
- Worldbridge Service:
https://www.visainfoservices.com/Pages/Content.aspx?tag=Welcome_Page
Worldbridge is the official company which handles all visa inquiries. Students should contact Worldbridge for any visa inquiries and not the British Consulate (s). The Consulates contact all questions out to Worldbridge

Students should carefully read all documents sent to them by Durham. Failure to properly follow the directions will result in delays in processing visas or lead to entry denial into the U.K.

- **Tier 4 (General) Student Visa:** Students who wish to stay in Great Britain for more than 6 months or intend to work, intern (including practicum and pre-practicum students), volunteer or fly through the Republic of Ireland, will need to obtain a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa prior to entering Great Britain. Students who need to obtain

a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa will complete the application process before leaving the United States for Great Britain. The application process is begun no earlier than 3 months prior to departure. Students applying for a visa will need to complete the following steps:

- Complete online application. The application can be found here: <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/applyonline>
 - Complete biometrics appointment. Biometrics information is provided and explained online after completing the online application.
 - Send printed visa application, stamped biometrics and supporting documents to the British Consulate in New York. Supporting documents include:
 - Valid Passport (the actual passport must be sent)
 - Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). This will be provided by Durham as an electronic number and a hard-copy document. Students will use the electronic generated CAS to complete the on-line visa application.
 - Boston College tuition support letter. This will be provided by OIP.
 - Maintenance funds. Maintenance funds are original bank statements in the student's or the parent's/guardian's name. The funds must demonstrate that a specific amount of money is available to the student for the duration of their time abroad. Durham students need to show at least 5400 British pounds for the entire academic year. Financial aid, scholarships and loans can be used as well. All documents must be in the student's or the parent's/guardian's name and must be on original documents (no web sites, PDFs, etc.). Joint accounts can be used. These amounts must be held in the bank account for a minimum period of 28 days. The end of that 28 day period must not be more than one month before the date of your application, for which you must show bank statements/other evidence. Finally, students must write on the documents how much the dollar amount is in pounds. Students must use the following site to convert dollars into pounds: www.oanda.com. If a student chooses to use their parent/guardians funds as proof the following specified original legal documentation (or a notarized copy) establishing the relationship must be provided with the application, which must include one of:
 - The applicant's birth certificate, showing name of the parent(s) showing the funds
 - Certificate of adoption showing the name of the student and the parent(s) showing the funds
 - Court document stating the name of the legal guardian(s) of the named student showing the funds
 - Two passport sized photos on photo paper
 - Original Boston College Transcript (available through Agora)
- There are no immunizations required for students studying in Great Britain.

Academics

- Michaelmas Term 2011
05 Oct 2011 - 14 Dec 2011
- Epiphany Term 2012
16 Jan 2012 - 16 Mar 2012

- Easter Term 2012
23 Apr 2012 - 22 Jun 2012*

Durham is a full year only program. Students must attend all three terms. Durham will hold an orientation about a week before the Michaelmas term begins. Students must attend this orientation. Further details will be provided by Durham.

* Students must plan to stay overseas for the entire exam period. All exams must be taken as scheduled. The exam timetable will be published during the spring term.

- Course information for Durham is available at:
http://www.dur.ac.uk/international.office/studyabroad/academic_information/. Students should click on, "Faculty Handbook," located under Module Selection
- The academic system at Durham is different than what students find at Boston College. Students will take a total of 120 credits, which is generally 6 classes. Most courses last the entire academic year. Courses or modules are less structured than courses at Boston College. Students are expected to do much more independent reading. Students' grades will be based on a limited number of assignments. It is likely that ones grade will be based on one final exam or paper.
- Course approval information will be found at:
<http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/academics/courseapproval.html>
- Information about transcripts and grades is available at:
<http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/academics/transcripts.html>

Housing

- Student's pay housing costs directly to Durham. Housing costs may include a meal plan. Durham students live in one of Durham's residential colleges. Colleges are located throughout Durham. Each college has its own distinct culture and history. Colleges are the center of student life outside of academics. Each college varies in their traditions and the accommodation offered. Some accommodation is fully self-catering, while some offer a meal plan. For more information about each college: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/colleges/>
- Additional information about the estimated cost of housing may be found at:
http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/offices/international/pdf/Updated_Budget_2010-.pdf
- Meals: Students at Durham eat at their residential colleges, on-campus or off-campus. Many of the rooms share kitchens and students can buy their own food to cook. Meal choices and options vary from college to college.
- Local Transportation: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=6159>
- Each college organizes activities throughout the semester. In addition, students may join clubs and societies through the Durham Student Union. For full details, please visit the website for the colleges and the Durham Student Union site:

- Colleges: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/colleges/>
- Student Union: <http://www.dsu.org.uk/>
- Students may purchase pre-paid cell phones upon arrival (these do not require a contract).

Wellness, Health and Safety

- Make sure that you have had any required or recommended vaccinations for your travel destinations by consulting the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov.
- HTH Worldwide Insurance Services is an emergency health and emergency services provider. All registered BC students are covered by our blanket policy while living and traveling outside of the United States. For more information, visit the following website: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/travel-health-safety.html>
- Students are advised to visit the U.S. State Department website: <http://www.state.gov/> for important travel information including travel advisories. In addition, the State Department has developed a site specifically for students: <http://studentsabroad.state.gov/>
- Adjusting to a new culture and environment can be stressful. Students will have a smoother transition by making sure that they prepare to remain healthy. The following are some websites that provide important information and advice about how to have a healthy and safe experience abroad:
 - http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/emotions/culture_shock.html
 - <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/cultural-services/articles/cultureshock-stages.html>
 - <http://www.bravenewtraveler.com/2007/11/20/the-4-stages-of-culture-shock-and-how-to-beat-them/>
- Be sure to visit the OIP website for additional information about Health and Safety: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/travel-health-safety.html>
- BC emergency contact information:
 - Office of International Programs: (617) 552-3827 (Monday to Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
 - Boston College Police Department: (617) 552-4444 (outside of normal business hours)
- Alcohol and Drugs: In many cultures, alcohol consumption is an acceptable part of the culture and people are taught to drink in moderation at home. Many countries have a lower drinking age than the U.S. while other countries have drinking and drug abuse laws that may be more severe. Students are subject to the laws of their host country, so if you choose to drink alcohol abroad, always drink responsibly and be knowledgeable about your host country's laws by visiting: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html

Finances

- The OIP website provides information about estimated expenses for study abroad: http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/offices/international/pdf/Updated_Budget_2010-.pdf
- Scholarships and Financial Aid information can be found at: http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/Scholarship_Opportunities.html
- The best way to access funds from the US is with an ATM, credit, and debit cards (also give the best exchange rate). Students who use an ATM, credit and/or debit card abroad, should contact the appropriate bank before leaving United States. Please inform the bank that you will be overseas for an extended amount of time as some banks may question foreign transactions. In addition, banks may have additional fees if a card is used overseas. It is advisable to have some funds in traveler's checks as a back-up method as well as a small amount of local currency on hand when students arrive.

Returning to BC

- Complete a Program Evaluation. Upon completion of your program OIP will e-mail the link to the evaluation.
- Mentor an exchange student from abroad by e-mailing: oiexchange@bc.edu
- Volunteer for Discovery Night, Pre-departure Orientation, Re-entry seminar by contacting Larry Pickener (Pickener@bc.edu).

References

- The *Rough Guide* or *Lonely Planet* series for travel, political and social information on Great Britain
- Durham web site: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/>
- *Brit-Think, Ameri-Think: A Transatlantic Survival Guide* by Jane Walmsley and Gray Jolliffe
- Durham International Student Guide: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/international/induction/durham/Durham.pdf>
- British Council USA: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/new/>
- National newspapers: *The Times* <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/> *The Guardian* www.guardian.co.uk *The Daily Telegraph* www.telegraph.co.uk, *The Independent* www.independent.co.uk
- Currency Conversion Guide: www.oanda.com
- Great Britain Visa Information: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk/> https://www.visainfoservices.com/Pages/Content.aspx?tag=Welcome_Page <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/>
- Web-based news site: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>
- County Durham: <http://www.visitcountydurham.com/>
- Local newspaper: <http://www.durhamtimes.co.uk/>