



BOSTON COLLEGE
OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL
PROGRAMS

Royal Holloway, University of London
Academic Year 2011-202
Program Guide

Royal Holloway, University of London
<http://www.rhul.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 the United Kingdom. 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.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/>.
- 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

- Boston College Program Coordinator
Helen Reed
Tel: 7 578 732 940
Email: helenjreed@hotmail.co.uk

For questions relating to your program of study at Royal Holloway, you may contact the International Office during regular office hours:

- Royal Holloway International
Royal Holloway, University of London
Tel: +44 (0)1784 443829
E-mail: studyabroad@rhul.ac.uk

To dial a UK number from the US, dial 011 44 and then the number (minus the first zero). When calling within the UK, you must always use the initial zero of the number.

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). Please note that students traveling to Great Britain must have a returned flight booked as part of the United Kingdom's immigration policies. Most flights from the US to London will arrive at either Heathrow or Gatwick airports.
 - Heathrow Airport: <http://www.heathrowairport.com/>
 - Gatwick Airport: <http://www.gatwickairport.com/>

For each airport website, the link, "Airport Information," provides information regarding arrival at each airport. Information includes: passport control, baggage claim and information regarding transportation into the city.

The Heathrow Express rail service (www.heathrowexpress.com), Gatwick Express trains (www.gatwickexpress.com), and the Piccadilly Line on the Underground (subway) are also options depending on your arrival airport. These train and subway lines leave you at major terminals in central London.

Royal Holloway will provide additional details.

- 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 inquires. Students should contact Worldbridge for any visa inquires and not the British Consulate (s). The Consulates contact all questions out to Worldbridge.

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

- **Student Visitors:** The Student Visitor status applies only to students studying in Great Britain for 6 months or less. The exception is if a student intends to volunteer, work or complete a pre-practicum or practicum abroad or if a student flies to Great Britain through the Republic of Ireland, the student will need to apply for a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa (information provided below). Student Visitors do not need to complete any application prior to leaving for Great Britain. Student Visitors will enter Great Britain and have their passports stamped accordingly. Students do need to provide the following documents and information upon arrival in Great Britain:
 - Valid Passport
 - Proof that you have an unconditional acceptance for your course at Royal Holloway. This will be provided by Royal Holloway.
 - Boston College tuition support letter. This will be provided by BC 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. Royal Holloway students need to show at least 800 British pounds per month abroad. 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
 - Evidence that the student intends to leave Great Britain after the semester is over (return airline ticket).
- **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, physical passport must be sent)
 - Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). This will be provided by Royal Holloway as an electronic number. 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. Royal Holloway students need to show at least 800 British pounds per month abroad. 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

- Autumn Term: Monday 19 September 2011 to Friday 9 December 2011
- Spring Term: Monday 9 January 2012 to Friday 23 March 2012
- Summer Term: Monday 23 April 2012 to Friday 8 June 2012

Royal Holloway will have an orientation prior to the start of term. Royal Holloway will provide more details at a later date.

Spring students study during both the spring and summer terms.

Full Year and spring students must plan to stay overseas for the entire exam period. All exams must be taken as scheduled.

- Course information for Royal Holloway is available at:
<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/international/Future-students/Programmes-and-applying/Study-abroad-and-exchanges/Study-abroad/Selecting-Course-Options.htm>

Students should carefully read and review the course selection policies contain in the above web page.

- The academic system at Royal Holloway is different than what students find at Boston College. Per semester, students at Royal Holloway must take the equivalent of 30 ECTS (credits) Courses or modules are less structured than courses at Boston College. Students are expected to do much more independent reading. Student's 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.
- Boston College 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

- Housing fees will be paid directly to Royal Holloway and costs vary according to the type of accommodation. Boston College students are guaranteed college housing as long as all forms are submitted on time. The available residences for study abroad students are all self-catered with shared kitchen facilities. Most rooms are singles and contain a bed, desk and storage space. Many of these also have en-suite (private) bathroom facilities. All residences are in locations convenient to the campus to ensure full participation in campus life.

For spring and Full Year students, if exams are over in the early part of the examination period students will still be responsible for paying the rent on the housing to the end of the exam period.

For more information, go to the Royal Holloway Accommodation Office's website: www.rhul.ac.uk/For-Students/accommodation.html.

- Meals: Past participants recommend buying food at larger supermarkets instead of small convenience stores. Another good idea is takeout (called "take away" in the UK) from small local restaurants
- Local Transportation: RHUL provides a bus service that runs between several main points across campus. The bus also runs between the Egham railway station and main campus. For more details, visit www.rhul.ac.uk/for-students/campus/bus-service.html.

Central London is easily accessible from Royal Holloway with frequent train services from Egham to London Waterloo (40 minutes). For local train timetables, visit www.southwesttrains.co.uk/. For more information about London transportation, please see the Transport for London website at <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl>, the Traveline website at www.traveline.org.uk or the London Transport website at www.londontransport.co.uk.

For enquiries on national ground transportation, please consult the National Rail website (www.nationalrail.co.uk/) or the National Express coaches website (www.nationalexpress.com). Cheap national flights are also available through Easyjet (www.easyjet.com) or Ryan Air (www.ryanair.com).

- Students are encouraged to take advantage of your membership at the Students' Union. The Union organizes various social and cultural events and has its own newspaper and radio station. It also supports over 100 societies and sports clubs. Royal Holloway also has a social program for study abroad students, which includes a mixture of campus-based events as well as excursions to sites of historic and cultural interest. For more information, please visit: <http://www.surhul.co.uk/>
- In addition to RHUL events, Boston College students are invited to participate in monthly activities organized by the Boston College site coordinator. In the past, activities and excursions have included museum and theatre visits in London and trips to Brighton and Hastings.
- Cell Phones: 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 and London
- Royal Holloway website: <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/international/>
- 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/>
- *Brit-Think, Ameri-Think: A Transatlantic Survival Guide* by Jane Walmsley and Gray Jolliffe
- 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/>
- *Time Out* for London: www.timeout.com/london/
- Virtual London guide: www.londonnet.co.uk/