



BOSTON COLLEGE  
OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL  
PROGRAMS

**The School for Oriental and African Studies  
(SOAS)**  
Academic Year 2011-2012  
Program Guide

**The School for Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)**  
<http://www.soas.ac.uk/>

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**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 London and the United Kingdom. Another useful site is: [www.economist.com/countries](http://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/>. (This is just one of many London papers)
- 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](http://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>

## On-Site Coordinator/SOAS Contact Information

- Boston College Program Coordinator  
Helen Reed  
Tel: 7 578 732 940  
Email: [helenjreed@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:helenjreed@hotmail.co.uk)
- SOAS Student Recruitment Office  
Thornhaugh Street  
Russell Square  
Tel: (0)20 7898 4034  
Fax: (0) 20 7898 4039  
E-mail: [studyabroad@soas.ac.uk](mailto:studyabroad@soas.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](http://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. Please refer to their websites for information regarding arriving in London and making your way into the city.
  - Heathrow Airport: <http://www.heathrowairport.com/>
  - Gatwick Airport: <http://www.gatwickairport.com/>

The Heathrow Express rail service ([www.heathrowexpress.com](http://www.heathrowexpress.com)), Gatwick Express trains ([www.gatwickexpress.com](http://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.

SOAS 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](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](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.

Student should carefully read all documents sent to them by SOAS. 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 SOAS. This will be provided by SOAS.
- 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. SOAS 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](http://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 SOAS 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. SOAS 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](http://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

- First Term  
Start: Monday 26 September 2011  
End: Friday 16 December 2011  
Reading Week: 7 - 11 November 2011  
Teaching starts: Teaching week 1 - Monday 03 October 2011
- Second Term  
Start: Monday 9 January 2012  
End: Friday 23 March 2012  
Reading Week: 13 - 17 February 2012
- Third Term  
Start: Monday 16 April 2012  
End: Friday 8 June 2012

An orientation will be held by SOAS before each semester. SOAS will provide more details.

Spring students will study at SOAS for both 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> term

All exams must be taken as scheduled. The exam timetable will be published during the spring term.

- Course information for SOAS is available at:  
<http://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/international/studyabroad/courses/>. Course listings can be accessed from this site.
- Students studying at SOAS for the full academic year are expected to take 4 *units*, which is a full course load in the UK. Students studying at SOAS for just term 1 or just terms 2&3 are expected to take 4 courses and do not need to be concerned about the unit value. A unit is either 0.5 or 1.0. 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.
- 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 by students directly to SOAS and costs vary according to the type of accommodation assigned. Study abroad students will most often be placed in Dinwiddy House. These buildings are adjacent to the Vernon Square campus and a 15-minute walk from the main campus at Russell Square. Each building has single rooms

with ensuite bathroom facilities and telephone/internet connections. The rooms are in clusters of 6 or 7 rooms sharing kitchen facilities. Students who receive university housing will sign a Housing Contract with SOAS (similar to a lease). 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.

- Further information about SOAS accommodations and housing fees can be found at <http://www.sshl.org.uk/dinwiddyhouse.asp>
- Meals: Each apartment is equipped with a kitchen. Students shop for themselves and cook in the apartment. There are numerous shops and restaurants located throughout the city
- Local Transportation: London has one of the most extensive public transportation systems in the world. You can consider using the Underground (Tube), bus, Docklands Light Rail, or tram system for less expensive transportation options. The Oyster Card is available for all of the previously mentioned methods of transport and is the cheapest and most efficient way to pay for public transportation. For more information, please see the Transport for London website at <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl>, the Traveline website at [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk) or the London Transport website at [www.londontransport.co.uk](http://www.londontransport.co.uk).

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

- In addition to the events and social clubs offered by SOAS, students are encouraged to take advantage of their automatic membership to the SOAS Student Union (<http://www.soasunion.org/>). Students are also enrolled in the University of London Union (<http://www.ulu.co.uk/>) The ULU building is only a short walk from the Russell Square campus and houses a swimming pool, gym facilities, lounges, and various student shops. SOAS also sponsors a dynamic lecture program with lectures, concerts, film screenings, etc. offered throughout the year by SOAS and visiting faculty/scholars.

Boston College students are also encouraged 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](http://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://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](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](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](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](mailto: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
- SOAS Study Abroad Guide: [www.soas.ac.uk/studyabroad](http://www.soas.ac.uk/studyabroad)
- *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](http://www.guardian.co.uk) *The Daily Telegraph* [www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk), *The Independent* [www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk)
- Currency Conversion Guide: [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com)
- Great Britain Visa Information: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk/>
- [https://www.visainfoservices.com/Pages/Content.aspx?tag=Welcome\\_Page](https://www.visainfoservices.com/Pages/Content.aspx?tag=Welcome_Page)
- <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/>
- *Time Out* for London: [www.timeout.com/london/](http://www.timeout.com/london/)
- Virtual London guide: [www.londonnet.co.uk/](http://www.londonnet.co.uk/)