



BOSTON COLLEGE
OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST
2010-2011
Program Guide

Queen's University Belfast (QUB)
<http://www.qub.ac.uk/>

Preparing for Study Abroad

- To maximize your study abroad experience, you should prepare yourself by learning about your host country, its history, and culture. You may want to begin with: www.economist.com/countries or <http://www.britannica.com/> for a summary. Know what is happening in the news in your host city by reading the local newspaper, *The Belfast Telegraph* at <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk>
- Engaging with and adapting to a different culture is an inherent component of study abroad. You will find the following websites useful to learn about intercultural communication before you leave home: <http://www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/> and <http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/educators/enrichment/culturematters/index.html>
- Customs and traditions in your host country are different from those at home. To learn a little about the local customs and traditions you should visit the following website: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/419739/Northern-Ireland>
- You and your parents should refer to the Office of International Programs website (www.bc.edu/international) and specifically to the *Study Abroad Handbook* for more information regarding the abroad experience.
- Prior to your departure you will meet with your International Study Advisor at an orientation to help you further prepare for your study abroad experience.

On-Site Contact Information

Ms. Donna Beckington, Senior International Officer
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Dr. Leeann Lane, BC On-site Coordinator (Dublin)
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Travel Information

- You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements. In the past BC students have often used student travel agencies such as STA Travel at www.statravel.com. These agencies generally offer competitive rates and open-ended tickets allowing you to leave Ireland whenever you want to.

To study in Northern Ireland, you must have a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond your estimated return date. You may apply for a passport at any major US post office. Be sure to start this process as soon as possible as it usually takes six to eight weeks to complete.

- Immigration requirements for Northern Ireland and the UK have change recently. It is important for you to read all documents provided by QUB and review immigration information found at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/mrc/DomesticandInternationalRecruitment/NewImmigrationRules/>. There are two ways through which to enter Great Britain: as a Student Visitor or on a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa.

Student Visitors: Students studying in Great Britain for six months or less do not need a visa, except if you intend to volunteer, work, or complete a pre-practicum or practicum abroad. If so, you will need to apply for a student visa (see below). Student Visitors do not need to complete any application prior to leaving for Great Britain. As a Student Visitor you will enter Great Britain and have your passport stamped accordingly; however, you will need to provide the following documents and information upon arrival in Great Britain:

- Valid Passport
- Student Visitor support letter (sometimes referred to as a sponsor letter) provided by QUB
- Boston College tuition support letter provided by OIP
- Maintenance funds. Maintenance funds are original bank statements in your name or your parent/guardian's name. The funds must demonstrate that a specific amount of money is available to you for the duration of your time abroad (at least 600 British pounds per month abroad). Financial aid, scholarships and loans can be used as well. All documents must be in your name or your parent/guardian's name and must be on original documents (no web sites, PDFs, etc.). Joint accounts can be used. The funds must be held in the bank account for a minimum of 28 days and the end of that 28-day period must be not more than one month before the date of your application; you're your application you must show bank statements or other evidence of funds. Finally, you must write on the documents the dollar equivalent in pounds. You must use the following site to convert dollars into pounds: www.oanda.com. If you choose to use your parent/guardian's funds as proof, the following original documentation (or notarized copy) establishing the relationship must be provided along with the application, which must also include one of the following:
 - Your birth certificate, showing name of your parent(s) and showing the funds
 - Certificate of adoption showing your name and your parent's and showing the funds
 - A court document stating the name of your legal guardian(s) and showing the funds
- Evidence that you intend 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) or volunteer will need to obtain a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa prior to entering Great Britain. If you need to obtain a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa you must complete the application process before leaving the United States for Great Britain. The application process may begin no earlier than 3 months prior to your departure. If you will apply for a visa will need to complete the following steps:

- Complete online application at: <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/applyonline>
- Schedule a biometrics appointment (explained online after completing the online application)
- Send your printed visa application, stamped biometrics and supporting documents to the appropriate British Consulate (Chicago, Los Angeles or New York). Supporting documents include:
 - Valid Passport (actual passport must be sent)
 - Visa support letter (sometimes referred to as a sponsor letter) provided by QUB
 - Boston College tuition support letter provided by OIP
 - Maintenance funds (see above)
- Vaccinations are not required for U.S. citizens
- The University provides a free transportation service from Belfast International Airport and Belfast City Airport to the halls of residence (Elms Village). Check their information package for dates and details. To take advantage of this service, you must send your flight details to the International Office by mailing the completed Orientation Registration form (or e-mail: international@qub.ac.uk)

Academics

- **Academic Calendar**

Please consult the acceptance materials that QUB sends you for the dates of the orientation. Plan to stay until the last exam date; you must remain for all of your exams. As of now, the semester dates are:

Fall Semester 2010 (Semester 1)

9/27 - 11/17	Teaching term
12/7 - 12/18	Exams

Spring Semester 2011 (Semester 2)

1/31-4/15	Teaching
4/18-5/6	Easter Recess
5/9-5/13	Teaching resumes
5/19-6/4	Exams

- The staff of the International Office will provide an orientation to familiarize you with QUB. Before your arrive you may want to look at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/ProspectiveStudents/InternationalStudents/StudyAbroad/OrientationandArrival/>
- You will pre-register for your classes before you arrive and will meet with an academic advisor to finalize your registration on the day of the orientation. In addition, Leeann Lane, BC Dublin On-site Coordinator will keep in touch with you once you arrive to invite you to events in Dublin.
- Course selection information is available from: <https://qsiscat.qub.ac.uk/psp/catalogBC> Course approval information will be found at: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/advisingservices/academics/courseapproval.html>
- Information about Transcripts and grades is available at: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/advisingservices/academics/transcripts.html>

Housing

- Although you will be paying BC tuition, you will pay for your own housing. Payment will be made directly to the provider. Single and double rooms are available in catered and self-catering halls or houses within walking distance of the university. Housing applications are sent along with the official letter of acceptance. The deadline for fall/year housing applications is August 1 and November 2 for spring semester accommodations. For further information check the Accommodation Services website at: www.qub.ac.uk/sacc/.
- Additional information about the estimated cost of housing may be found at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/ProspectiveStudents/InternationalStudents/StudyAbroad/Accommodation/>
- The university does not have a meal plan but QUB has many on-campus dining facilities as well as off-campus restaurants
- Information about local transportation may be found at: <http://www.dublinuncovered.net/transport.html>
- Most students purchase a cell phone when they arrive in Dublin. During the university's orientation you will receive information about buying a cell phone.

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>
- Visit the U.S. State Department website: <http://www.state.gov/> for important travel information including travel advisories.
- Adjusting to a new culture and environment can be stressful. You will have a smoother transition by making sure that you prepare to remain healthy. 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:
OIP: (617) 552-3827 (Monday to Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
BCPD: (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. You are subject to the laws of your 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/tips_1232.html#drug_offenses

Finances

- The OIP website provides information about estimated expenses for study abroad:
http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/meta-elements/pdf/0910_estimated_stude.pdf
- The following website provides some information about the cost of living in Belfast:
<http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/ProspectiveStudents/InternationalStudents/StudyAbroad/FeesandLivingCosts/>
- Scholarships and Financial Aid information can be found at:
http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/financesawards/Scholarship_Opportunities.html

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 your host university by contacting oipexchange@bc.edu
- Volunteer for Discovery Night, Pre-departure Orientation, Re-entry seminar by contacting your International Study Advisor, Esther Messing at e-mail address: messines@bc.edu
- It is not uncommon when you return from studying abroad to experience "reverse" culture shock. The following may help you transition back to home: <http://www.cie.uci.edu/prepare/shock.shtml>
<http://www.studyabroad.com/guides/handbook/handbook5.html#shock>

References

- Bardon, Jonathan. A History of Ulster. Belfast, UK: Blackstaff Press, 2005
- Mulholland, Marc. The Longest War: Northern Ireland's Troubled History. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002
- Wilson, Robert Mclain. Eureka Street: A Novel of Ireland Like No Other. New York, NY: Arcade Publishing, 1999
- Useful websites:
Local information about Belfast: <http://www.discovernorthernireland.com/>
Travel guides for Ireland: www.letsgo.com/
www.roughguides.com/
- Student and parent guides for study abroad:
<http://www.studyabroad.com/guides/handbook/handbook5.html#shock>