iCharleston
London Pre-Departure Orientation

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FIE: Where You’ll Live & Learn

- The Foundation for International Education
  - London-based non-profit organization
  - Founded in 1998
  - 50 partner US universities and colleges
  - Over 500 students last fall
  - 5 Residence Halls and one Study Centre in South Kensington
  - Partnered with College of Charleston since 2014

- FIE staff are on hand to help you in every way they can, so please come to Foundation House during your time abroad and use us as a resource!
About London

- London is...
  - The most multi-cultural city in the world, with one in three Londoners born outside the UK.
  - The largest city in Europe with more than 8.7 million people.
  - Center for arts and culture and the heart of the British social scene.
  - Endlessly accessible by tube, bus and train.
  - A gateway to the rest of Europe.
Start Preparing Now!

- You may think you have a long way to go before departure… but your program will be here before you know it!

- Before you go, write down what you hope to learn or accomplish during your program.

- Make copies of important documents – passport photo page, visa page (if applicable), and Student Letter
Culture Shock

Definition: Anxiety and disorientation felt when people have to operate within a different cultural or social environment.

Just because you are going to an English-speaking country does NOT mean you won’t experience culture shock. There are many cultural differences between your home country and the UK.

Expect to be challenged. Expect to also feel uncomfortable at times.

The Stages of Culture Shock:
- HONEYMOON
- HOSTILITY
- HUMOR
- HOME
Ways to Manage Culture Shock

- Revisit your goals for the program when you are having trouble appreciating your time abroad.
- Remember that this experience is what you make of it.
- Utilize your sense of humor.
- Be open-minded: it’s not wrong, it’s different!
- Have tolerance for ambiguity.
- Talk to your Site Director and FIE staff if you feel that you are really having difficulties adjusting. We are here to help.
What to Pack

DO NOT OVERPACK.
- Storage space is limited
- You will have to get your luggage to and from your residence!
- You can buy all necessary items in the UK—don’t panic!

You should bring:
- an umbrella and hooded rain jacket.
- all necessary prescriptions and medications for the duration of your program, in their original labeled bottles.
- Bath towel

Small appliances: hair dryers, straighteners, etc.
- Check the voltage of your appliance. British voltages are typically 240V. It may be easier for you to buy a cheap hairdryer or electric shaver whilst you are here.
Money and Finances

- The cost of living in London is significantly high.
- For current exchange rates, visit www.xe.com.
- Budget between £90 and £120 per week for food and personal expenses.
- You can visit an ATM in South Kensington once you arrive.
- Banking: Use your regular debit card while abroad.
  - You MUST notify your bank and credit card companies that you will be using your accounts overseas, or they may freeze them.
Insurance and Medical Provision

- Charleston participants are covered by comprehensive **travel** insurance through Endsleigh.
  - You will receive more information about this policy from the London team, including instructions on how to make a doctor’s appointment.

- Full orientation to health care services upon arrival in London
  - You typically pay costs up front and receive reimbursement

- Supplemental insurance through your own provider
You MUST have a current valid passport to enter Britain.
  • And it must be valid for at least 6 months after the end date of your semester.

College of Charleston will issue you a student letter that you must carry with you and present at UK Immigration.

Full immigration information will be emailed to you by FIE.
Going Through Immigration

- When you land in London, you will go through UK Immigration, where you will present your passport and student letter.

- An official will ask you questions such as the purpose of your visit, how long you will be in the UK, and where you will be staying.

- It is in your best interest to treat the customs officials with respect, as they approve your entry into the country!
Arrival & Getting to Your Residence

- Your group will be collected by a London Blue Badge Guide and your Charleston Site Director at Heathrow Airport, who will help you make your way to central London.

- Travel via coach as a group with your luggage directly to your residence!
Orientation

- On arrival, you will check in at your residence. After that, you will go to Foundation House with your passport for Registration.

- Residence Life Orientations will take place the evening of arrival to help you settle in.

- FIE Orientation will take place the following day—an opportunity to answer any questions you have, introduce you to the local area and help you understand London public transportation.

- Other orientation activities include a London bus tour, theater trip, and FIE welcome BBQ!
Academics

- Classes will use the extensive and excellent resources of London as part of your course.
  - Field trips!

- This is a study program (study abroad), not a travel program.
  - Academics take precedence over other activities.
  - Please do not book any travel until your timetable is confirmed on arrival in London!!

- Preparation and participation are expected in all class sessions and excursions.

- Faculty will have a different teaching style abroad than your teachers in high school.
Foundation House + Metrogate House Classrooms

- Classrooms and offices for FIE
- Just around the corner from Gloucester Road Tube Station, Natural History Museum, V&A Museum, Science Museum, Harrods, etc!
- Student Lounge with event info, daily newspapers, weekly journals
- Foundation House hours: 8am-9pm
- Metrogate House hours: 24/7
Student Life in London

- The Student Life Team in Foundation House
  - Information about local events
  - Travel advice
  - Sponsors special discounted outings for students
  - Extra-curricular calendar

- Some unique student life offerings:
  - Imperial College Student Union
  - ISH: International Students House
  - HOST UK weekend British home stays
  - Regular Facebook updates

- International Student Identity Card
Student Housing: Lightfoot Hall

- 24-Hour Reception
- 15-minute walk from classes at Foundation House + Metrogate House
- Kitchens are equipped with basic cooking gear and utensils.
- Location on King’s Road in Chelsea
  - Prime real estate!
  - Cafes, shops, grocery stores, farmers market on Saturdays at Duke of York Square
- FIE Residence Life Supervisors live in the building.
- No overnight guests are allowed.
- You will receive roommate assignments when you arrive
Student Housing: Lightfoot Hall

- Rooms will be doubles, shared with other iCharleston participants
- Bed linen provided (UK sizing!)
- Towels are not provided!
- Laundry on-site, payment by card
- "Kitchenette" and TV in each bedroom
  » Microwave and fridge
- Other students will be living in the building. Get to know one another!
The Neighbo(u)rhood
Mobile Phones

- Many students purchase inexpensive mobile phones or SIM cards
  - “Unlock” your phone before arriving in the UK
- The most common mobile plan in the UK is called “pay-as-you-go”
  - “Top Up”, minutes-based
  - It is up to you what plan you choose, as every student has different needs.
- Check with your own cell phone provider for study abroad rates
- Skype & WhatsApp
- Carphone Warehouse: https://www.carphonewarehouse.com/
Computing and Technology

- Each FIE academic and housing facility has high speed wireless internet.
- Bring your own laptop, but should properly insure it.
- The IT team in London are located in Foundation House
- Printing is available in Metrogate House (open 24/7)
Health and Safety

- Use common sense!
- Big city - petty crime happens!
- Register with the US State Department Web site
- Stay in touch – online travel forms
- Reporting incidents to iCharleston, FIE and the London Metropolitan Police
- Comprehensive Emergency Incident Response Plan
  - Cell phone/Facebook/Email
Important & Helpful Resources:

- FIE Website has all this information and more! [www.fie.org.uk](http://www.fie.org.uk)

- Travel:
  - Citymapper: [https://citymapper.com/london](https://citymapper.com/london)

- Grocery stores:
  - Sainsbury’s: [http://www.sainsburys.co.uk/](http://www.sainsburys.co.uk/)
British Trivia!

- What is the British national food dish, according to the British Foreign Secretary Robert Cook?
- What is the name of the world-famous music festival held in Somerset every summer, which Ed Sheeran headlined last weekend?
- Who was the last British tennis player to win Wimbledon?
- Who is the Prime Minister of the UK, and who is the Leader of the Opposition?
KEEP CALM AND SEE YOU SOON

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/FIELondon
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/fiestudy_abroad/
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