

Student Guide to Location

LONDON

Accommodation

iCharleston London participants reside in together near their study locations. Residence halls have 24/7 security and support from our partners at Foundation for International Education.

- Rooms are double/triple/quadruple occupancy with en suite bathrooms.
- Bedding fully provided (pillow, sheets, comforter); students will need to provide their own towels, which can be purchased upon arrival in London
- Fully equipped kitchens on each floor with cooking tools (stove, microwave, cookware, and dishware), as well as large fridges and freezers
- Rooms come equipped with mini fridge and wireless internet

Services and Facilities

- Free WiFi
- 24/7 security presence
- Swipe card key system and CCTV cameras
- Laundry room in the basement with a cost of £5 per cycle (wash and dry). Students provide their own detergent
- Bedding changed and cleaned weekly by Foundation for International Education (FIE) housekeeping staff

Academic Resources

iCharleston London participants take courses with the Foundation for International Education (FIE) during their fall semester in London. FIE provides excellent faculty and support staff as well as interesting classes that take you into the heart of London.

Places to study

- Common spaces in the residence hall - kitchens, study lounges
- Foundation House – There is a student lounge in the basement with comfy couches and Wi-Fi.
- Metrogate House – There is a computer lab/study room in the basement as well as printers to use.
- Coffee Shops
 - Fleet River Cafe in Holborn has large tables and free WiFi, making it a great place to get some work done.
 - Chains like Starbucks, Caffe Nero, Pret a Manager, Costa Coffee, and Fait Maison all have WiFi as well
 - Places around the King's Road to study - A Wanted Man, Nell's, Joe and the Juice

Services Provided

- Writing Support Tutors - FIE provides writing support for students who want to have

someone look over their papers before they submit them.

- Learning Accommodations - FIE students can receive various learning accommodations, as long as they submit the appropriate documentation
- Used textbooks - prior to or upon arrival, students can reserve textbooks for their classes through FIE

Food

London is truly a global city, and with that comes a global cuisine. There are thousands of restaurants, markets, and food stands to try, but be sure to budget your money and cook a good bit. Since you will not have a meal plan, you will be responsible for making or buying your own meals.

Grocery Stores

- **Waitrose** (196 Kings Rd.) - 5 min walk from Lightfoot Hall, basic grocery store, medium price range, good quality food (get MyWaitrose card to get free coffee when you shop)
- **ASDA** (204 Lavender Hill, Clapham Junction) - 15/20 min bus ride - only 2 min walking, like Walmart, very big and inexpensive store
- **Partridges** (2-5 Duke of York Sq.) - 15 min walk, smaller store, high quality food, expensive
- **Whole Foods** (63-97 Kensington High St.) - 35 min walk or take the 49 bus (15-20 minutes); lots of variety, fresh juices, sushi bar, healthy foods, high prices
- **Sainsbury's** (158A Cromwell Rd.) - 10 min walk from Foundation House or take the 49 bus from Lightfoot (still have to walk ~10 min); big grocery store, inexpensive, lots of options, also sells homeware products like towels, tupperware, pots & pans, cleaning products, etc.
- **Tesco** - mini across from the Gloucester tube station; larger store at Earls Court, about a 25 minute bus ride away; American food section

Coffee Shops

- Starbucks (Gloucester Rd. - two locations) - free WiFi, 5 min from Foundation House
- Pret a Manager (Gloucester Rd.) - free Wifi, good on-the-go lunch food, 5 min from Foundation House
- Fait Maison (Gloucester Rd.) - free WiFi, 5 min from Foundation House
- Caffè Nero (Gloucester Rd.) - free WiFi, 5 min from Foundation House
- A Wanted Man (King's Rd.) - free WiFi, 2 min from Lightfoot Hall, mediterranean food
- Nell's (King's Rd.) - free WiFi - 2 min from Lightfoot Hall, great juices

Restaurants

- Da Mario's (Gloucester Rd.) - Italian, moderate price, very close to Metrogate/Foundation House
- Light of India (Gloucester Rd.) - Indian, moderate price (15% off for take out orders)
- Zack's (Gloucester Rd.) - Mediterranean, inexpensive, WiFi, good to do work and have lunch or breakfast (good pancakes!)

- Big Easy (King's Rd.) - US style, moderate price
- Byron Burger (King's Rd., Gloucester Rd.) - inexpensive, but quality burger
- Azteca (King's Rd.) - Mexican, expensive, but authentic
- Bluebird (King's Rd.) - Brunch, expensive, cafe *and* full service restaurant
- VQ Diner (Fulham Rd.) - Good diner/Breakfast food, inexpensive, open 24/7
- Bosphorus Kebabs (Old Brompton Rd.) - best kebabs nearby, inexpensive
- Franco Manca (Old Brompton Rd, and more) - chain pizza restaurant with locations all around London, inexpensive and delicious

Finances

England uses the British Pound (£) as their currency, which is worth a bit more than the U.S. Dollar, so be sure to convert your money when determining how much you're spending. The U.K does not accept U.S. dollars as valid currency.

ATMS/credit/debit cards/Banks

- American credit/debit cards are accepted almost everywhere in the city, but students should ensure that they are aware of any international transaction fee that may occur
- Barclays ATMs are spread throughout the city and may or may not charge for withdrawals depending on your bank
- Major banks and ATMs in London include:
 - Barclays, HSBC, Lloyd's, Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), NatWest

Travel Notices

- Be sure to contact your bank prior to departure to alert them that you will be travelling outside of the country for a semester.

What to budget

- At the beginning of the semester students will need to purchase items for their bedroom such as towels, toiletries, school supplies, and decorative items if desired
- Students should budget \$150 per week for groceries, restaurants, laundry, and miscellaneous costs. This cost can be lowered if you cook more and budget wisely
- Students should make sure to include any expected travel expenses (airfare, lodging, cultural excursions) into their budget

NOTE: fees to change dollars into pounds in cash are usually higher than the transaction fee to withdraw pounds with a card at an ATM

International Phone Service

Students are required to purchase an U.K. phone number upon arrival in London. This can be done by purchasing an international phone or replacing the American SIM card with a U.K. SIM card. We recommend purchasing a SIM card, as opposed to a cheap phone, so that you don't have to carry around two separate phones everywhere that you go.

Purchasing Phones

- SIM cards/ cheap phone plans will cost about £20 per month, depending on how much data is associated with the plan
- SIM cards are easy to use, and everything about your phone (except the number) will stay the same
- Places to purchase a SIM card or inexpensive phone:
 - Phone networks/providers - O2 (King's Rd.), EE (King's Rd.), Vodafone, 3
 - Carphone Warehouse - this sells plans from different companies; there is one on King's Rd. and High St. Kensington

Useful Apps to Download

- Citymapper - This app is a must-have for getting around London. You put in your starting location and destination, and it will tell you all possible ways to get there (bus, tube, walking, uber), the estimated time, and estimated cost -- public transport is paid for with your program fee!
- Maps.Me - Download this app and the London map, and you will be able to navigate without data. Very useful for the first few days until you get your phone plan and to save on data!
- Time Out - There's a weekly publication, but if you want to know all about cool events happening in London, this is what you want to use.
- WhatsApp/Viber - great for texting/calling people that don't have Facetime/iMessenger

Health and Wellness

This may be your first time away from home, and it is important to take care of yourself. London is a great city to get in some exercise because there are so many places to see. Be sure to make sure you're eating right, getting plenty of sleep, and know when you need to ask for help.

Pharmacy

- Boots Pharmacy - Gloucester Road, King's Road (2 locations)
- General medication, first aid, prescription pick up

Doctor/Walk-in Centres:

- FIE's Student Life website is a great resource for all nearby doctor's offices and medical clinics - <https://www.fie.org.uk/medical-services>; the closest ones are:
- Earl's Court Health and Wellbeing Centre (associated charge of £75, some money can be claimed through your insurance)
 - Phone #: 020 7341 0300
 - Address: 2B Hogarth Road, Earl's Court, London SW5 0PT
 - Hours of Operation: Mon & Thurs 8am - 8pm, Tues & Wed 7:30am - 7pm, Fri 8am - 7pm, Sat 9am - 12pm
- Parsons Green NHS Walk-in Centre (little to no cost)

- Phone #: 020 8102 4300
- Address: 5-7 Parsons Green, London, SW6 4UL
- Hours of Operation: Mon-Fri 8am - 8pm, Sat & Sun 9am - 1:30pm

Hospital info

- Usually a few hours wait, but the best option after hours
- Fulham NHS Urgent Care Centre - Fulham Palace Rd
- SoHo NHS Walk-in Centre - 1 Frith Street

Mental Health - <https://www.fie.org.uk/counseling-mental-health>

FIE provides free confidential one-on-one counseling services with psychotherapist Dr. Deborah Hill. Dr. Hill is an excellent resource for students to use if they are having any issues with anxiety, depression, and homesickness. While this service is offered free of charge, students are limited to three visits. Charges will apply starting with the fourth visit.

Local gyms, places to workout

- Battersea Park - right down the road!
- Chelsea Sports Centre - 5 minute walk from Lightfoot Hall; student rate offered
- Holland Park, Kensington Gardens/Hyde Park - 20 minutes away
- David Lloyd (<https://www.davidlloyd.co.uk/>)
- Fitness First (<http://www.fitnessfirst.co.uk/gyms-near/gyms-in-london/>)

Transportation (<https://tfl.gov.uk/>)

London is home to one of the best transportation systems in the world - the Tube! You'll find that you can get almost anywhere you need to go via the tube, but you'll also have access to buses, trains, and cabs to get you to your next destination. Each course in London will take you on excursions into different parts of London, so an Oyster card is essential and included in your program fee. An Oyster travel card provides Zone 1 & 2 rides during your semester in London and will be given to you upon your arrival in London.

Tube/London Underground

- This is the most popular and easiest form of transportation
- Your Oyster card will take you anywhere within Zones 1 & 2
- Stations nearby: Sloane Square, Gloucester Road and South Kensington

Buses

- Buses can be more convenient depending on where you are traveling, and there is a bus stop right outside of Lightfoot Hall!
- Your Oyster card can be used on any of the buses
- Routes to tube stations, Foundation House, large grocery stores, etc.

Cabs

- Black cabs are all over London, but they are the most expensive form of transportation

- Cabs will accept cash or credit, and can be picked up anywhere in the city

DLR, London Overground

- Occasionally, you may use the DLR or London Overground, but it really depends on where you are traveling (Greenwich, for example).
- You can access this with your Oyster card for an additional fee

Santander Bikes

- More commonly referred to as “Boris Bikes” after the former Mayor of London.
- You can pick them up in various places around the city for about £2 (free for 30 minutes of use!)
- There is a bank of bikes right outside of Lightfoot Hall and is a great way to get to Foundation House when the weather is still nice
- These are great for riding around the parks, but be cautious on the streets of London

Entertainment

It is impossible to be bored in a city like London. There are endless opportunities to experience British culture through theatre trips, museums, and markets of all kinds.

Shopping (clothes and housewares)

- Cheap
 - H & M - Kensington High Street
 - Primark (clothes) - Hammersmith or Oxford Street
 - Ryman - Old Brompton Road, Gloucester Road, King’s Road (school supplies)
- Moderate
 - Peter Jones - Sloane Square (large department store, towels, linens, cookware)
 - Marks & Spencer (clothes/housewares) - King’s Road
 - Topshop - Kensington High Street, Oxford St.
 - Zara - King’s Road
 - Waterstones - King’s Road (bookstore)
- Expensive (while maybe too expensive to shop in, these store are almost like museums for window shopping!)
 - Selfridge’s (department store) - Oxford Street
 - Harrod’s (department store) - Knightsbridge
 - Liberty (department store) - Oxford Street
 - Fortnum & Mason (tea/coffee/gifts) - Piccadilly

Places to Explore

- Parks
 - Battersea Park - 10 minute walk from Lightfoot
 - Kensington Gardens - 15 minutes from Foundation House
 - Hyde Park - 20 minutes from Foundation House
 - Holland Park - Kensington High St. (Japanese garden inside)
 - Regents Park - close to the wax museum

- Hampstead Heath - a little ways out, but HUGE - good for a light hike!
- Museums
 - Natural History - Cromwell Rd (<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/>)
 - Victoria & Albert - Cromwell Rd (right next to Natural History) (<https://www.vam.ac.uk/>)
 - Science - Exhibition Rd (right behind Natural History) (<http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/>)
 - National Gallery - Trafalgar Square (<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/>)
 - Tate Modern - Bankside (<http://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern>)
 - British Museum - Holborn/Russel Square (<http://www.britishmuseum.org/>)
- Neighborhoods
 - Soho/Piccadilly/Covent Garden (20 minutes on the tube) - all considered to be the central parts of London; here you'll find Piccadilly Circus, lots of shopping and restaurants, movie theatres, street performers, Trafalgar Square; highlight for Harry Potter fans - **House of Minalima**
 - Shoreditch (45 minutes on the tube) - a more youthful, artsy neighborhood in East London; here you'll find Brick Lane (famous for its Indian food), a weekend market, and a great underground vintage store open weekends only
 - Camden (45 minutes on the tube) - a neighborhood famous for its music scene in North London; here you'll find concerts to go to, and a weekend market
 - Notting Hill (25 min on the bus or 10 on tube) - just like in the movie, Notting Hill is famous for its main road, Portobello Road, which has different themed markets Friday-Sunday
- Markets
 - Portobello Rd - crafts/trinkets - Notting Hill (<http://portobellomarket.org/>)
 - Borough Market - food - Bankside (<http://boroughmarket.org.uk/>)
 - Camden Lock - food/crafts/trinkets - Camden (<https://www.camdenmarket.com/>)
 - Maltby St. Market - Southwark
 - Columbia Road Flower Market - flowers/crafts - Bethnel Green (<http://www.columbiaroad.info/>)

In Case of an Emergency

Should there ever be an emergency, FIE staff members and iCHS staff members are on-site for you to speak with. It is also a good idea to know where the U.S. Embassy is in London should you ever need to visit. You can find the address below:

US Embassy London

33 Nine Elms Lane
 London, SW11 7US
 United Kingdom
 Phone: [44] (0)20 7499-9000

Emergency Number:

- In the event of an emergency dial 999

Transitioning to Life Abroad

Whether or not you've spent time away from home or travelled abroad, your first semester of college will be a bit different than anything you've experienced before. Here are some things to be aware of before you start this great adventure.

Class set up

- Classes in London are 3 hours long, and each class meets once a week. You may have classes Monday through Friday and have multiple classes in one day.
- You will find that at times during the semester, you do not have a lot of work. However, midterms and finals can be stressful as all classes will be assigning essays, projects, and exams. Be sure to plan ahead!
- All classes in London are experiential, so you'll be going on field trips quite frequently.

Residence Life

- You will be living with other iCharleston students and will be sharing your residence hall with other students studying abroad.
- Each residence has Residence Life Supervisors who are there to support you, but also to enforce any regulations FIE may have such as quiet hours.
- Remember that since you are sharing your living space, you should be respectful of the other people living with you. Be prepared to share cleaning duties and figure out how you want your roommates to work together so everyone has a great experience.

Free time

- You'll have a good bit of free time in London since your classes are in 3 hour blocks, so be sure to use that time wisely. Make sure that you set aside time to study, get some exercise, cook your meals, and explore the beautiful city you live in.

Additional Resources

Foundation for International Education

<http://fie.org.uk/>

State Department information for England

<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/united-kingdom.html>

Information on money abroad <http://www.businessinsider.com/money-matters-to-expect-while-abroad-2012-3>

iCharleston Pinterest page

<https://www.pinterest.com/cofcichs/?eq=iCharleston&etslf=4925>

CofC student blog - study abroad London

<https://isastudentblog.wordpress.com/category/england/london/>

