

COLLEGE *of* CHARLESTON

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Student Guide to Location

LONDON

Accommodation

iCharleston London participants reside in South Kensington 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)
- Rooms come equipped with mini fridge and wireless internet

Services and Facilities

- Free WiFi
- 24/7 security presence 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 lounge
- Foundation House – There is a student lounge in the basement with comfy couches and Wi-Fi.
- Metrogate House Residence – There is a computer lab/study room in the basement with printers to use.
- Coffee Shops
 - Chains like Starbucks, Caffè Nero, Pret a Manager, and Fait Maison all have WiFi. More community-oriented shops include places like Café Society, Coco Momo, and Hjem.

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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 - students can receive various learning accommodations from FIE, 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 students should consider budgeting since there is no meal plan and they will be responsible for making or buying their own meals.

Grocery Stores

- **Waitrose** (128 Gloucester Road) - 10 min walk from Metrogate - 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 - like Walmart, very big and inexpensive store
- **Partridges** (17-19 Gloucester Road) - 5 min walk, smaller store, high quality food, expensive (American staples!)
- **Whole Foods** (63-97 Kensington High St.) - 15 min walk or take the 70 bus (8 minutes); lots of variety, fresh juices, sushi bar, healthy foods, high prices
- **Sainsbury's** (158A Cromwell Rd.) - 15 min walk - big grocery store, inexpensive, lots of options, also sells homeware products like towels, tupperware, pots & pans, cleaning products, etc.
- **Tesco** - mini "express" store across from the Gloucester tube station; larger "superstore" at Earls Court, about a 20 minute bus ride away. Inexpensive.

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
- Café Society (1 Kyance Place) – Free Wifi, 5 min walk from Foundation House

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 place to do work and eat

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- Byron Burger (Gloucester Rd.) - inexpensive, but quality burger
- 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
- Coco Momo (Gloucester Road) – Best variety and quality of food for the price.

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/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 around \$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 add expected travel expenses (airfare, lodging, excursions) to budgets

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

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International Phone Service

Students can purchase a UK phone number upon arrival in London if they so choose. This can be done by purchasing an international phone or replacing the American SIM card with a UK SIM card. It is required to have an active phone number while abroad. This number can be US-based (i.e. International roaming) provided your phone can accept and make phone calls throughout the duration of your time abroad.

Purchasing Phones

- SIM cards/ cheap phone plans will cost about £15 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, bike, etc.), 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

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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

- 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 a member of a team of qualified counselors. All members are excellent resources for students to use if they are having any issues with anxiety, depression, and homesickness. This service is offered free of charge for the initial few assessments.

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Local gyms, places to workout

- Battersea Park
- Chelsea Sports Centre - student rate offered
- Kensington Gardens/Hyde Park – Right down the street from Metrogate
- 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! Students can get almost anywhere needed to go via the tube, but they'll also have access to buses, trains, and cabs to get to their destinations. Each course in London will take students on excursions into different parts of London, so an Oyster card is essential and included in the program fee. An Oyster travel card provides Zone 1 & 2 rides during the semester in London and will be given to students upon their arrival in London.

Tube/London Underground

- This is the most popular and easiest form of transportation
- The Oyster card allows for transportation anywhere within Zones 1 & 2
- Stations nearby: Gloucester Road and South Kensington

Buses

- Buses can be more convenient depending on the destination
- Oyster cards can be used on any of the buses

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 depends on the destination (Greenwich, for example)
- These are accessed with Oyster cards for an additional fee

Santander Bikes

- More commonly referred to as “Boris Bikes” after the Prime Minister
- They can be picked up in various places around the city for about £2 (free for 30 minutes of use!)
- These are great for riding around the parks, but be cautious on the streets of London

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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 (school supplies)
- Moderate
 - Peter Jones - Sloane Square (large department store, towels, linens, cookware)
 - Marks & Spencer (clothes/housewares) - King's Road or Kensington High Street
 - Topshop - Kensington High Street, Oxford St.
 - Zara - King's Road or Kensington High Street
 - Waterstones - King's Road (bookstore)
- Expensive (while maybe too expensive to shop in, these stores 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
 - Kensington Gardens / Hyde Park
 - Holland Park - Kensington High St. (Japanese garden inside)
 - Regents Park – Farther away but has loads of interesting features
 - 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/>)

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- 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 (40 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 great 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

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

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

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

CofC Student Blog - London <https://isastudentblog.wordpress.com/category/england/london/>