# Table of Contents

- **Academics** ................................................................. 5  
  - Pre-departure Planning ............................................ 5  
  - Graduate Courses .................................................... 5  
  - Credits and Course Load .......................................... 5  
  - Registration at Stirling ............................................ 5  
  - Dropping/Adding Courses (Semester) ......................... 6  
  - Class Attendance .................................................... 6  
  - Grades ........................................................................ 6  
  - Stirling & UWEC Transcripts ..................................... 6  
  - UK Academic System ................................................ 6  
  - Service-Learning ...................................................... 9  
- **Money Matters** ............................................................ 9  
  - Cost Estimate ............................................................. 9  
  - Fall Exchange Option ................................................. 10  
  - Spring Study Abroad Option ....................................... 10  
  - Housing Costs ............................................................ 10  
  - Currency Exchange .................................................... 10  
  - Cost of Living ............................................................ 10  
  - Funds upon Arrival ..................................................... 11  
  - Bank Accounts ........................................................... 11  
  - Credit Cards and ATMs ............................................... 11  
  - Traveler’s Checks ........................................................ 11  
  - BUTEX North American Scholarship Programme .......... 11  
- **Health & Safety** ............................................................ 11  
  - Centers for Disease Control ....................................... 11  
  - Vaccinations ............................................................... 11  
  - Medical & Mental Healthcare ...................................... 12  
  - Services for Students with Disabilities ....................... 12  
  - Intro to the UK Health System .................................... 12  
  - Safety in the U.K. ........................................................ 13  
  - Hiking ......................................................................... 13  
  - Sexual Harassment and “Lad Culture” in the UK .......... 13  
  - Emergency Contacts ................................................. 14  
  - 911 Equivalent in the UK ............................................ 14  
  - Marijuana and other Illegal Drugs .............................. 14  
  - Required Documents .................................................. 14  
  - Visa ........................................................................... 14  
  - Why Can’t I fly through Ireland? ............................... 15  
  - Visas for Travel to Other Countries ......................... 15  
  - Packing Tips ............................................................... 15  
  - Weather ..................................................................... 15  
  - Clothing ..................................................................... 15  
  - What to Pack ............................................................... 15  
  - Converters & Adapters ............................................... 16  
  - Getting To Scotland .................................................... 16  
  - Travel Arrangements .................................................. 16  
  - Immigration ................................................................. 16  
  - Getting to Stirling ....................................................... 16  
  - Early Arrivals .............................................................. 17  
  - Settling In ................................................................. 17  
  - Orientation ................................................................. 17  
  - On-Site Support .......................................................... 17  
  - Semester Students: Campus Activities/Organizations .... 17  
  - Semester Students: Community Involvement ............. 17  
  - Summer Students: Involvement ................................... 18  
  - Sporting Facilities ...................................................... 18  
  - Housing ................................................................. 18  
  - Living Situation .......................................................... 18  
  - Laundry ................................................................. 18  
  - What’s Provided? ...................................................... 19
Congratulations on being accepted by the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC) to the semester exchange/study abroad or summer study abroad program in at the University of Stirling. Living and studying in a new culture is both an exciting and a challenging experience. Past participants of study abroad report that the many advantages of international study include:

- Gaining new perspectives on a chosen academic field
- Increasing understanding of different cultures
- Enhancing personal development
- Developing different perspectives on U.S. culture
- Gaining self-confidence and independence
- Learning skills for the future international job market

It is up to you to determine how you can best benefit from these possible advantages. This is your adventure!

Use this program-specific guide with the more general resources in your BlugoldsAbroad account. While this guide contains the information available at the time of publication, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. Your peer advisor will email information throughout the semester, and we encourage you to do your own research, also, using the web resources listed towards the end of this guide, as well as others that you find. Contact the Center for International Education (CIE) staff or your peer advisor with your specific questions.

Questions only you can answer include:
1) What are YOUR goals for this experience? Advancement in a future profession, desire to expand personal and academic horizons, need for a change, and wish to challenge yourself in a new environment?

2) Given the way the program is set up; how can you best prepare to meet your goals? For example, if one of your goals is truly being immersed in Scottish culture, yet you are living with other international and U.S. students, how are you going to get out and meet the locals?

The information in this guide was current at the time of publication, though changes may occur at any time.
**ACADEMICS**

Additional information on topics such as maintaining program eligibility, registration at UW-Eau Claire, class attendance, course equivalencies, grades, transcripts and service learning is in the Academics section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

**Pre-departure Planning**

Please see the UWEC Academics page for Stirling semester or Stirling summer for details on how to plan your courses at Stirling.

**Graduate Courses**

Some semester students have expressed an interest in taking graduate courses abroad. Although your Stirling faculty advisor may not have a problem with you taking graduate courses, UW-Eau Claire does. You will not be granted credit for graduate courses taken abroad unless Stirling allows the graduate course to count toward their home campus undergraduate degree.

**Credits and Course Load**

**Summer:** Each summer course is worth 3 credits and depending on how many you take/the number of blocks you attend, you can earn 3-12 credits. Most students take 6-9 credits.

Summer courses will offer a lot of unique, outside-the-classroom excursions and field trips.

Summer students have the unique opportunity to do an internship during block II. If you are interested in doing an internship, you must do blocks I and II.

**Semester:** Most semester courses are worth 5 U.S. credits. Typically, you must take three classes (15 credits) per semester. However, there are a few “half modules” that are equal to 2.5 U.S. credits, in which case you could take either 12.5 U.S. credits or 15 U.S. credits per semester.

**All Students Keep in mind:**

- The credits you earn abroad are considered UW-Eau Claire resident credits.
- The classes you take abroad will count towards the total credits needed for graduation.
- Dropping below full-time status may result in loss of financial aid and/or insurance coverage and must be approved in advance by the CIE and Stirling.

**Registration at Stirling**

You indicated on your U of Stirling application which courses you would like to take. In your official offer letter from the U of Stirling, you will receive a list of modules that you have been approved to take. You will need to select your top three module choices and one reserve module and return the form to Stirling.

**Semester:** You will be pre-approved to register for these classes by the International Office at Stirling, based on the course information you listed on your offer reply/acceptance form.

You will also be asked to complete a four-step, online “Discover Process” via your online Stirling account. Please follow the directions for completing the online enrollment forms. These forms must be completed BEFORE you will be allowed to apply for housing.

**Summer:** You will be enrolled in your first choice course(s) as long as they are available. Your second choice will be given if your first isn't.
### Dropping/Adding Courses (Semester)

Upon arrival, you will be assigned an Advisor of Studies. You must set up a meeting with your advisor during the first week of the semester to discuss your registration. You may make changes to your registration during the first two weeks of the semester, provided space is available in the classes you wish to take. All changes must be approved by your Advisor of Studies, and you must report them to the Student Matriculation and Records Office.

### Class Attendance

You are expected to attend all teaching sessions (e.g. lectures and tutorials), as material covered in these sessions forms the basis for your understanding of the subject.

Different departments/faculty may have specific attendance requirements and penalties over and above the general university guidelines. If you are in doubt about the attendance policy for your module/course, consult your lecturer.

### Grades

Stirling gives grades in percentage points, which are then converted to U.S. letter grades. At Stirling, a mark above 70 is nearly impossible to achieve. It would be extremely rare for a student to receive above 80 for a piece of work. An excellent piece of work in the U.S. may be marked 95 whereas in the UK, the equivalent mark is 75. Both are excellent grades in their respective countries but on the face of it may appear lower. As such UW-Eau Claire uses a standardized scale to convert grades from Stirling. This conversion scale has been evaluated many times and will not be evaluated again. The conversion scale is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stirling</th>
<th>UW-Eau Claire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67-77%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-66%</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-63%</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57-59%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54-56%</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-53%</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47-49%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44-46%</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-43%</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 40%</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: UWEC students abroad are not allowed to take classes pass/fail. Grades from Stirling are figured into your UWEC GPA and posted to your UWEC transcript. No exceptions will be made.

### Stirling & UWEC Transcripts

Please see the Academics section of the Study Abroad Handbook for important information if you are graduating, transferring or applying for a competitive major such as Nursing or Education at the end of your term abroad.

University of Stirling will send a transcript to UW-Eau Claire. Transcripts are not available until two or three months after the end of the Stirling term. Due to this delay, you will initially receive a grade report with “NR” (not reported) for all courses. A revised report will be available after the grades have arrived.

### UK Academic System

**Expectation of independent learning:**

Returned students most often describe academic life at the UK as “different.” They go on to explain that while they didn’t find classes there more or less difficult than classes at
home, they did need to adjust to a new way of teaching and learning.

From a UK perspective, it is hard to understand methods used in U.S. higher education, with lots of direction from the professors, many small, graded assignments, and the general "checking up" to be certain that students are learning the assigned materials. **This is how UK students learn in high school.** Once they enter university, they are expected to take responsibility for their own education.

**Summer Class meetings and schedule:** Your classes will be held for longer periods of time each day and excursions will be intertwined as well. Being that each block is only 4-weeks, the content will be much more content. Some of your courses may be made up of lectures and tutorials or some may be more hands-on the entire time.

**Semester Class meetings and schedule:** Most classes meet once per week for either a three-hour lecture or two to three hours with a mixture of lecture and tutorial. For the lecture and tutorial, both sections are taught by the same professor (known as a lecturer in the UK system). Given that the course load is 3-5 courses per term, you may find yourself spending only 12-15 hours in class per week depending on your schedule.

**Lectures:** Like in the U.S., the lecture is a traditional method of teaching that allows lecturers to pass important information to a large number of students. However, lectures in the UK offer less opportunity for students to ask questions: questions and discussions are in the tutorial. Also, the lectures are not intended to tell you everything you need to know for the test or assignment. They provide an overview to allow you to place your course material or readings in context, or to focus on a difficult concept or theory.

**To take the best advantage of lectures, you should keep up with course reading and come to lecture prepared. By being prepared for lecture, you will be able to engage and ask questions in the tutorials.**

**Tutorials/Seminars:** Tutorials, or seminars as they are also called, are NOT mini-lectures. They are active learning opportunities where the tutor and students meet to discuss the material covered in lecture and the reading that you are doing outside of class. For tutorials to be effective, they require active student participation. This means you:
- must have read the assigned work and suggested sources in advance,
- should be prepared to contribute to the discussion,
- made note of any difficult concepts or points from lecture or your readings that you do not understand, and
- should be willing to raise issues for discussion.

**Tutorials are not optional.** Attendance is kept, and absences are noted. Tutorials also allow for closer professor/student relationships than are typically found at the undergraduate level in the U.S.

**Advance planning and independent learning:** With limited hours of class time per week, you may think your time in the UK will be an academic vacation. This is not the case. Much of the emphasis is placed on private study. In the British system, students do not say they are "studying" history, for example. **They say they are "reading" history. And that is**
Precisely what students are expected to do: read! As one student said, "You will probably spend a lot less time in class than you are used to, but in exchange, you are expected to do a lot more independent work!"

Upon beginning a class, you will likely be given a (very) long reading list. This is not a required reading list; it is a list of suggested readings that will expand your knowledge of the subject area. What you actually read from the list is mostly left up to you. If you are told that "You may wish to look at these specific titles," take that as a strong hint to read those books. You should also browse through several of the others and choose two or three to read carefully. These readings will form the basis of your contributions to tutorial discussions, as well as for the essays that serve as assessment for the module.

Differences in assignments and exams: In the UK, you will rarely find a lecturer who makes short, weekly assignments. During the term, you may have to give a few tutorial/seminar presentations, typically a group assignment where you and two or three other students need to prepare a short presentation about the week's topic in order to facilitate discussion.

In some courses, you may not hand in any work until the last few weeks of the term. At this point, you will probably be asked to hand in essays or papers, which will range in length from 5-15 pages. You often receive the essay questions with your syllabus at the beginning of the semester. Start writing early!

The essays give you the opportunity to 1) show the lecturer that you have done some of the course reading, and 2) show the lecturer that you have critically thought about the material you have read. Generally speaking, you will be expected to present an original idea, or discuss opposing ideas, and come to your own conclusion. Demonstration of clear thought and argumentation are as critical as backing up your arguments with knowledgeable sources. You may also take a final exam in essay format.

In case you're worried, take this advice from a former peer advisor: "Don't be afraid to email them or go to office hours! I often went to office hours to get input on essay outlines!"

Participation points: Another difference is that there are no "participation points" in the UK. You may be penalized for not attending but you will not earn points just for coming to class or participating, as that is a basic expectation for all students.

Student services: Another difference to note is that "student services" are a relatively newer concept in Scottish universities than in the U.S. The university is there to provide access to academic resources. There are some student support units. However, universities do not have the mission, common to most U.S. institutions, of "student development." University students are considered adults who will work their way through the system, asking questions when necessary. As a newcomer to the system and the culture, you may need to ask questions often!

In case you're worried, take this advice from a past participant: "It all sounds a lot scarier than it really is. The keys are keeping up with reading, participating in class discussions, and explaining everything in papers/exams in detail, because you're not just telling the lecturers what they already know, you're trying to..."
convince them of your viewpoint. If you are lost, by all means, talk to your instructors. They are very helpful to international students.”

**Summer support:** That being said about the traditional support structure, the summer program is a bit different in that it is more of a packaged deal. There will be excursions arranged (some included, some optional), social events and other resources to utilize during your summer abroad. The international summer school staff will also be more present to assist in any issues that arise.

**Books:** The main thing to remember is that there usually is not one specific text. Students are given reading lists and are free to choose any of them to prepare for class and/or to write the essay or exam. The only exceptions are literature classes. Students often share books with other students or check them out from the library. Past students have suggested getting to the library early in the semester as many books on the list will be checked out from the library if you wait too long.

**Service-Learning**
Given that you will most likely spend fewer hours in the classroom in Scotland than at UW-Eau Claire, you may find your term abroad a good time to complete some service-learning.

However, to have this option, you must do the following **before you leave the U.S.**:

- **Apply for A Tier IV Student Visa**
  See the Learning Content “Visa Information: UK” in your BlugoldsAbroad account for details.
- **Have A Criminal Background Check**
  Volunteer work with vulnerable populations (i.e. children, the elderly, people with disabilities, etc.) will require a criminal background check. Like U.S., the UK has experienced some tragic incidents where people with criminal backgrounds have victimized vulnerable people. The result: a required criminal background check of all volunteers. You can apply for a criminal background check through the State of Wisconsin Department of Justice ([http://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/cib/crime-information-bureau](http://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/cib/crime-information-bureau)). You must apply for and receive your background check before you depart for the UK. Once you receive your letter, put it in a safe place and bring it with you. You will ultimately share it with the volunteer site coordinator.

Once you are in Stirling, you will need to locate a suitable service-learning opportunity AND remember to submit your service-learning forms online before you begin your project! ([https://www.uwec.edu/service-learning/](https://www.uwec.edu/service-learning/))

**MONEY MATTERS**

*UWEC information about making payments, when they are due, withdrawal and refund deadlines, financial aid, general scholarships, budgeting and ways to bring money abroad is in the Money Matters section of your Study Abroad Handbook.*

**Cost Estimate**
You can find the most current Cost Estimate for your program, in easily printable format, on the [CIE Stirling Semester page](http://www.uwec.edu/stirling-semester) or the [CIE Stirling Summer page](http://www.uwec.edu/stirling-summer). Be sure you are looking at the correct term. The cost estimate includes what you pay to UWEC, what you pay to Stirling, and what you pay directly to other vendors.
Fall Exchange Option
Occasionally, students in the fall will be going to Stirling as exchange students. This will be determined before the cost estimate is posted so please see that to know whether or not you are considered as an exchange student. Exchange options are never guaranteed and are always more competitive as we have limited spaces. On a tuition only exchange program, each participant pays the costs they would normally pay at their home school – so Eau Claire students pay UWEC costs, and Stirling students cover tuition costs at their respective university, and they switch places. You will pay Stirling directly for your housing.

No money is exchanged between the schools, and there is no direct monetary correlation between what you pay in Eau Claire and what you receive in Scotland.

What is exchanged is not actual payment, but rather benefits. You should receive the same benefits a typical Stirling student receives, and the Stirling student receives the benefits a typical Eau Claire student receives. This type of arrangement allows students to participate in overseas programs at a cost similar to what they would pay to attend their home university abroad students to Stirling. Spring is typically more expensive than the fall because you are paying Stirling non-resident tuition. Again, you will pay Stirling directly for your housing.

Housing Costs
Semester: All housing costs are paid directly to Stirling. The cost of accommodations will depend on where you select to live.

Summer: All housing costs are included in your summer program fees.

Currency Exchange
The currency of the United Kingdom is the pound, abbreviated GBP (Great Britain Pound) and symbolized “£.” Just like the dollar, the pound is divided into 100 units, called “pence,” abbreviated “p.” Coins come in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 pence, as well as 1 and 2 pounds. There are £5, £10, £20, and £50 bills.

Scottish banks print their own versions of the pound, commonly referred to as “Scottish notes.” Scottish notes can be used in all parts of the United Kingdom although a small number of students have reported trouble using Scottish notes in England. You can avoid this problem by simply withdrawing money after you arrive at your destination in England.

You can find current exchange rates at http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/.

Cost of Living
For an idea of what everyday costs you may encounter, check out this website: https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Stirling-United-Kingdom
**Funds upon Arrival**
The University of Stirling recommends that you arrive in the UK with approximately £200-£250 in British currency, more if you are traveling by taxis and other public transport. Do not carry any more than this in case it gets lost. You are able to withdraw money from ATMs using your credit or debit card.

**Bank Accounts**
For yearlong students, it may take up to three weeks to open a UK bank account so be prepared with cash, debit/credit cards, and/or traveler’s checks until then. **Students studying in the UK for six months or less are not allowed to open an account.**

**Credit Cards and ATMs**
Credit cards are widely accepted in the UK. You will want to make sure you have either Visa or MasterCard as those are the most widely accepted. It is strongly recommended that all of your credit/debit cards have a chip in them. Most places in the UK have the chip reader technology and swiping your card is less common.

When withdrawing money from the ATM, always use caution. Make sure you notify your bank and credit card companies before your travel. They will want to know your travel itinerary to the best that you have it planned out. Also make a copy of all of your credit cards so that in the event they are lost, stolen, or eaten by an ATM, you have the contact information to call and cancel.

**Traveler’s Checks**
Traveler’s checks are increasingly rare and difficult to use. They generally must be cashed at a major bank, although, in some countries, post offices also offer this service, and you must have your passport with you. Most banks charge a fee for cashing the checks; it can vary widely. Before cashing a check, ASK what the fee is.

**BUTEX North American Scholarship Programme**
The British Universities Transatlantic Exchange Association (BUTEX) has a North American Scholarship Programme open to all undergraduate students currently registered at an institution in the United States or Canada. To be eligible to apply, you must have been offered a study abroad or exchange place at a UK university with BUTEX membership for a minimum of one semester. The University of Aberdeen, Glasgow and Stirling are all members. For further details on how to apply, please see www.butex.ac.uk.

**HEALTH & SAFETY**
**General information on these issues, as well as information on CISI insurance, is included in the Health & Insurance and Safety Abroad sections of your Study Abroad Handbook.**

**Centers for Disease Control**
The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has vaccination suggestions, how to stay healthy when abroad, and health information specific to the UK. Review the [CDC site for the United Kingdom](https://www.cdc.gov/travel/).  

**Vaccinations**
Due to an increasing measles and mumps cases in Europe, we strongly encourage all students to check their vaccine history to see if they have had the MMR vaccine.
Also, our university partners in the UK have indicated that the National Health Service has a policy of immunizing for Meningitis “C” and recommend that students who have not been vaccinated plan to have this done before leaving home.

**Medical & Mental Healthcare**

**Campus Medical Services:**
Campus does have a healthcare and dental centre that students can register with and use the facilities. For more information, see here. Summer students should also contact the Stirling international office to make sure the same services are provided in the summer. If not, they will advise on the best places to go for care.

**Clinic Registration:**
Registering with a clinic is free and can be done the first time you visit the clinic.

**It is normal in the UK to wait four-six days for an appointment** unless it is an emergency. That has nothing to do with you being registered in advance or not.

**Counseling Resources:**
Stirling has an emotional wellbeing and counselling center on campus. They have counselors and mental health professionals that are there to support you if you need them. Whether it be homesickness, anxiety, depression, etc. please know there are support services available. Click here for more.

**Services for Students with Disabilities**
Stirling’s Student with Disabilities office can provide assistance to study abroad students.

It is also important to look at the level of accessibility in Scotland. To find more information on this topic, please see the State Department Country Specific Information page. If you have questions or concerns about this, please contact your UWEC study abroad coordinator.

**Intro to the UK Health System**
The National Health Service (i.e. the UK national healthcare system) sometimes does not have a very good reputation in the U.S. The system generally works fine; however, it operates under a different set of assumptions from the U.S. health system. U.S. students and their parents need to be aware of some of the major differences between the U.S. and UK health systems.

1) **The UK system is set up to favor those typically most in need of medical treatment:** infants/children, pregnant women, and the elderly. People in traditional university age range are expected to be low users of the system except in the case of accidents or serious illness.

2) Because of this, **there can be a long wait to set up treatment for pre-existing conditions.** If you have a condition that will need ongoing treatment while in the UK, contact your UW-Eau Claire study abroad coordinator right away!

3) In the UK, **medical professionals do not consider a common cold/sore throat to require medical attention.** Being sick with a cold for three or four days is considered normal and of no major concern in a person of college age.
4) **Antibiotics are rarely prescribed in the UK.** Doctors point to research that shows frequent use of antibiotics leads to mutation in germs, rendering the antibiotics useless. Antibiotics are therefore used to treat severe illness. If you use antibiotics regularly, you may wish to bring them with you.

5) **Allergy shots are generally not recommended** by physicians in the UK. It will be difficult to find anyone who will prescribe or administer them.

**Safety in the U.K.**

Information on crime, specific safety issues, road safety, drug penalties, and terrorist activity in the U.K. is included in the U.S. State Department’s [United Kingdom Country Information website](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/documents/uk-country-travel-info.html). Specific safety in and around Stirling will be discussed during orientation in Eau Claire and at Stirling.

One main thing to remember about safety in the UK is that they drive on the opposite side of the road, so **LOOK RIGHT!!** before crossing the street.

**Hiking**

Per the U.S. State Department, “Hiking in higher elevations can be treacherous. Several people die each year while hiking, particularly in Scotland, often due to sudden changes in weather. We encourage visitors, including experienced hikers, to discuss their intended routes with local residents familiar with the area and to adhere closely to recommendations.”

**Sexual Harassment and “Lad Culture” in the UK**

“Lad culture” is a concern among British universities. In recent research, it was defined as a “group” or ‘pack’ mentality residing in activities such as sport and heavy alcohol consumption, and ‘banter’ which is often sexist, misogynist and homophobic.” Although some respondents found it influenced their academic experience at the university, lad culture is seen as particularly influential in the social side of university life. Some commentators compare it to “bro culture” or frat culture here.

Many respondents, in the study, reported sexist jokes and rape banter in their friendship groups that made them feel uncomfortable or felt pressured to engage in sexual relationships. Sexual harassment was common, and there were accounts of sexual violence. Harassment ranged from verbal harassment and catcalling to physical harassment and sexual molestation. Some viewed groping in nightclubs as a part of a normal night out.

Excessive drinking is an often-cited contributing factor and the university drinking culture is seen as one of the biggest obstacles to eliminating lad culture. Some women were also found to participate in the heavy drinking and crude behavior associated with lad culture and have been dubbed “ladettes.”

Undoubtedly, some UW-Eau Claire students have witnessed or been victim to this type of behavior in Eau Claire. However, it may be more difficult to speak up when you are in a new culture. You cannot change a culture in a visit, but you can make smart choices about how to manage your interactions and reactions to lad culture:

- Ask your British friends, both male and female, how they think lad culture impacts university social life.
• Remove yourself from situations where you do not feel comfortable. Listen to your instincts.
• Drink in moderation if you choose to drink. UWEC student health services has information about being smart while drinking.
• Be careful accepting drinks from people that you don’t know. In particular, watch your drink when you are out at bars or clubs.

Emergency Contacts
General emergency procedures are described in the Safety Abroad section of the Study Abroad Handbook, and Stirling has a Study Abroad Adviser who is available for consultation if difficulties arise. You will receive an emergency contact card at Orientation 2; be sure to keep it in your wallet. The information is also on the Contact Names & Addresses page of this guide.

911 Equivalent in the UK
If you are in an emergency situation in the United Kingdom, you will need to know how to reach the local police, fire, or ambulance services. The local equivalent to the 911 emergency line in the United Kingdom is 999; in Gibraltar, it is 112. Save this number in your cell phone in case you need it to use it quickly.

The U.S. State Department also provides a list of 911 numbers abroad. Please note that in some countries there are different numbers for fire, police, and ambulance. Plan ahead and research numbers before you go.

Marijuana and other Illegal Drugs
Although marijuana may be relatively easy to obtain in the UK, the possession and use of marijuana is illegal. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in the U.K. are severe and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. U.S. citizenship offers no protection if you break a U.K. law. There is NOTHING the CIE, Stirling, or the U.S. government can do if you are found in violation of U.K. laws.

In addition to legal penalties, you are putting yourself at risk of robbery or assault, or you may get a much more dangerous combination of drugs than you thought you were buying.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS
Passport information is included in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, please contact the CIE for more information about the following topics.

Visa
(As of December 2019, this information was accurate. Due to Brexit and potential new regulations, this will be updated if needed.) A visa is official permission to temporarily reside in another country and is granted by the government of that country. U.S. citizens studying in the UK for less than six months may enter the UK under two categories: Short-Term Study Visa or Tier 4 (General) Student Visa.

Most summer and semester UW-Eau Claire students enter under the Short-Term Study Visa category. Academic year students must apply for a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa.

See the “Visa Information: UK” in the Learning Content section of your UW-Eau Claire BlugoldsAbroad account for basic information
about the visa options. This information will also be discussed briefly at study abroad orientation.

Note that you cannot enter the UK for the first time via Ireland if you are using the short-term study visa option. In addition, proof of onward journey, usually in the form of a roundtrip plane ticket, is required.

It is your responsibility to keep up-to-date about student visa requirements for the UK, and if required, to apply for and receive a visa from a UK consulate or embassy in a timely manner.

**Why Can’t I fly through Ireland?**

When booking flights to the UK, it will be tempting to purchase a flight that has a layover in Ireland as they are often more affordable. However, all UK partners advise that you CANNOT do this! Ireland is considered a part of the Common Travel Area (CTA) with the UK and causes immigration to be very complicated. Traveling through Ireland, in route to the UK, means you won’t ever go through the proper immigration that is needed for the student visa. You are advised to travel directly from the US to England or Scotland.

**Visas for Travel to Other Countries**

If you plan to travel outside of the UK while abroad, verify visa requirements for each country you will visit by contacting the nearest consulate for that country, or your travel agency. Most Western European nations do not require U.S. citizens to have a visa for tourist travel of less than three months, but you should always verify the requirement as entry requirements can change with little notice (and Europe has talked about changing this).

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**PACKING TIPS**

There is general packing information in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook, and you will get a suggested packing list for Stirling at Orientation 2. In addition, you should know the following:

**Weather**

Stirling’s climate is temperate and it receives a lot of rainfall. Even in the driest month, it rains a lot. The average annual rainfall for Stirling is 42 inches (compared to Eau Claire which is around 17 inches). December/January are the coldest months (~35ºF) and July is the warmest (~68ºF). The windiest month is March. Winter can be very long and gloomy.

**Clothing**

Past participants suggest bringing clothing that you can wear, or take off, in layers. Many of the buildings are not centrally heated so it can be very drafty.

Take clothing that is washable and does not wrinkle easily. Scottish students generally dress casually, but not as casually as U.S. students do (as in, you won’t see Scottish students wearing sweatpants to class). You will be hard pressed to find students wearing sweats to class. Bring a few “dress-up” clothes for going out to restaurants or clubs. Some nightclubs will not let you in wearing jeans or tennis shoes. In addition, having a good waterproof jacket is important. You should bring a light and heavy jacket as you’ll experience a variety of seasons. And don’t forget your umbrella!

**What to Pack**

Your peer advisor will provide a suggested packing list at Orientation 2.
**Converters & Adapters**
The standard electric current in the UK is 240 volts and in Europe is 220 volts. U.S. appliances such as hair dryers and razors run on 120 volts. If you plan to bring these appliances, you will need to buy **both a converter and a plug adapter**. You may also choose to buy the appliances abroad, but still bring a plug adapter for traveling in other countries.

**Getting To Scotland**
*There is information on student-oriented travel agencies, instructions for booking a flight, and other travel information in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook*

**Travel Arrangements**
It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements to Stirling.

Remember:
- **You should not book your flight until your acceptance has been confirmed and the exact beginning and ending dates of the program have been confirmed by the University of Stirling.** However, this does not mean that you cannot look online and begin price comparisons.
- **You cannot enter the UK for the first time via Ireland if you are using the short-term study visa option.**
- Most visas require a **roundtrip** ticket. If you are planning to travel at the end of the program, that is fine. You don’t need to leave the UK immediately at the end of the program, as long as you will not be there in Europe as a tourist for more than a total of 90 days before/after the program

**Immigration**
If you are using the short-term study visa option to enter the UK, you will be asked to provide documents to the UK immigration official at the airport. Please see your BlugoldAbroads Learning Content “Visa Information: UK” for details on what documents you need to have with you.

Upon verifying your documents, the immigration agent will stamp your passport with the short-term study visa.

**IMPORTANT:** You will be arrested if you bring pocket knives, blades, mace or pepper spray canisters, or any part of a gun into the United Kingdom. Please refer to the [US State Department Country Information page](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/visa/visa-information-index.html), which details the items visitors are prohibited from bringing into the United Kingdom.

**Getting to Stirling**
Further details about arrival and departure will be sent to you with your University of Stirling "Offer Letter".

Stirling is located about a one hour and 20-minute drive from Glasgow and a 45-minute drive from Edinburgh.

You should plan to fly into either Glasgow International Airport (GLA) or Edinburgh International Airport (EDI). You can fly into Glasgow Prestwick Airport (PIK), but the cost of getting to Stirling will be much higher unless you are traveling with a group.

**Semester students:** If you arrive on designated dates (Stirling will give these to you)
Stirling staff will greet you at either Edinburdh or Glasgow’s airport. To learn more about this, see here for travel recommendations in general and here for airport collection information.

For more information on how to get to Stirling, visit the U of Stirling website: https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/getting-here/

Summer students: Stirling will offer a pick-up and drop-off transfer service for Edinburgh and Glasgow international airports, available at selected times on the first and last day of each block. They will contact you when you are able to fill out the arrival/departure forms. Historically, if you want to use the drop off transfer, your flight needs to depart Glasgow or Edinburgh after 9:00am. Sometimes earlier arrangements can be made. Again, the international summer school will be in contact about these logistics.

Early Arrivals
Since the University of Stirling cannot accommodate students prior to the arrival date, you will need to find alternative housing arrangements if you arrive early.

SETTLING IN
Orientation
You will have an orientation program upon arrival, including an introduction to the university and the city and the surrounding area.

On-Site Support
As an international student at the University of Stirling, you will have access to campus resources. The international staff is there to support you should any questions or concerns arise. The international staff won’t actively seek you out to make sure everything is going okay.

Instead, should anything come up, you will need to reach out to them. As you may recall from earlier sections, the UK education system is much more hands off than the US education system, but the UK system can support you if you make staff aware.

Semester Students: Campus Activities/Organizations
Stirling University Students’ Association, or SUSA, helps students organize activities, from sport to cultural activities and more. SUSA also provides a framework within which students can organize clubs and societies which suit their interests. A list of clubs and societies can be found on the SUSA clubs and societies web page: http://www.stirlingstudentsunion.com/.

You can also get involved with the International Society. It runs a variety of social events (including the famous Scottish ceilidh!), trips around Scotland and other opportunities to mix with people from the 80+ nationalities represented on campus. For more information, visit the Society’s website: http://www.stirlingstudentsunion.com/clubssocieties/societies/internationalsociety/

Semester Students: Community Involvement
A great way to get involved in the community is to volunteer your time. Check with the study abroad office on your campus to see if any positions are available on campus or within your city. Otherwise, look into student groups that participate in volunteer activities. Past students who chose to do this gained a lot from the experience. Not only do you get to meet people, you get to make a difference. However, please see the “Service Learning” information in this guide as volunteering in the UK will
require a background check and Tier 4 Student Visa.

**Summer Students: Involvement**

It can be hard to join the student organizations and the international society only because it is summer and not as many students are around. The international summer school is mainly filled with North American students so you will need to make an effort to branch out and meet others. Past students have done this by finding a local religious affiliation or by doing the internship course.

The summer school staff will host a wide variety of activities and excursions that will give you opportunities to experience the local culture. Some of these will have additional fees but they try to keep them affordable. Past activities have included Scottish dance lessons, nature walks, karaoke nights, a farewell Ceilidh (traditional Scottish dance), etc.

**Sporting Facilities**

The university is a great place for sport and offers excellent sporting facilities. Facilities include a large indoor sports hall, group fitness classes, a nine-hole golf course, squash courts, 50-meter swimming pool, indoor and outdoor tennis courts, a fitness center (with a variety of equipment including free weights) and an athletics track.

**HOUSING**

**Living Situation**

**Semester students:** Study abroad and exchange students have the choice of two to three on-campus and one off-campus residence each year. Students apply for accommodation online and instructions about how to do this will be emailed to you after you have been offered admission to the University and you have accepted the offer. You list your housing preferences, but you will be assigned where there is space available.

Student accommodation is apartment-style living similar to Chancellor's Hall at UW-Eau Claire. Students live in apartments or chalets, where three to seven students (co-ed) have individual bedrooms but share living, kitchen, and bathroom space. Find details at [https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/accommodation/visiting-students/](https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/accommodation/visiting-students/)

**Summer students:** You will be housed in one of the university’s newest accommodation buildings which is on-campus, apartment style and with other international summer school participants. You will have your own bedroom but will share the apartment with 4-5 other students.

**Students with disabilities:** Stirling does have some accommodation that was specifically designed to be accessible for students with varying needs. For more information on what is available, please visit the [Accommodation Students with Disabilities page.](https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/accommodation/visiting-students/)

**Laundry**

The University of Stirling has various laundry facilities located in A. K. Davidson Hall, Murray Hall, Alexander Court, Spittal Hill, John Forty’s Court, Thistle Chambers, Union Street development Stirling and in Polwarth House, central to the main residences complex. All have card operated washers and dryers.

In the main laundry at Polwarth House, £4 buys a 12-point laundry card, which is swiped in the machines as they are used. Washes “cost” four points, and 20 minutes in the dryer “costs” two
points, so each card holds the equivalent of three washes, six dries, or two of each.

Most students let their laundry air-dry in their rooms to save costs. If you live in Beech Glade, however, you'll have the luxury of a drying room on your floor.

**What's Provided?**
Each room has a desk, lamp, chair, bed, bookshelf, storage space, and sink. A bedding pack is provided, but you need to provide your own towels, cooking and eating utensils. WiFi is also included.

**Summer students**: bed linens are also included

**Meals & Snacks**
All accommodation at Stirling is self-catered, meaning you cook your own food. You will need to provide your own silverware, plates, cups, and other cooking utensils (or borrow from local students). Summer students will have kitchen items furnished.

Alternately, semester students can eat at campus cafeterias and eateries. You can add funds to your U of Stirling student card if you like for use at these venues.

Most students choose to cook for themselves and limit the amount they eat at the campus eateries as cooking is less expensive, and lots of social life in the halls centers around the kitchen.

**Cultural differences in food**: Because tea is a more common drink than coffee, you'll find water kettles rather than coffee pots in most kitchens. When you go shopping, you'll find that eggs are not refrigerated. You'll find less beef and chicken, and more pork and lamb. Ketchup, peanut butter, and ranch dressing are hard to find and have a slightly different flavor. If you eat out, you'll find more Indian food and less Mexican food.

**Common Scottish and English meals**

- **Haggis**: a traditional Scottish savory dish containing sheep's organs (heart, liver and lungs) minced with onion, oatmeal, suet, spices, and salt; mixed with stock; and traditionally encased in the animal's stomach and simmered for approximately three hours. Most modern commercial haggis is prepared in a sausage casing rather than an actual stomach. For those of you who are not fans of organ meat, there is also vegetarian haggis.

- **Black Pudding**: a type of sausage made by cooking blood or dried blood with a filler until it is thick enough to congeal when cooled; often served at the traditional Scottish breakfast.

- **Square Sausage**: Lorne sausage known for its shape is often served with breakfast or on a roll.

- **Tablet**: basically, sugar and butter; it is amazing.

- **Clootie Dumpling**: a traditional dessert pudding made with flour, breadcrumbs, dried fruit, sugar, spice, and milk.

- **Stovies**: A Scottish dish based on potatoes; recipes vary widely but the dish always contains potatoes and variously onions, carrots, other vegetables, roast beef, corned beef or other meat.

- **Fish and Chips**: fried fish served with fries. Depending on where in Scotland you are, they will ask if you would like vinegar or salt or both. You will also find a variety of toppings people put on just chips such as doner or curry.
• **Shepherd’s Pie**: lamb pie cooked in a casserole with a layer of toasted mashed potatoes.
• **Bangers and Mash**: sausages and mashed potatoes.
• **Yorkshire Pudding**: popover served alongside roast beef with gravy on top.
• **Cadbury Chocolate**: an absolute must.
• **Doner**: found at the kebab shops; similar to a Gyro.
• **Fried Milky Way/Mars Bars**: almost anything can be found fried; just check out the menu at the nearest fish and chips shop.

**COMMUNICATION**

*Information on accessing/forwarding your UW-Eau Claire email address and on computer app-based phone services (SKYPE, What’s App, Facetime, etc) is in the *Contacts & Communication section of your Study Abroad Handbook.*

**Time Difference**

Scotland is six hours ahead of Eau Claire. For example, when it is 1:00 P.M. on Thursday in Eau Claire, it is 7:00 P.M. on Thursday at Stirling. To see the current time at in Scotland, visit: [https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/uk](https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/uk)

**Email/Internet Access**

The University provides email and WiFi access, or you can access a web-based email account via the Internet. If you bring a laptop, there will be places to use it on campus and in your housing arrangement. There are also various computer labs on campus. You will need to purchase a UK adapter for your computer if you bring one. Make sure that if you have a three-prong computer plug that you purchase a two-prong converter (to plug into your adapter) that turns into a three prong so that you can charge your computer.

**Video Chatting/Online Apps**

Most Stirling students communicate with family and friends back in the U.S. by using and online video chat service such as Skype, Facetime, or WhatsApp. Past students recommend that you set up a regular time (for example, Sundays at 10 PM, Scottish time) so both sides are online at the same time.

**Calling from the U.S.**

*From the U.S. to Scotland*: You must first dial 011, which is the international dialing code. Next, you must dial 44 to get Scotland, and then the rest of the number to reach a specific city and location.

**Snail Mail**

International airmail takes 7-10 days to cross the Atlantic in either direction. Make sure you don’t send anything valuable as the package is likely to be opened when going through customs.

**TRAVEL WHILE ABROAD**

See additional information in the *Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook.*

**Independent Travel**

If you plan to travel in England, Scotland or Wales, transportation by train, ferry, bus (coach) and plane are all possible. When deciding whether to travel by train or air, remember this: they are often comparable in price, but train travel is considerably longer. For example, a train from Glasgow to London takes four hours versus a forty-minute flight. On the
other hand, traveling by train allows you to see much of the countryside that you would miss if you fly. Also, train stations are usually closer to the city centers, while a taxi or bus ride might be needed if you fly.

Stirling’s website has great resources for transportation in and around Stirling.

**Train**
A 16-25 RailCard gives you 1/3 off regular fare tickets. It pays for itself after three to four trips. Check out this Web site for more information: [http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/](http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/). There is also a special rail pass just for southwest England (which includes London and Oxford) that gives you a discount on train tickets. When you buy a ticket to London using the pass, the ticket may also be used as a subway pass around London for the entire day.

**Bus**
Scotland has a great bus system that can take you to many Scottish cities inexpensively. At [www.megabus.co.uk](http://www.megabus.co.uk), you can get a roundtrip bus ticket from Glasgow to Edinburgh for 3-4 pounds (roughly $7-9). If you’re going further, a National Express Student Coach Card entitles you to one-third off all regular fare coach tickets.

**Ferry**
If you have time, you can also take a ferry from Scotland to various cities in Ireland/Wales/England. Past participants have said they really enjoyed the ferry experiences. See [https://www.aferry.co.uk/](https://www.aferry.co.uk/) for more information.

**Air**
While Stirling doesn’t have an airport, it is easy to get to Glasgow or Edinburgh and take an international or domestic flight. Many past students have recommended Ryan Air as a helpful site with low-budget flights all around Europe: [http://www.ryanair.com/en](http://www.ryanair.com/en). Typically, Ryan Air flies into airports that are further outside the city, so you may need to spend more on taxis, buses, or trains to get into town. Keep in mind that airlines like RyanAir and other budget airlines, charge for the littlest things like printing your boarding pass at the airport and their weight/bag restrictions are very strict. Do your research to know what you can bring. If you don’t you will end up paying a lot of money!

**CULTURAL NOTES**

**Where am I going? UK, England, or Great Britain?**
You are actually going to all three simultaneously. “The United Kingdom is a country that consists of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In fact, the official name of the country is ‘United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.’

Great Britain is the name of the island northwest of France and east of Ireland that consists of three somewhat autonomous countries: England, Wales and Scotland. Therefore, Scotland is part of Great Britain, which is part of the United Kingdom. The UK includes England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.” From: [http://geography.about.com/library/faq/blqzuk.htm](http://geography.about.com/library/faq/blqzuk.htm)

**The Government**
The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy, with a queen and a parliament that has two houses: The House of Lords and the House of Commons. Supreme legislative power is vested
in parliament, which sits for five years unless dissolved sooner. The House of Lords was stripped of most of its power in 1911, and now its main function is to revise legislation.

The current monarch and prime minister are:
Sovereign: Queen Elizabeth II (since 1952)
Prime Minister: Boris Johnson (since 2019)

England has existed as a unified entity since the 10th century; the union between England and Wales, began in 1284 with the Statute of Rhuddlan, which was not formalized until 1536 with an Act of Union. In another Act of Union in 1707, England and Scotland agreed to permanently join as Great Britain. The legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland was implemented in 1801, with the adoption of the name the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921 formalized a partition of Ireland; six northern Irish counties remained part of the United Kingdom as Northern Ireland and the current name of the country, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was adopted in 1927.

From:
http://www.infoplease.com/country/united-kingdom.html
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<td><strong>Jo Hagerty</strong></td>
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<td>Study Abroad &amp; Exchanges Manager</td>
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**U.S. Consulate in Edinburgh**

3 Regent Terrace
Edinburgh EH7 5BW
Phone: 0131-556-
Fax: 0131-557-6023
After-hours Emergency for American Citizens:
Phone: 020 7499 9000
Email: edinburgh-info@state.gov
Web: [https://uk.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/edinburgh/](https://uk.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/edinburgh/)

If you have an after-hours emergency that can be helped on the U.S. side, please call University Police at the number above. Calls can be made to this number 24 hours a day. You may get an answering machine; however, an officer is alerted as soon as you have left your message. Be sure to give the officer the phone number you can be reached at, as well as what type of assistance you require.
### Web Information: Stirling

#### City
City of Stirling: [https://www.yourstirling.com](https://www.yourstirling.com)

Things to do in Stirling: [https://www.visitscotland.com/destinations-maps/stirling/see-do/](https://www.visitscotland.com/destinations-maps/stirling/see-do/)


#### Culture
The Telegraph: [https://www.telegraph.co.uk/scotland/](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/scotland/)
Scottish Culture: [https://www.scotland.org/about-scotland/culture](https://www.scotland.org/about-scotland/culture)
Scottish Traditions: [https://www.scotland.org/about-scotland/culture/scottish-traditions](https://www.scotland.org/about-scotland/culture/scottish-traditions)

#### Country
Visit Scotland: [https://www.visitscotland.com](https://www.visitscotland.com)
Lonely Planet: [https://www.lonelyplanet.com/scotland](https://www.lonelyplanet.com/scotland)
British Council: Scotland: [https://scotland.britishcouncil.org](https://scotland.britishcouncil.org)
When past participants of the Stirling program were asked to sum up their experience, here is what they said:

I wish I had known a little more about how the school itself runs during the semester. The University of Stirling is very different in regards to how students chose classes, having additional seminars during the week, and how grades are distributed. *(Eds: All of these topics are touched on in the guide: be sure to ask questions of returnees during orientation to get details!)*

I really enjoy it my housing. Everyone I live with is amazing, and the space is a good enough size. A couple of things to be aware of--I am living almost a mile away from the main part of campus where all classes are held. Also, laundry is in a separate building and is quite expensive.

I have never had so much fun at university. This experience has definitely prepared me for the future in my education and being able to live independently. I felt like I learned so much outside of the classroom as well. I met so many people this semester. Everyone here is so open and welcoming. I had nearly 15 people all offering their homes to me when I stayed over Christmas. If you go somewhere alone, you are most likely leave with at least 5 friends. I wish I could never leave; though I do miss my home and Eau Claire.

While traveling keep track of your wallet, ID, keys, etc. and if you’re in a place where you don’t know the language, be wary of individuals that may try to prey on tourists.

I would challenge you to get outside your comfort zone even more by trying to interact with students, flatmates, peers, anyone who isn’t of the same background as you. I made several close friends who live in different countries around the world and they impacted me so much by forcing my perceived notion of those cultures out and showing me how similar and different they could be.

I wish I had known how lonely I was going to be. I spent most of the day alone. It also would have been nice to know that I was going to spend even more money than I budgeted for.

The summer school is amazing! The coordinators did everything they could to give each person their own experience. I learned a lot about the rich culture and history there.

The summer program is very relaxed with no exams and only essays. The professors were amazing and taught subjects we would never learn in the states. The internship was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I was able to try all sorts of research equipment that isn’t available here. The dorms were amazing, nice and brand new. I wasn’t a fan of making my own food and I wish I could have experience more Scottish food.