

“Wish I’d Known” Survey
London Metropolitan University

PACKING AND TRAVELING

Specifically, what kind of LINENS did you need to bring?

- Did not need to bring any. My flat had bed sheets, pillowcase, comforter and towels.
- Helpful hint; bring one travel sheet for hostels and hotels while traveling.
- None, linens and duvets were provided. I did, however, need towels.
- Nothing, we were supplied linens every 2 weeks
- Towels, although our host family also provided them
- They were already supplied. Helpful hint—my mom made a travel sheet for me (folded a sheet and sewed it). It worked really well for traveling and staying at hostels where sometimes they weren’t the cleanest.
- None

What are you glad you packed from home?

- Lots of film.
- Transformers.... they are a lot cheaper in the U.S. than London.
- Pictures, comfortable clothes, pictures and favorite CD’s
- Clothes
- Favorite snack foods and a small blanket
- Black pants, warm clothes, comfortable shoes—lots of walking
- Transformers—a lot cheaper in US than London.
- Warm clothes, rain jacket, UK/US modem adapter, laptop

What do you wish you had left at home?

- Some of my “corny” WI clothes.
- A lot of clothes that I brought I never even wore. Bring clothes that you can accessorize well with.
- I brought a lot of jackets because I thought the weather would be cold like it is in Wisconsin, but it has actually been fairly warm for October and November.
- Clothes I didn’t need to pack—extra sweaters and pants
- Half my clothes—I over packed sweaters, lots of clothes that I never wore.

Do you have any travel tips to pass on (planning advice, safety considerations, guidebooks, train vs. bus, etc.)?

- Make sure to check on holiday dates and time changes in different countries. Daylight savings time is a different day in the U.S. and caused me to miss a flight to Scotland! Let’s Go Europe is great! Traveling by train is nice, but do not buy a Eurail pass unless you have your trip planned out and know that you will be using your entire ticket. Flights are extremely affordable!
- Always travel with someone...try to avoid arriving in new cities during rush hours.

- The tube is easier to figure out than the buses, but if you're spending a night out make sure you know which night buses to take home so you don't get stranded in a strange area. *Time Out* magazines are a great source of info about nightlife, movies, plays, etc.
- Travel with someone else to feel comfortable at first. Buy Eurail pass for traveling.
- Make reservations at hostels/hotels before you start traveling—takes away a lot of worry.
- Let's Go Europe is great. Traveling by train is really nice. Don't get a Eurail pass unless you have your trip planned out and you know you are going to use it all. Flights are fairly inexpensive as well. A lot of hostels are really nice and cheap. Ask to see the room before you pay for it.
- Eurail passes are great for extensive traveling, plan as much ahead as possible, *Hanging Out in Europe* is a great guide book

What places would you advise future students to see and why?

- Rome, Paris, Munich and Venice!
- Ireland—the beautiful countryside, Spain—beautiful cities, Germany—changing environment, Italy (Rome and Florence)—wonderful art, Amsterdam—Anne Frank Museum
- There are many places to see in London...take advantage of it.
- Remember that London is not representative of the entire UK! Visit the English countryside, especially York and the Lake District; Scotland and Wales are beautiful and Ireland has some of the nicest people you'll ever meet. Paris and Brussels are so close and easy to get to that you should definitely go there as well.
- Ireland, Germany, Amsterdam, Spain, Italy (Rome and Florence)
- See as much as of your host country as possible—museums, plays, other cities, historical sites
- There are so many things in London. Take advantage of what is there. Get some good guidebooks and do what they recommend. Travel a lot. I went to more countries than a lot of other people and am very glad I did.
- Rome—so much history, unique
- Germany—very cheap, good beer, many fun and interesting cities

MONEY AND COMMUNICATIONS

How much money in U.S. currency would you recommend students have at their disposal for their whole time abroad?

- London is expensive—\$3000-\$4500(you can go with less if you budget yourself)
- \$5,000
- At least \$3,000
- At least \$4,000 if you're traveling
- \$5,000
- I had only \$20 in US currency for when I returned to the states.
- London is expensive. If you like to shop, go out and see plays. I would say at least \$3000 for the 3 months there.

- Depends how much you want to travel; I spent around \$12,000 total (including EVERYTHING and traveling to 10 countries).

How much money did you have in foreign currency when you left for your program?

Was it enough?

- 50—80 pounds
- I had about £100, which is plenty. Don't carry too much cash on you at once in case you lose it or get your pocket picked.
- None
- £100. Yes, it was enough to last until I was able to get to an ATM, which was very accessible
- I had £60, which was enough for the first couple days. Not much is needed because there are ATM's everywhere. When taking out of the ATM, take more because it's a \$3-4 fee every time you withdrawal.
- None, I would take money out through an ATM at Heathrow, avoid currency exchange booths

How did you manage your money (credit cards, traveler's checks, bank accounts etc.)?

How and where did you access your money?

- Mostly cash and check cards. Use traveler's checks and credit cards for emergencies.
- ATM'S are everywhere...however, there is a \$3-4 fee every time you withdraw.
- I used credit cards and got cash from ATMs. Some of the people in the program brought traveler's cheques, which proved to be a bit of a pain in the neck because some places don't accept them and you have to find a place to exchange them.
- I was carefree...I used it until it was gone. I had very little worries. There are lots of cash machines around.
- I took some traveler's checks, just for backup, but used a Visa check card and ATM's to access money
- Traveler's Cheques are good to have in case of an emergency. My debit card wouldn't work for a while and that's the only time I used my traveler's cheques. Credit cards are accepted basically everywhere.
- Online banking is a good idea, I mainly used credit cards, and took money out from ATM's (check with your bank to find out how much they will change you)

How much money did you spend on books?

- Most books are available in the library—but I spent no more than 20 pounds on books.
- About \$75.00
- About \$100. I thought that everything would be available in the library, but most of my classes required us to have textbooks that we would need to keep throughout the semester.
- \$60, I didn't even use half of the books.
- \$75
- About \$75-\$100

- About \$80

How did you communicate with the U.S.? What would you recommend to future students (e.g. calling card, set up e-mail account and where, etc.)?

- Primarily e-mail, phone cards (do not buy any until you arrive in London! U.S. phone cards rip you off on international rates) and my parents set up a international one rate plan with AT&T—very cheap and well worth it!
- I bought a cell phone with a pay-as-you-go system, meaning that I only had to pay for the minutes I used. You can also buy calling cards fairly inexpensively, as we had phones in our rooms.
- Email was great, get a calling card that allows you to call the U.S. from that country
- Calling cards are difficult to use abroad unless they are bought in your host country, email accounts like hotmail/AOL etc, are probably easiest to use and can be used at cafes and on campus.
- Set up an international calling card before you leave. Phone cards can be purchased there but sometimes they rip you off. I recommend getting a hotmail or yahoo account for email. You'll definitely use it a lot.
- E-mail is always great, also London has tons of cheap calling cards (make sure you buy them over there because it is much cheaper)

SCHOOL WORK

How did your academic experience abroad differ from your U.S. experiences concerning:

Relations with professors/Classroom Instruction?

- It was much more personal than I thought...they were interested in American views.
- Most of my professors were fairly approachable, except in the larger classes. The classes were a bit different in that I had a 1-hour lecture followed by a 1-hour seminar in which we discussed the lecture and asked questions.
- There was less interaction with professors.
- Similar lecture but also have seminar for discussion
- They are extremely different from here. I had one professor that yelled at my group and I because we wanted to ask him a question during office hours. I had another professor that told us that there was no way we could contact him outside of class. He was not paid to do any work outside of class time so it wasn't worth it to him.
- Less interaction with professors overall, although the seminars give you some one-on-one, they are also much harder to get a hold of out side of class.

Grading?

- A bit more demanding.
- They grade differently here but I felt they were quite fair about it. In most of my classes, we didn't turn the assignments in to the professor, but in to the "assessment office". This was fairly irritating because the assessment office was open different hours almost every day, so you always had to check and see when it would be open so that you didn't miss your chance to hand in your assignments. Also, the Profs

don't give you back your actual papers, just a sheet with their comments and your grade written on it.

- It was harder to have or get decent grades.
- Different grading scale—receive number, not percentage
- I haven't received any grades yet, but they do grade on a 70 or 80% scale instead of 100% scale. Just do what the professors say and you should get fine grades.
- Still waiting for grades.

Study habits?

- They don't make mini-deadlines to keep you on track...it's up to you.
- Studying and homework is left up to the student's responsibility. It was obviously hard for me to spend long hours studying when I'm living in London and I want to go out and see the City, but the professors let you know right away when the assignments are due so you have enough time to get them done.
- I didn't have to study that much, which allowed more time to travel.
- I studied much less abroad, no tests—only required papers
- It will feel like you don't have to do barely anything compared to all of the work you have to do at La Crosse. I would recommend not wasting money on the books. I spent close to \$100 and only one book was relevant to anything discussed or papers I had to write in my classes.
- Overall I studied less, but it is very easy to save everything for the end, and then you will be very busy trying to finish school and spend your last few weeks in London.

Library?

- It's not Murphy Library by any means, loud at times, but it worked well for me.
- The library's collection is adequate and the loan periods were fine, but I felt the lack of things like copy machines were quite annoying. Also, the fact that it closes early during the week (9pm) and on the weekends (11am-4:30pm) made it difficult to use the library facilities for research or word processing.
- The resources were outdated (most books were from 70's and 80's. It was hard to get info on the Internet and reliability. We had to pay for copies printed.
- Very similar
- The library at UNL isn't too bad, but there are not many up to date books. There are tons of great libraries around London though. Just ask the librarian at UNL where they are.
- Keep way shorter hours, computer labs only open until 8:30 p.m.

Computer Access?

- CPU's were older and printers didn't always work very well, but accessibility wasn't a problem.
- The computers were all DSL and had fast connections, but it was often hard to find an open computer if you went at certain times of the day.
- Very similar
- There are a lot of computers on campus. You have to pay for printing everything. Some of the computers are really old and slow, but there are good ones in the

Towers Building. Our accounts weren't working for the first two weeks we were there so that was frustrating. Internet cafes are everywhere, but they are pretty pricey.

- Not usually a problem.

Other?

- Do not expect a UW-L in London. Things are very different...more relaxed, but less organized. It is a diverse, liberal and urban university—an excellent experience!
- They weren't as organized abroad, and there was a lot of independent study

What enabled/hindered your successful academic experience?

- They didn't hold my hand. They gave the assignment and expected it to get done. If you have problems then ask, otherwise you are responsible for your education.
- It may be because the school recently changed "management" and became London Met rather than UNL, but I found things to be very disorganized and a lot different than what we would find at US schools (i.e. posting seminar group lists and timetable info on sheets of paper outside an office rather than on a website). The buildings were cold and falling apart and the main Tower building was nearly impossible to navigate for the first few weeks.
- Professors didn't post office hours or call back with our questions.
- Not having a very demanding schedule with work due all the time allowed me to travel a lot, very flexible, you could do your work as it fit into your schedule.
- The professors I had are what hindered my academic experience. I couldn't believe I got yelled at for visiting a professor during his office hours. I guess I just misunderstood what office hours meant.
- Not having my computer there (mine broke while I was over there), I also found it harder to find information for my papers.

SOCIAL LIFE

How did you meet students from your host country?

- In class (but many students are international), school organizations and pubs around the university.
- I found it somewhat difficult to make British friends since everyone I live with is American. However, going to bars and clubs allowed me to mingle with the locals.
- Classes, dancing, art museums
- You must approach British students, very few will make the effort to get to know you first—meet at pubs, school functions
- I met host students in my classes and while going out to the pubs near campus. The Rocket, which is like the student union, was also a great place to meet students. The Rocket turned into a club on Wednesday and Friday nights and was tons of fun, a great social scene.
- It's easy to meet people in the seminars because they are smaller groups.

How did you like to spend your free time and why? Is there anything you regret not doing more of in your free time?

- Pubs, clubs, theatre, live music, art galleries...there is so much!!! London is a Mecca for theatre and arts. This city never sleeps, so get a Time Out magazine (gives clubs, pubs, music, theatre and art listings) every week and enjoy the city.
- I went to museums, plays, movies, movie premieres, shopping, restaurants, cathedrals, cafes, parks, bars, clubs, concerts...there is so much to do here in London that I'm sure I will regret missing out on something. I tried to experience as much of what London offered as I could.
- With my new friends traveling and seeing wonderful places. I should have traveled more.
- Spent at traveling and seeing London—should have seen more of England—Oxford, Cambridge, etc.
- I spent my free time traveling to many countries. The traveling is very accessible and day trips are really cheap and a lot of fun so I wish I would have done that more.
- Museums, clubs, pubs, sights...I wish I would of seen a couple of more plays, I only saw one.

What opportunities for social, recreational, and cultural events that the host university or program offered did you like the best? Why?

- The university has tons of things going on through their bar/club called The Rocket. The Rocket hosts many parties and social events. There also is a large number of academic clubs ranging from drama to food. Church is also a good way to meet many friendly people.
- The programs didn't really offer any sort of events except for tickets to a musical, which was nice. Most of the social, recreational, and cultural events that I took part in were my own idea.
- Very few opportunities were provided to interact with students from the UK (just Americans)
- Program offered trips to various places
- UNL did provide some opportunities. They had the student union—the Rocket. The international office brought in a travel agent that had tons of organized trips planned that you could go on.

What piece of advice would you give future students regarding their non-academic life while abroad?

- Explore the city! Don't lock into any are right off the bat. Don't cling to your American flat mates.... immerse yourself in the many cultures London has to offer.
- Don't spend all of your time at one American bar near the university! Explore! Visit new places! You're in London for three months so make the most of your time here!
- Enjoy the time away from school back home, realize what you want or things that are important
- Do and see as much as you can—it is a once in a lifetime opportunity! Get to know your host family or natives of your country—you will learn a lot.
- Go out and meet people. People are where you are going to get the most knowledge. You just need to find what you enjoy doing the most socially. Anything you have ever dreamed of doing will be in London. You can always find people that enjoy the same thing that you do.

- Don't get too caught up with worrying about money/school, when you get back its going to be the traveling and experiences you had that you'll remember the most.

CULTURAL ISSUES

Are woman treated differently in your host country than in the U.S.? If so, what advice would you pass on to women who are thinking of studying in your host country?

- European men are very aggressive. Be smart!
- Women are not really treated any differently, but men here can be very aggressive. Also, since London is a very ethnically diverse city, be aware that some cultures view women differently.
- More sexual harassment, racial problems. I had problems with men making gestures at me.
- Women are considered easy—many men I came across assumed they would be “getting some” even on the first date. I never worried about being unsafe however.
- I found that Europeans do treat women differently. They are a lot more forward than I have ever experienced before. I had a couple of experiences of guys just walking up to me on a street and asking me out, before even talking to me. The advice I would give is that just be confident in yourself. Make good judgment calls. Don't be dumb and then it won't make a difference.
- I didn't see much of a difference.

Are minorities—racial, religious, sexual identity—treated differently in your host country than in the U.S.? If so, what advice would you pass on to members of any minority group that are thinking of studying in your host country?

- Although no country is free of any intolerance, London is generally accepting and open-minded.
- I am not a minority, but it seemed that minorities were treated much the same as they would be in the US. London is a very diverse place and is quite liberal, so everyone should be able to find something for themselves here.
- Yes/no. Minorities in our country are more prevalent in the UK. There were more Arabs, blacks, and Chinese lived in our area. There were fewer problems with sexual identity and religion.
- There were very few minorities where I studied outside of London. However, in the city they seemed to be very accepting of everyone—I wouldn't hesitate if I were a minority.
- I think that minorities are more accepted in London than in Wisconsin. There are so many people from so many different parts of the world. Where we lived, we were the minorities. If you are a minority you don't need any advice because you will feel more comfortable there.
- I think they are probably treated better in London; it is such a diverse city that it isn't as big of deal as it is here.

OTHER COMMENTS

- It may seem like you should save all your money for London, but because everything is very expensive over there, I would suggest buying anything that you might need before you go! (i.e. Band-Aids, aspirin, cold medicine, film, antibiotic salve, etc.)
- Be open-minded and willing to try new things. It may seem really different when you first get here, but once you start experiencing life in a different country you'll be having so much fun that you can't believe how fast time is going!
- It was the best time ever! Live it up!