



## Pre-arrival Information for Spring 2018 Study Abroad and Exchange Students

We have prepared a few notes that will hopefully aid your preparation to come to the UK and to settle at Strawberry Hill successfully. These are some basic points only; you will receive a full induction in the days after your arrival at St Mary's University.

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Thank you for choosing St Mary's University Twickenham London as your Study Abroad destination. We look forward to welcoming you to Strawberry Hill.

## TERM DATES

Tuesday 23rd January	Arrival Date
Wednesday 24th - Friday 26th January:	Orientation
Saturday 27th January	London Walking Tour and Scavenger Hunt
Monday 29th January	First Day of Classes
Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup> March - Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> April	Easter Break
Friday 11th May	Last Day of Teaching
Mon 14th – Fri 25th May	Exams
Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> May	End of Term
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> May	Move out of accommodation by midday

## UK VISA REGULATIONS

If you are a non-EEA national, you will normally need a visa to study in the UK.

There are two visa options available to Study Abroad Students: **Student Visitor Visa** or **Tier 4 Student Visa**

If you are intending to study with us for only one semester and not taking an internship course you can come to the UK as a [Student Visitor](#).

If you are taking an internship or will be studying for two semesters, you will need to obtain a [Tier 4 Student Visa](#).

All students are responsible for ensuring they understand the visa process and the requirements needed.

The Tier 4 visa route has additional requirements compared with the Student Visitor Visa route. Therefore, if you know

you will be applying for a Tier 4 visa, please email [studentvisas@stmarys.ac.uk](mailto:studentvisas@stmarys.ac.uk) so that we may prepare the necessary documents. Please do not apply until St Mary's has issued you with a CAS number.

If you have any further questions, please contact [studentvisas@stmarys.ac.uk](mailto:studentvisas@stmarys.ac.uk). More information about visas can also be found at [UK Visas and Immigration](#) and [the UK Council for International Affairs](#).

## ACCOMMODATION

### Students in halls

#### *Hall and room entry*

You will be given two keys, the outside door key and your room key. Bring a key ring with you, but not one that is named or marked with room location in case it goes missing. If you lose your keys you will be charged for replacements and in some cases replacement locks.

#### *Cleaning*

Rooms are cleaned weekly by the university cleaning staff. You will be advised which day he or she comes and you should tidy up the previous night so that the room is available for cleaning by 9am.

#### *Bedding*

Fire retardant duvets and pillows will be provided, together with a duvet cover, pillow cases and sheets. Please bring your own towel(s). You will be responsible for laundering your bed linen and personal clothing. There are launderette facilities on campus.

#### *Furniture*

Essential furniture is provided (usually a wardrobe, drawers, desk and chair) and

rooms have shelf space and a notice board. Posters or photographs can only be displayed on the designated board.

#### *Plug Adaptors*

If you wish to bring any electrical items with you, make sure to buy an adaptor either before or after arrival as the UK electricity supply system may be different from that of your home country.

#### *Communal kitchen facilities*

These provide snack making facilities e.g. fridge, microwave, kettle and toasters. Each student is responsible for their own washing up and must provide their own crockery or cutlery. The kitchens also have irons and ironing boards.

#### *Personal possessions insurance*

This is provided free of charge only to those students living in halls

#### *Candles / naked flames*

The use of these is strictly prohibited due to the potential fire risk.

#### *No-smoking policy*

Students are asked to note that smoking is not permitted in halls and all university buildings have been designated smoke-free since July 2007.

#### *Visitors*

No visitors are allowed to stay over in halls.

#### *Security*

We have 24-hour security near the main reception where students can go for assistance. The Security phone number is 020 8240 4335.

### **Support services in halls**

Senior residents are usually 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year students who have lived on campus during their first year and their role is to assist and support you during your time on campus. You can seek their advice anytime, they are there specifically to help new students settle in to campus life.

Resident Mentors are members of staff who reside in the halls of residence. Their role is to support, guide and assist students living on campus. For example, should a student fall ill and need assistance, the Resident Mentors should be called. Resident Mentors can also issue disciplinary action against students who breach the hall rules. You will be required to attend regular hall meetings as advertised. There will also be a briefing relating to fire, health and safety and personal safety during the first few days.

#### *Meal Plan*

As part of this scheme, you will receive 14 meals per week during term time only, which are taken as seven evening meals, five breakfasts and brunch at the weekend at the St Mary's refectory.

#### *Payment*

For some of you, your home institutions will be covering the costs. Those who are paying St Mary's directly will be notified about payment arrangements in due course.

#### *Post*

Any mail sent over to students in halls will be delivered to the mail room (above the Student Union Bar). If the item is too big to fit into your mailbox Security will contact you. Your address will be;

Room No  
Name  
[hall name]  
St Mary's University  
TW1 4SX Twickenham  
London  
United Kingdom

## **Students in homestay**

### *Breakfast and kitchen use*

Breakfast will usually be cereal, toast, coffee, juice etc. and many hosts will ask you to make yourself at home and help yourself. If there is anything in particular that you like to have for breakfast just speak to your host and, in most instances, they will be pleased to buy it for you (within reason). Please ask your host the time you are able to take breakfast.

Please leave the kitchen or dining room in the condition you find it and put your plates etc. in the dishwasher or the sink. Most hosts will be happy for you to make a drink or to prepare food you have bought yourself. Please talk to your host to make sure this is acceptable.

### *Bathroom*

Please agree an appropriate time with the family for you to bath or shower so no one will have to queue when everyone is trying to get out of the house, particularly first thing in the morning. Again, please leave the bathroom in the condition you find it in.

### *Bedroom*

You may have your own bedroom or share it with another student. Try to keep the room clean and tidy. Your host will provide bed-linen which will be changed each week. It is courteous to offer to strip and remake the bed.

### *Telephones in homestay*

Please clarify with your host the exact situation with regards to the telephone. Most hosts are happy for you to receive brief incoming calls from your family and to make out-going calls with the use of a card. Local calls are NOT free in the UK.

### *Washing machines*

Often hosts will allow the use of the washing machine for a small charge although there are launderette facilities on campus. Some will state 'light use' only, i.e. T shirts and underwear as drying space is often at a premium. Jeans and other heavy items should therefore be brought to campus to wash. Your host will show you how to use the washing machine and some lucky students will even get their laundry done for them. Not all households have tumble dryers. If they do, remember that they are expensive to run. You may wish to offer to buy washing powder and softener if there is no charge for using the machine.

### *Keys*

Your host will provide you with a set of keys when you arrive which you will be expected to return before you leave. Please check what you need to do to secure the house if you are the last person to arrive home at night or leave in the morning.

### *Use of the house*

Most hosts will invite you to join them in their 'family room' and other parts of the house, but please respect the fact that there are times when it may not be convenient for you to join them. Initially wait to be invited. Under no circumstances should you invite anyone to stay overnight or at the weekend without the advance permission of your hosts. If they agree,

you may wish to offer to pay for your guest to cover the cost of extra laundry, breakfast, etc.

### *Smoking*

Most of the accommodation arranged is non-smoking. If you do smoke, please check with your host where this is permissible.

### *Plug Adaptors*

If you wish to bring any electrical items with you, **make sure to buy an adaptor** either before or after arrival as the UK electricity supply system is / may be different from that of your home country.

### *Meals on campus*

As part of your meal plan, you will be entitled to Breakfast Mon – Fri, brunch at the weekend and seven evening meals at the St Mary's refectory. Unfortunately, the evening meals cannot be swapped for lunches.

**For more information on accommodation, please contact [accommodation@stmarys.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@stmarys.ac.uk)**

## **MODULE CHOICES**

Please complete the online [Module Choice Form](#) by November 26<sup>th</sup>. A list of modules offered can be found [here](#). You will receive your timetable upon your arrival at St Mary's.

## **ARRIVAL INFORMATION**

### **Coach pickup:**

January 23<sup>rd</sup> Midday Meet at London Heathrow Terminal 3 'Meeting Point' in arrivals.

Please complete the online [Flight Information Form](#) by Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 5pm GMT.

The following information is requested on the form:

- Departure date, time and departure city/airport
- Airline and flight number
- Destination airport and terminal
- Arrival date and time

### **Where to arrive**

London is served by three international airports: Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted. If you are coming directly from overseas, you should aim to arrive at London Heathrow Airport on the morning of Tuesday January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Heathrow has five terminals. You should try to arrive at Terminal 3, as we arrange coach collection from Heathrow for all who can meet at the 'Meeting Point' in Terminal 3 by 12pm Midday local time.

Please note that British Airways land at Terminal 5. If your flight comes into a Heathrow terminal other than Terminal 3, you should try to arrive in London no later than 9am, in order to allow enough time for you to transfer to Terminal 3.

### **'Meeting Point'**

Once you have been through passport control, picked up your luggage from the baggage hall and have come through customs (follow the 'Nothing to declare' sign), you will walk through to the arrivals hall. The 'Meeting Point' is signposted. You will find it just to the right as you come out of the arrivals hall.

### **Arriving earlier or later**

If you are arriving earlier than January 24<sup>th</sup>, or you are arriving later than midday (which we very strongly advise against if you are arranging your accommodation through St Mary's), or you are arriving at another airport (i.e. not Heathrow), please notify us at [studyabroad@stmarys.ac.uk](mailto:studyabroad@stmarys.ac.uk) immediately. You may be required to make your own way to campus if arrangements cannot be organised.

Unfortunately, the group will not be able to wait for individuals, so you need to be prepared to make your own arrangements.

Your accommodation will not be available before January 24<sup>th</sup> – even for storage.

### **Making your own way to campus**

If you are making your own way to campus and you have a lot of luggage, the easiest way may be to take a black cab. Make sure to budget for this and have UK pounds ready to pay. From Heathrow to the campus in Waldegrave Road you should expect to pay up to £40 or £50. Should you wish to take public transport, the [Transport for London website](#) has a journey planner function. Our postcode is TW1 4SX – the nearest train station is Strawberry Hill.

A cheaper option for a Taxi would be a local taxi firm - Strawberry Hill Mini Cab (020 8898 2009). Call and book before your arrival and ask them to meet you with a sign with your name in the arrivals hall at the terminal` your arrive at. Price is £24 plus car-park charge (usually £4 or so).

Location maps and directions for alternative modes of transport are explained on [our website](#) in detail. It may be a good idea to look through and print

these even if you are planning to be picked up as delays may be inevitable.

**If you have NOT arranged accommodation through St Mary's and you are making your own way to the campus**, please be at St Mary's Reception at 5.45pm (evening) on January 23rd for dinner, which will be offered to you by St Mary's. If you cannot participate in the dinner at 5.45pm on January 23rd, please be at St Mary's on January 24<sup>th</sup>. An induction schedule will be sent to you with further details in due course.

## **INDUCTION PROGRAMME**

An itinerary for the induction week will be sent to you in due course. The schedule for the first week will be very busy, as it will include general and academic orientation, and the first field excursion. The first week is a good opportunity to settle and get your bearings before our home students arrive. Under no circumstance should you skip induction week. Please do not plan any travelling during the first week, including the weekend.

## **MEDICAL HELP**

Please see the Medical Information Factsheet.

## **SOCIAL PROGRAMME**

All study abroad students have the opportunity to enrol onto the St Mary's social programme prior to arrival. The social programme includes various cultural activities in the past has included a Jack the Ripper walking tour, Day trip to Stonehenge and Bath, Greenwich Boat Cruise and Tour and a Wales Weekender

trip. Further details on the programme will be given in due course.

## **DISCIPLINE AND STUDENT CHARTER**

Study Abroad students are subject to the same rules and regulations as St Mary's home students. The Student Charter is available on [SIMMSpace](#)

## **MONEY**

**Debit cards** – probably the easiest way to manage your money while in the UK.

Make sure to check with your bank that your card will be recognised in the UK. You should also notify them that you will be using it abroad so that they do not put a hold on your account due to suspected fraud. Cash deposits can be made directly into your US bank account if this should prove necessary. The small ATMs often found in corner shops will not accept US cards. However, there are several larger banks and ATMs in the centre of Twickenham, a 10-15 minute walk away from campus.

Other alternatives are wiring funds via Western Union or American Express, credit cards or postal money orders.

## **MOBILE PHONES**

Most Study Abroad students opt to purchase simple mobile phones in one of the local phone shops. You can opt for a 'pay-as-you-go' scheme.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN LONDON**

The 'Oyster Card' scheme offers the best rates on London-wide travel on buses and on the underground. You can charge it up

with different types of travel cards or just opt for a 'top-up' version whereby you top it up when you need to. Most local shops as well as public transport offices are able to do this for you.

You may want to visit the Transport for London website at <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/> for further information on Oyster and travel in London in general.

## **CONTACTS FOR PRE-ARRIVAL ADVICE**

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