What to Know Before You Go

1.) **What is a Passport Letter?**
   You will soon receive a very important special Passport Letter. You will have to keep this letter with your passport at all times. When you present your passport to the immigration officials, be sure to present your Passport Letter also.

2.) **What are the flats like?**
   We are very fortunate to have a Study Centre located in the heart of central London, but please be aware there are certain “quirks” with all buildings as old as ours (17th century). During summer you may be housed in accommodations in central London. You can expect the same amenities as well as quirks with older buildings. Rooms may be smaller than you are used to and there are a great many stairs with no elevator. There is no air conditioning in the flats. Each apartment has wireless internet access and there is a computer lab at the London Study Centre which is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

3.) **How can I use a cell phone without spending my life savings?**
   We recommend that you purchase a pay-as-you-go cell phone abroad. With most phones, you will not be charged for incoming calls. It will be very simple for students with a smartphone to buy a data package for a reasonable fee per month which provides unlimited data, 300 minutes, and unlimited texts for calls within the U.K. More information will be provided at the on-site orientation.

4.) **Where do I get my books for classes?**
   We have emailed your registration materials, including a list of required textbooks. Unless indicated otherwise, you will need to purchase your books prior to departure, and bring them with you to London.

5.) **Will they accept my American dollars in London?**
   No. We recommend that you go to your local bank several weeks prior to departure and exchange at least $200 for British £. You can also exchange currency at the international airport for an increased convenience fee.

6.) **How do I access the rest of my hard-earned money?**
The easiest way to access money in London is with an ATM card. Your FSU Card will work as an ATM card at banks in London. Make sure your ATM card is associated with an international ATM circuit, like Cirrus, Plus or Star. If you have a Bank of America account, you can withdraw cash more easily and less expensively.

7.) **Now that I can access my money, how much should I expect to spend?**
As indicated by former students, an average of $4,000 - $6,000 is needed for meals, incidental expenses, and personal travel during a full semester in London.

8.) **How do I make sure I don’t fry my laptop abroad?**
Make sure to bring plug converters for all electronics. Laptop computers will also require transformers. Most laptops have a built-in transformer. Check your manual. Even if yours does have a transformer built in, you will need a plug converter to change from the US plug to the plug used in the UK. As for other electronic items such as hairdryers, curling irons, etc., **LEAVE THEM AT HOME.** Even the ones with variable currency get fried. It’s much better to purchase what you need locally, and you can share the cost with flat-mates. As an aside, don’t forget to check your homeowner’s insurance to make sure your electronic devices are covered for theft abroad.

9.) **Can I refill my prescriptions abroad?**
You must bring sufficient quantities of prescription medication with you. Make sure to keep these medications in their original containers, along with a copy of the prescription, in your carry-on luggage. If you have difficulty getting a vacation prescription to cover your entire stay, please contact IP immediately.

10.) **How do I keep my peace of mind while abroad?**
Make copies of your plane ticket, passport, and credit cards (back and front). Bring copies with you to London, and leave additional copies at home with your family.

11.) **Can I have packages sent to me while I am abroad?**
We strongly discourage students from having any packages sent to them while abroad. We have had numerous students who had problems either with packages arriving after they’ve already left the program or getting charged a significant
amount in duty. Either way, it’s not worth it. Please feel free to encourage your loved ones to send mail, but not packages.