



## Budget Planner for Study in England

To begin the process of determining your personal study abroad budget, you should cross-reference this guide with [Preparing to Study Abroad, Money Matters](#) and the program costs listed on our website, [www.ifsabutler.org](http://www.ifsabutler.org).

The information in this guide was compiled by staff in the IFSA-Butler England office and is based upon personal experience and student feedback. Despite years of experience, however, we have yet to create a “perfect” budget. If you’re honest with yourself about your expectations and lifestyle, this guide will give you a good idea of how much money you will need abroad.

**Costs are in U.S. dollars unless otherwise stated.**

### Tips for Determining Your Budget

- When figuring your budget, enter the minimum amounts on which you think you could manage.
- Estimate a second set of figures that are more generous. Include items such as meals, personal expenses, entertainment and vacation travel. You might be able to afford the more generous projection.
- If your resources are more limited, go back and make selective adjustments based on close questioning of what you *really need*, what would be *nice to have* and what you *could do without*. Your final budget should fall somewhere in the middle.

The budget worksheet (see last page) itemizes costs you will incur in the U.K. It is in three parts: **fixed expenses**, which are expenses prepaid in the United States in U.S. dollars; **variable expenses**, which are mainly in England and include start-up and term-time costs; and **vacation expenses**, which are expenses for your university vacation in England and at the end of the program. We have also added a line where you should enter your personal resources, from which you will subtract your estimated expenses to determine a working budget.

### Exchange Rates

The currency in the U.K. is the pounds sterling (£). The latest exchange rate is available at any bank, in most major newspapers and on the web at [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com).

### Fixed Expenses

All students have the fixed expenses of the program fee, housing deposit and their transportation to and from London. Other fixed expenses could include the [Tuition Payment Plan](#) enrollment fee and/or tuition differential.

- **Program fee:** Use the “Services Included in the Program Fee” information in [Money Matters](#) to determine what is included in your program fee. Remember that your \$500 program deposit is credited to the fee.
- **Housing deposit:** All students pay a separate \$300 housing deposit which is refundable at the end of the program, less any fines, damages or outstanding debts in your name. We will send a housing deposit invoice to your billing address before your program begins.
- **Transportation costs:** Enter the cost of travel from your home city to London. IFSA-Butler pays for one-way travel from orientation to your university city. Be sure to include the cost of returning home, including transportation to London for your return flight home.

- **Tuition Payment Plan** (not applicable to all students): If you use the monthly payment plan through Tuition Payment Plan, enter the enrollment fee, which is \$55 for the year or \$35 for the semester.
- **Tuition Differentials** (not applicable to all students): Some institutions charge higher tuition for subjects such as engineering, sciences, psychology and music. The IFSA-Butler website provides specific fee information for your particular university. You will not be billed for tuition differentials until you have registered for classes abroad.
- **Overload fee:** Some universities abroad charge a fee for taking more than the required credit, called an overload fee. These universities do not always tell IFSA-Butler about the overload fee in advance. If you plan to take an overload in England, investigate the possibility of additional fees. You are responsible for overload fees if they occur. The *Student Handbook* you will receive during orientation discusses a full course load, so you can avoid overloads and their related fees.
- **Meal plan bills** (not applicable to all students): Some university residence halls carry mandatory meal plans. If you are assigned to one of these residence halls, we will send a bill to your designated billing address toward the end of your time abroad. To determine if your housing abroad might include a meal plan, consult the university's program page and the England program fees on our website.
- **Cost of medical, travel and personal property insurance:** While in England, you will have medical coverage through an IFSA-Butler group medical plan, the cost of which is included in your IFSA-Butler program fee. You might also wish to secure personal property or travel insurance. IFSA-Butler is not responsible for your personal property.
- **Passports:** The fee for obtaining a U.S. passport is \$135 or \$110 to renew an expired one. If you already have a passport, check the expiration date to ensure that it is valid for six months past the time you will be in the U.K.
- **PBS Tier 4 Student Visa:** Students studying for six months or more must have the PBS Tier 4 Student Visa. Semester students studying in England who do not wish to work part-time **OR** engage in volunteering **OR** will not be in the U.K. for more than six months do not need to apply for an entry clearance visa prior to departure; upon arrival in the U.K., your passport will be stamped granting you student visitor status. As of July 2015, the cost for a PBS Tier 4 visa is approximately \$500.

### Variable Expenses

- **Personal items:** Estimate what you will spend on clothing, a new backpack or travel items. You will want comfortable, color-coordinated clothes and shoes suitable for walking, but you should also plan on buying some items abroad. See the "Packing" section in [Preparing to Study Abroad](#).
- **Orientation:** During your orientation, housing, light breakfasts, lunches and some entertainment are provided. While meals can cost as little as £5 in pubs and fast food restaurants, most students spend an average of £10-15 for their dinners; we recommend budgeting £50-60 for dinners and entertainment during orientation.
- **Family visit (optional):** Travel to and from the optional family visit is payable by you, however IFSA-Butler will reimburse students \$50 for the weekend after you have participated. Your host family will provide all meals, but you should have about £30-50 to offer paying your own way at a restaurant or on an excursion where fees are involved. Most students bring a thank you gift from home, so you may need to purchase this before departure.
- **Textbooks:** Our IFSA-Butler England office estimates full-year students will spend £200-240 for books; semester students, £110-150. A textbook estimate is included in our personal cost estimates for England.
- **Emergency reserve:** Whether it's a credit card or a cash reserve, set aside money for emergencies. You might want to consider £100-300.

- **Meals:** Current students living in London report spending about £70–80 weekly on food; those out of London spend about £60. This, of course, will depend on your own habits and preferences. Students tend to spend more freely in the first couple of months and often have to call home for additional funds.

Refectories (cafeterias), restaurants and snack bars are located in many of the main university buildings. Menus vary. Residence halls and student houses/flats have kitchen facilities for those who wish to prepare their own meals. All IFSA-Butler-operated housing has fully equipped kitchens. Where meal plans are compulsory, we will send a bill to your designated billing address toward the end of the semester.

You can save money by using subsidized campus dining services and also by preparing your own breakfasts and dinners, especially with other students. You can also take your main meal in a refectory at noon, so your evening meal can be a hearty snack. Shop in street markets or chain supermarkets, not in convenience stores. Take advantage of seasonal fruits and vegetables, as they are less expensive than those that are out of season.

- **Local transportation:** The London Underground is the most efficient way to travel throughout London. One of your first purchases in London will be a tube pass (Oyster Card) for the Underground. As of July 2015, students commuting in Zones 1 and 2 can purchase a discounted monthly pass for about £123; for Zones 1, 2 and 3, about £150.80. An Underground Travel Pass is required for discounted bus fares. You can check the most recent fares on the Underground's website: <http://tube.tfl.gov.uk>. Most London students commute in Zones 1 and 2, but some may need to commute farther.

Our England office estimates local transportation costs for full-year students in London to be £500 and £300–400 for students in other cities. For semester/term students in London, it could be £200, £100 for other cities.

All students will receive a temporary Oyster Card upon arrival for use during orientation. Oyster Cards are for use in London only. Once students have registered with their university of study, those in London can then apply for a student discounted Oyster Card through their university. The cost is £81.50 per month.

- **Personal expenses:** Students report personal spending at about £35 weekly. They recommend stocking up on certain toiletries (which average £5 weekly) and prescriptions before leaving the United States, if there is room in your luggage. Toiletries in England are expensive, especially contact lens solutions. Certain items students often purchase after arriving in the U.K. are hair dryers, clothing, curling irons, CD players, etc.

In your planning, be sure to include laundry, haircuts, postage, school supplies, photocopying, etc. Also consider the cost of purchasing a prepaid phone card or perhaps using a mobile phone. Purchasing a cell phone once you arrive in the U.K. should cost no more than £25. See [Preparing to Study Abroad](#) for more information about telephones.

Postcards cost 37p; letters less than 20 grams cost 47p; those between 20 and 40 grams cost 105p to send. A first-class letter within the U.K. costs 30p.

Be sure to set aside money in case you need to visit a doctor or fill a prescription.

- **Entertainment:** Students' ideas of entertainment vary as much as their meal preferences. Past students report spending £45–60 weekly in London, £40 in other English cities. For some students, the cost of alcohol should be considered; a night in the pubs could cost as little as £3 or as much as £20, depending on lifestyles.

Student unions offer a wide range of activities, including sports, films, discos, etc. Carry your host university-issued student ID card everywhere; it often earns you discounts on admissions to museums and entertainment options. Your student ID also gets you a discount at the movies. The average cost of a first-run movie is about £5. You will receive more information on this subject during orientation.

## Vacation Expenses

- **Travel:** Student unions have services to help you travel as inexpensively as possible. There are also a number of budget travel agencies in major cities to visit for comparisons. No matter where you're going be sure to check out the State Department warnings; they're available at most travel agencies.

For travel in Europe, you have the option of Eurail, Europass, InterRail and Wasteels BIJ tickets. Eurail offers three types of tickets: Eurailpass, Flexipass and Saverpass. You must be in Europe for more than six months to be eligible for an InterRail pass, which is considerably less expensive than Eurail and covers more countries. Many students have been disappointed with Eurail and Europass after discovering cheaper options. You can buy Eurail and Britrail Passes when you buy your group flight ticket or you can wait to make comparisons abroad. Eurail or Europass must be purchased in the United States, but someone back home can always purchase it for you and send it to you. Britrail and/or Britrail + Ireland can also be purchased in the United States.

Many students have found the 16-25 Railcard to be a better deal than the Britrail pass. The 16-25 Railcard costs £30 and gets you one-third off most train trips in the U.K. for a year. You can purchase the card at most railway stations.

Invest in a guidebook that will cover your personal travel style (*Let's Go*, especially *Let's Go Europe*, *Fodor's*, *Chronicle's Cheap Eats in London*, *The Rough Guide*, *Lonely Planet*, *Insight Guides*, etc.). You can save on lodging costs by staying at hostels. While it is not necessary to join Hostelling International, members have priority if the hostel is full. See their website at [www.yha.org.uk](http://www.yha.org.uk) for more information.

- **Accommodation:** Program housing in a university residence hall or student house/flat is offered only during the weeks when classes are in session, but storage space is usually provided for students who travel between terms. Those who wish to remain in residence must make arrangements in advance and pay daily or weekly fees. You may be required to move into another room if you stay during official university vacations because some universities rent their rooms for conferences. If you are in IFSA-Butler-operated housing, you may stay as long as you like during vacation periods that fall within your program time frame, but housing is not available after the end of the program.
- **Meals:** When you travel, you'll eat most of your meals in restaurants, so you might want to estimate £80 weekly, not including beverages. Food costs more during popular vacation times.
- **Personal expenses:** The telephone call component of your budget will be higher during vacation periods than in term time, but other expenses should be about the same. Entertainment and recreational expenses will vary. You will obviously need less if you're backpacking and hostelling than when staying in city hotels. It's difficult to gauge how much you'll spend on clothing and gifts, but keep in mind you must carry (or ship) all those purchases home at the end of your program.

## Approximate Costs of Commonly Purchased Items in England

Now you're ready to begin your budget planning. The cost estimates in this guide are in **pounds sterling (£)**. To calculate the value of the U.S. dollar to pounds sterling, consult the business section of any major newspaper or see [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com).

Keep in mind that 1000 g = 1 kg = 2.2 lbs; £1 = 100 pence

### Grocery Items

Milk	54p/L	Potatoes	£1.50-2/1.5 kg
Yogurt	£1.10/100g	Beef steak	£4.50/.5 kg
Cheese	£1.70/200 g	Peanut butter	39p/340 g
Eggs (six)	£1.50-2	Bread (loaf)	64p
Orange Juice	98p/L	Soda	£1.50/2 L
Apples	£1.30/kg	Coffee	£3.50/220 g
Oranges	£1.60/kg	Tea	£2.50/250 g
Lettuce	£1.10/.5 kg	Sugar	90p/.5 kg
Bananas	70p/kg	Potato chips	£1.50/150 g

### Personal Items

Contact lens solution	£8.99/250 ml	Clothing iron	£30
Deodorant	£1.50-3.00	CD player	£69.99
Toothpaste	44p/100 ml	Laundry detergent	£2.50/1.5 L
Shampoo/conditioner	£3.29/400 ml	Laundry costs	£5/week
Soap (four bars)	£1.60	Haircut - women's	£10-50
Tampons (box of 30)	£3	Haircut - men's	£8-25
Hair dryer	£14-30		

### Entertainment

Movies	£5-7 (with your student ID)
Theatre	£15-60 (when purchased just before show with student ID)
Museum or gallery	£3+ (many are free; others ask for a contribution)
Cup of coffee	£1.50-2.50
Pub meal	£5+
Pint of beer	£3 (less in some student union bars)
Alcohol	£3.50+ (by the glass in a pub)
House wine	£3.50+ (by the glass in a pub or wine bar)

## Budget Worksheet - England

England program: \_\_\_\_\_ Current exchange rate: \_\_\_\_\_

### Fixed expenses

**U.S.\$**

Program fee (see program fees on <a href="http://www.ifsa-butler.org">www.ifsa-butler.org</a> )	\$ _____
U.S. domestic and round-trip transportation	\$ _____
Housing deposit	\$ <u>300</u> _____
Tuition Payment Plan enrollment fee*	\$ _____
Supplemental fee surcharge*	\$ _____

*\*may not apply to all students*

### Total fixed expenses

**A \$** \_\_\_\_\_

### Variable Expenses

**£**

Passport fee (first time or renewal)	£ _____
Personal items (clothing, luggage)	£ _____
Personal expenses	£ _____
Orientation spending money	£ _____
Family visit	£ _____
Textbooks (see your program fee sheet)	£ _____
Local transportation	£ _____
Meals	£ _____
Entertainment	£ _____
Emergency reserve fund	£ _____

### Total variable expenses (conversion to U.S.\$)

**B \$** \_\_\_\_\_

### Vacation expenses (check with travel professionals and/or guidebooks)

Travel costs (train, airfare, etc.)	£ _____	\$ _____
	£ _____	\$ _____
Accommodation	£ _____	\$ _____
	£ _____	\$ _____
Meals	£ _____	\$ _____
Personal, including entertainment	£ _____	\$ _____

### Total vacation expenses (conversion to U.S.\$)

**C \$** \_\_\_\_\_

### Total estimated expenses (add lines A, B and C) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

List personal resources available such as savings, family contribution, financial aid, summer earnings, etc.

Total estimated resources	\$ _____
Less total estimated expenses	\$ _____

### Your Study Abroad Budget

**\$** \_\_\_\_\_