

BUCKHAM OVERSEAS STUDY PROGRAM STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Why BOSP?

There are obviously a million reasons why you should study abroad (unless you prefer to live under a rock your whole life). But why choose the Buckham Overseas Study Program? One major reason why I chose it is because it's a UVM-sponsored program. What, pray tell, is that? It means two important things:

1. Financial aid "travels" with you to the University of Kent (Kent Uni). This means that if you receive, say, a \$10,000.00 tuition remission from the University, you will still pay the same amount when you are at Kent. This is a *major* selling point for parents, especially Vermont-resident parents who are paying in-state tuition.
2. The courses you take at Kent Uni transfer back to UVM as letter grades that count towards your major, minor, and/or distribution requirements and cumulative GPA. This is different from many other study abroad programs, in which the courses would only count as "electives" that do not move you towards graduating. The UVM Transfer Affairs Office is well aware of BOSP, and you will work with them to make sure your classes transfer back successfully. At the end of the year, Kent Uni will send your transcript to the BOSP director (currently Helen Scott), and she will give it to Transfer Affairs.

A note about in-state vs. out-of-state tuition

Something that students notice relatively early in the application process is that in-state students get a much better deal with this study abroad program, since you and your parents are still paying UVM tuition rates, not Kent Uni rates. While Buckham is definitely a program for everyone at UVM, in-state students pay less, as they do for a UVM education. Kent tuition rates are actually lower than UVM out-of-state rates, since the British education system is heavily financially supported by the UK government.

There are three different academic periods during which you can study abroad in Canterbury:

1. **Go for the full year:** If this works for your schedule I'd *highly* suggest choosing this option. The reality is you probably won't get a chance to travel extensively abroad after college until you've established yourself as an adult with a paycheck, and lord only knows when that will be. The year I studied in Canterbury, four students chose this option and seven chose to come for second semester.
 - Pros of going for the whole year
 - You meet more people than you would if you were only there one term, especially within the first week of arriving at Kent because the Office of International Education puts on some great events for you to attend (International dinners, outings to the local stores, etc). Of the friends I met in England whom I still keep in contact with, most of

them are from that first week.

- You have the opportunity to really explore the Kent area. And not just Kent, but England as a whole and even all of Europe if you're interested. I even had a friend pop over from England to Russia for a week because *she could*. And remember, the more time you study in England, the more holiday time you have to travel.
2. **Go for spring semester:** If you cannot go for the whole year, I'd say this is definitely your next best choice. You arrive in Canterbury in mid-January and stay until mid-June (five months). It is two months longer than the fall term, and seems to be the perfect amount of time to study abroad, with 2.5 months of courses and at least one month of holiday in April (probably more, depending on your exam schedule).
3. **Go for fall semester:** Not many people choose this option, and those who do are normally constrained by strict UVM course schedules (they need to take a specific UVM course second semester, etc).
- The pros of going in the fall vs. the spring:
 - Kent Uni has a great support system when you arrive on campus in late September. Like I mentioned before you will be invited to various "International Student" activities which are integral to making connections with people on campus.
 - But the obvious con is much more extensive:
 - You only get three months in England, as opposed to five months if you go spring semester or nine months if you go for the full year. And while spending three months in Europe is wonderful, it's certainly not as good as almost double or triple that amount.

That said, if you are only able to study abroad for fall semester of your junior year, then do it! You'll still have a great time and be able to explore, albeit not to the same extent as if you went in the spring or for the full year.

International Students Statistics

Here are some facts about international students at Kent Uni, thanks to Hazel Lander, who is in charge of the International Students at Kent:

- During the 2012-2013 school year, there were 565 short term international students at Kent (including European students).
- There were 12,000 full-time and 6,200 part-time students at Kent's Canterbury campus. So the short-term international students make up about 3% of the total student population.
- About 400 arrive in the fall, and the other 75 begin in the spring.

Your Kent Uni Holidays

Lucky for you (and your family, if they plan on visiting you in England) the English

university schedule has many holidays. I highly suggest that you take advantage of these weeks/months to travel throughout the UK and Europe.

- **“Reading Week” in the fall (usually around early November):** this is a week you don’t have class because you’re supposed to be writing your midterm paper, but if you organize your time and get your work done ahead of schedule, then you can use this week to gallivant around. Be forewarned: it’s possible that each of your courses will give a different reading week, and therefore you won’t have one full week off.
- **Holiday break from mid-December to mid-January:** this is virtually the same as your UVM holiday break, and (normally) exactly the same dates.
- **Easter break from early April to early May:** This is a new one for UVM students. Technically this month is supposed to be used for studying for exams, but more realistically (if you use your study time well) you will be jet-setting around the continent.
- **Whatever time you have left after exams end in the summer term:** depending on your exam schedule, this could be up to one month of holiday. I had one exam on May 9th and then got to travel until mid-June, when I flew back to the US.

A note on coming home early:

Every now and then a student feels unable to stick it out until the end of the semester or year, and calls Helen telling her he or she wants to come home right after exams end in May (instead of waiting until the term to end in early June). This is **STRONGLY DISCOURAGED**, most importantly because Kent Uni requires all international students to stay for the full term. Also, such a large part of the study abroad experience is staying for the whole semester (or year). A student might want to come home because they feel homesick or are running out of money and those are legitimate concerns, but I can tell you it’s something you’ll probably regret in the long run. There are ways to cope with homesickness and some really helpful budgeting techniques that I’ll focus on in a bit so hopefully neither will be a problem for you. Of course there are always exception to every rule, and if you really need to go home for a serious reason Helen will figure out a way to make that happen.

ACCOMODATION AT KENT UNI

Some notes about Park Wood:

Park Wood is the campus neighborhood where most international students (and many first-year English students) stay. It consists of clusters of row houses and apartments (dorms), a Park Wood bus stop, a Park Wood convenience store called Essentials, a pub called Woody's, and two laundry rooms that accept coins. All UVM students say here. It's a very nice wooded area about a ten-minute walk from main campus

Park Wood contains two different types of living arrangements. Both are self-catered, i.e. you will be buying your own groceries and cooking for yourself. Each cluster of houses or dorms is referred to as a "court", i.e. Beckett Court, Bossenden Court, Farthings Court, Marley Court, etc.

The Houses

These are row houses, attached to one another on each end. Typically they are five to six bedroom houses with a kitchen and two bathrooms. Every student gets his or her own bedroom. Unfortunately there is no living room, but this is relatively common in student housing. The houses are older than the flats, although some are more updated than others. The five-person houses are considered "standard", while the six-person houses are considered "superior" by Kent Uni and are much newer. One of my friends lived in a house in Clowes Court that was pretty rustic ("standard"), but my other friend lived in Tudor Court and her house had recently been re-done and was noticeably nicer (newer kitchen appliances, tons of built-in storage space in her room, newer bathroom, etc). For these reasons, the six-person houses are slightly more expensive than the five-person houses. (See below for list of costs.)

The Flats

The flats are more like the dorms you're used to at UVM, except each apartment (or "flat") has its own full kitchen and each of the four to six students in the flat has his or her own bedroom AND BATHROOM. It's the personal bathroom that really makes the difference between the flats and the houses. I stayed in Bossenden Court (flats) for the full year, and I would suggest it for anyone who prefers a quieter atmosphere. In the houses everyone is closer together and sound travels very easily. It's also worthwhile to mention that you are not guaranteed your first choice for housing, which is why you need to pick three choices when you register.

More Information

Here is a website that describes the differences between the Park Wood houses and flats. The video at the bottom gives you some good visuals for both types of housing.
<http://www.kent.ac.uk/accommodation/canterbury/apply/guide/park-wood.html>

Remember: if you want to live in the flats you must choose the "**ensuite**" option when you sign up for housing. That means you have your own bathroom, which is the major difference between the two housing options.

APPLYING FOR A STUDENT VISA

What is a visa?

A visa is a stamp or document, usually enclosed inside your passport, that tells customs officials that you are allowed to be in the UK as a student for a certain amount of time (in this case, nine months). It also allows you to work twenty hours a week, if you wish to do so.

Who needs a visa?

You only need a visa if you're traveling abroad for the whole year. That's a good thing for all of you studying for one semester, because applying for a visa truly stinks (I'm being brutally honest here). In my personal experience it's time consuming, stressful, and hard to figure out, even with all the help available to you. So count yourself lucky if you don't need one. And if you do need one, let the games begin!

Timing

You can apply for your visa three months before your course of study begins, no sooner. If you do begin too soon (as I did) you will have to do it all over again when you hit the three-month mark.

What you need to include in your application:

Basically, you need to prove that you will be studying in the UK, and that you have money to cover your stay there. If you have scholarships from UVM or outside sources, you'll need to include proof of this as well.

Here is a list of documents to include in your visa application:

- Passport
- Letter of acceptance from Kent Uni
- Bank statement and/or proof of financial aid for living expenses
 - Your bank statement must show £800 for every month you'll be in Canterbury (£800 x 9 months = £7,200 = about \$11,500)
- Letter from UVM stating that you will be paying tuition to your home school, and UVM will then be paying Kent Uni
- Newly taken passport photographs for your visa ID picture
- UVM transcript

Visa Application Resources

Use these sites to help you figure out the details of applying for your visa. The BOSP director can also be very helpful during this process.

- UVM OIE Visa website: http://www.uvm.edu/oie/?Page=study/plan.html&SM=sa_menu.html
- UK Border Agency website: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/Tier4migrantguidance.pdf> (start on the bottom of page 20)
- Kent Union Advice Centre: <http://www.kentunion.co.uk/advice/international/>

Getting to Canterbury

The Buckham Program will set up your flight to England. Since the program pays for your flight there and back, you don't have to worry about scheduling this yourself. But you do have to make sure to tell Helen which airport you'd like to fly out of, and if you have to leave or return at a different time than the other students. For instance, I needed to come home a week earlier in June than everyone else in to be at my sister's high school graduation, so I made sure Helen knew ASAP.

The majority of transatlantic flights are night flights, which means your flight will leave the US in the evening and arrive in England in the morning (local time). This is a bit of a pain because your first day in the UK will be a blur of sleepiness, but also really REALLY exciting. *Remember, England is five hours ahead of Vermont.*

Make sure to get a good night's sleep the night before you leave the US. This sounds like the dumbest advice in the world, but think about it: unless you are able to sleep on the plane (in which case I envy you and please *tell me your secret*) you won't be sleeping again for about 36 hours. Better stock up on rest the night before.

Depending on what city you're leaving from in the US, your flight will be six to seven hours or longer. I left from Boston Logan airport and was probably in the air for seven to eight hours. In the spring semester one of my friends left from San Francisco and her trip was much longer, about ten to eleven hours.

You'll be flying into Heathrow airport, which is located to the west of the City of London, in the Greater London area. After you get off the plane you'll be funneled into a line for customs with hundreds of other exhausted passengers. I'd suggest bringing something to keep you busy, either a book or some trivia cards or something along those lines, as this part can be quite long. My friend Kait and I experienced no delay or frustration of any kind on the plane, but we ended up waiting in line for customs for about three hours altogether. This is not the rule, as when my sister came to visit me in December she only took about half an hour in line. So it completely depends on the day and how many people are traveling. It's great to have a travel buddy, but obviously this is not always possible.

If you arrive in the fall, Kent Uni organizes a really great welcome party for you at Heathrow. Administrators will be waiting for you in the arrivals terminal wearing Kent Uni shirts, waiting to cross your name off a list of arriving students. After being on your own for about ten hours, this is quite a relief.

Staff will put you on chartered coach buses that go straight to Canterbury. Note about the buses: **YOU NEED TO BUY YOUR COACH TICKET BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE U.S.** This is something you will be prompted to do when you register online for Kent Uni. It's possible to buy a ticket once you get to Heathrow (my friend Kait did) but there's no guarantee there will be spots left. Just do it beforehand and make sure to have your printed receipt with you so there's no confusion.

If you arrive in the spring, there will not be a welcome party for you at Heathrow, although Kent Uni will coordinate your transport for those of you wishing to take taxis to Canterbury. If you choose to take a taxi, Kent Uni will choose the taxi company and set you up with one to three other UVM students arriving at a similar time to share the ride. This could cost you about £50.00-£90.00 each (not including tip), depending how many students share the cost.

If you do not wish to take a taxi to Canterbury, here are two other options:

- Coach: Buses in the UK are generally very nice, but if you go from Heathrow to Canterbury you will need to transfer at Victoria Station in Central London, and moving all of your luggage from one bus to another, then waiting another hour for your second bus to arrive might be beyond you in your fatigued state. A coach would probably cost you from £5.00-£20.00.
- Train: Trains in England are wonderful, fast and *relatively* cheap compared to Amtrak in the US (which is honestly my only point of comparison). You'd need to take the Underground tube system to St. Pancras station, where you'd get on a highspeed train that takes you straight to Canterbury West Station, in downtown Canterbury. Then you can take a taxi or a bus up the hill to campus. The only problem with this plan is taking the Underground, which is a great public transportation system but if you have more than one suitcase it will be very hard to maneuver up and down stairs. If you are able to do this, then this would be the cheapest and fastest choice for you.

First Day On Campus

When you arrive on campus you'll be dropped off at the Reception building, which is at one end of Park Wood. You'll need to get your keys from the nice people who work at Reception, by showing some ID, your acceptance letter from Kent, and your housing contract (which will all have been mailed to you in the US). If you arrive in the fall, you might get your keys from another building closer to your actual house/dorm. You will be directed there once you are dropped off at reception. Furthermore, if you arrive in the fall there will be plenty of Kent Uni upperclassmen whose job it is to help you get where you need to go. I was very lucky, a sweet third-year student offered to carry one of my suitcases for me as she led the way to my flat.

Once you drop your stuff off in your room, you need to go get your Kent ID card from the Fitness Center. There should be maps all over the place, which you will need to use because this entails about a ten minute walk through a very pleasant wooden path. This is the path you'll be using every day to walk from Park Wood to main campus. Pretty much anyone on campus who is not a new international student or a first-year will be able to tell you where to go. Never hesitate to ask for directions!

How to connect your computer to the Internet in your accommodation

Sorry to break it to you, but there's no wireless in the houses and flats. Don't shoot the messenger. It's weird to get used to but not so bad if you have a long ethernet cord. When you arrive in your room there will be a pamphlet explaining how to connect to the internet. It's pretty straightforward but some students with older computers have problems and if you fall under this category you'll have to go visit Computer Services on the second floor of the library. While there is no wireless internet in the dorms, there is wireless in the library and the academic buildings on main campus.

Things you probably won't think about, but it's good to have this figured out before you go:

Linens:

- Make sure you pack some basic linens to use your first night in Canterbury. Chances are you won't have time to go downtown and buy anything right away, so it's a good idea to have a sheet and pillowcase with you.
- Speaking more long-term, you'll want to either bring bedding and towels with you or plan to buy them in Canterbury. You can either do this downtown at a store like BHS (British Home Store), or take a bus slightly out of the town center to Asda (Walmart), which is the cheapest option.
- Or, you can buy "bedding packs" from the Kent Uni Store. These are very convenient because you pick them up at Park Wood Reception when you check-in, meaning you don't have to buy anything separately.

<http://store.kent.ac.uk/browse/product.asp?catid=44&modid=1&compid=1>

Food

- Obviously you don't want to fill your suitcase up with food, but do bring some granola bars or something similar to have that first day in England. You'll be very busy and probably won't have time to make it downtown to go food shopping. And remember, you can always buy food at Park Wood Essentials, the little shop at one corner of the Park Wood neighborhood.

Second Day on Campus

These are some things to think about after you get a good night's sleep and are ready to begin your Canterbury Experience.

Phones

- Probably the easiest thing to do is to buy an inexpensive phone and use a pay-as-you-go plan. This is very common in the UK but not so much in America. All it means is that you put money on your pay-as-you go plan, which translates into a certain amount of minutes and texts, and then when you use that up you put on more money. That way you're only paying for what you need, and you don't have to worry about terminating a contract once you return to the US.
- Here are the main phone carriers in England. Every one but Virgin is in downtown Canterbury.
 - Vodaphone
 - Orange
 - T-Mobile
 - Virgin
 - O2
 - 3
- There are pros and cons for each one. I personally chose Vodaphone, and spent £30.00 on a basic phone (with a "qwerty" keyboard) at the Canterbury Vodaphone store on High Street. Turns out I could have gotten an almost identical one at the Carphone Warehouse for £15.00-£20.00. Generally the Carphone Warehouse sells you the physical phone then you get to pick which network you want to use. If I ever go to England for an extended period of time again this is what I'll do.
- Fun fact: The phone company Orange has a neat little perk where every Wednesday you can get two half price cinema tickets at most cinemas in the UK. If you go see a cheap matinee you and a friend can get in for as low as £3.00 each. I didn't have Orange but looking back that would have been nice.

ACADEMICS AT KENT UNI

Here's a re-cap of the Kent Uni academic terms and holidays:

Autumn Term: late September – mid December

Holiday Break: mid December – mid January

Spring Term: mid January – early April

Easter Break: early April – early May

Summer Term (exams): early May – mid June

If you come for the fall or for the whole year, you'll arrive in mid September. If you come for the spring, you'll arrive in early January.

Realistically, your exams will probably end much before mid June. I had one full month in between my one and only exam on May 9th, and my flight home on June 11th. It was, to put it Britishly, "BRILLIANT"! I traveled all over England with my American and British friends. Don't hate me—that'll be your life soon.

To see exact dates, check out this website.

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/about/termdates.html>

As of Winter 2013, it has dates including the 2015-16 school year.

For instance, here's next year's schedule straight from the site:

Autumn Term	30 September 2013 - 20 December 2013
Spring Term	20 January 2014 -11 April 2014
Summer Term	12 May 2014 - 20 June 2014

How Classes are Structured

As previously stated, courses in England are set up very differently than courses in the US. Not only do you typically take only two courses each semester, but you also spend much less time in class. If you're taking two English classes, which most of you will be doing, you will have two one-hour lectures and two two-hour seminars (small discussion sections) per week, reading about two books per week. For some of you this will be a dream come true ("So little class time!! Tons of me-time!") but more realistically it's tough to convince yourself to be productive throughout the week, since you just keep putting off the work until the day before class. Because of this it's very important to be self-disciplined and cultivate good study habits.

Picking Classes

Since you only take two courses at a time at Kent, be really careful about what you pick. I was guaranteed by past BOSP-students that it didn't matter what I chose because once I arrived on campus I could switch my courses, but that's not always the case. It's REALLY IMPORTANT that you like the courses you take, which sounds so obvious and dumb but I think UVM students are so used to taking 5+ classes that we don't realize what it's like to

take only two courses, and how important it is to be passionate about both of them or else you just lose all your academic steam.

Here is some advice for picking classes, culled from the batch of UVM students who studied at Kent Uni when I was there:

- **Don't overload on English credits.** Remember, you're only allowed to use 45 English credits to go towards your major, and it would really stink if you took too many in England then didn't have one left to take at UVM for your senior seminar. Just do the credit math and save at least three credits for when you get back from Kent. I took three English courses at Kent so I had six credits left when I got back to the US, which was just enough for me to take my senior seminar and one other English course I had my eye on.
- **Course Stages.** Kent courses are divided up into Stage 1, and Stage 2/3. Take my advice on this one, and don't pick Stage 1 courses. You might think "But hey, I'd rather have tons of time to travel and not be bogged down with homework 24/7" but I've heard from past BOSP students that Stage 1 courses are *rough* because it's you and a bunch of 17 and 18-year-old English freshmen who are away from home for the first time. You won't get a lot of out of it, and I think ultimately you'll regret that. Pick Stage 2/3, preferably 3. That way you'll be with English students your own age, and chances are it'll be easier to make friends.
- **Long Weekends.** Many of the UVM students who went my year were able to configure their schedules to give themselves three or four-day weekends. This is definitely something to think about if your goal to travel a lot, especially if you are only in England for one term. But remember: having all that free time can really mess with your head, so structure your week to your best advantage.
- Don't forget to meet with **Transfer Affairs** at UVM before you leave the country and make sure that your Kent classes will transfer. It's important to update Transfer Affairs if your classes change once you get to Kent (like mine did). Also, don't take any language classes at Kent unless you are prepared **not** to receive credit for them. This happened to a student during my spring semester at Kent and it caused her a lot of headache and frustration. There are exceptions to this rule, but you have to solidify this with Transfer Affairs and your home language department *before you leave*.

Course List

Here is the list of courses offered at Kent Uni. Click on the "Stage 2 and 3" tab and scroll down the list to find the English courses, currently spanning from "EN555" to "EN641".

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/courses/modulecatalogue/humanities.html>

Give yourself plenty of time to peruse these courses. It's possible to change them once you get to Canterbury, but it's much easier for all parties if you pick something you really like and don't have to move anything around later.

Here are some English courses that UVM students have taken in the past. Note: not all of them are offered every year.

- EN555 Medieval and Tudor Lit

- EN580 Charles Dickens and Victorian England
- EN636 Eighteenth Century Literature, 1750-1830
- EN640 Nineteenth Century Literature
- EN641 Modernism
- EN647 Literature of Terror
- EN657 The Brontës in Context
- EN556 Early Modern Literature 1590-1660
- EN630 Modern American Literature

Essay-Writing

Essay writing is very different in England. I was first warned about this from a UVM student who studied at Kent two years before me, and I'm very glad she mentioned it. Here's a breakdown of the "essay situation", as I like to call it:

- For an essay in an English literature course (chances are the courses you take at Kent will be English lit) you are expected to use many secondary sources throughout the essay (and therefore include a list of secondary sources in your bibliography). At UVM every single essay I had written for English classes had been a close-reading or at least just generally based around *my* ideas about the book, and did not include outside references. Some you might be used to including bibliographies in your English essays, but for those of you who, like me, do not have experience with this, be prepared. Hopefully your seminar leaders will give you tips to help you write your first essay, but some might not.
- Plagiarism: The English school system is much stricter about plagiarism than UVM, at least it seemed that way to me. Every paper you turn in has to be uploaded electronically to TurnItIn.com, a site that checks your work against everything else online to make sure its original. Personally, this was very stressful for me because I was used to being trusted with my work, but you get used to it. You will need to turn in one copy electronically, then print out a receipt (stating you have turned it in online) and attach that to a hard copy of the essay which you turn into the English department office on main campus. Again, this should be explained to you by your seminar leader.

Exams

All Kent Uni exams take place at end of year in May and June, **even if the class ends in December**. This is *extremely different* from the way you are used to taking exams at UVM, so be ready for this. The great part about this system is that you do not have any exams before winter break, but the obvious con is that you will be taking an exam in May for a class you haven't thought about since mid December. That's five whole months for you to forget everything you learned. Of course, this only affects those of you studying abroad for the entire year. For students studying abroad in the fall, it is possible to take exams at UVM using a proctor system but it involves some organization, so it's something to consider when selecting courses (and deciding when to study abroad).

Reviewing for your exams is very important. In my experience, you cannot succeed by BS-ing your essay answers like you might be tempted to. The faculty expects you to really

know your stuff, especially since you technically have the entire month off before exams to study.

KENT UNI SOCIAL LIFE

International Student Events

During your first week at Kent, you'll be asked to attend a few events. These will be more numerous if you arrive in the fall vs. the spring. Sure you'll hem and haw, and really not want to go because school-organized events aren't cool, but come on, you know you really should go. When I went to the International Student Dinner they sat us down in this giant room in the Rutherford building and served us a *really swanky* dinner with fancy napkins and fancy glasses and fancy tablecloths. Why not take "the man" up on a free meal? If you don't go, you're only hurting yourself. I met a lovely French girl at this dinner who turned out to be one of my closest friends in Kent—she's even visiting Vermont this spring! See, much like winning the lottery, you never know what might happen.

Mea Culpa: When I had already been in Canterbury for one semester and my friends arrived for spring semester, I absconded with them the night of the International Student dinner and forced them to lose out on some intense bonding time with fellow new international students. Sorry, guys!

Restaurants/Bars on Campus

Not to make a big deal out of this, but THERE ARE MORE THAN HALF A DOZEN RESTAURANTS/BARS ON CAMPUS! Here's the lowdown on a handful of them, in order of my personal preference:

- **Origins**-Origins is the restaurant/bar in the Darwin building. It's Tex-Mex themed and their £6.50 chicken fajitas are ridiculously delicious. I'm dead serious—if someone handed me a ticket to Canterbury I'd head to Origins first, *then* hug all my English friends while eating the fajita. Check out the menu at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/catering/where-to-eat/darwin.html>
- **Rutherford Bar**-Rutherford Bar is located in, wait for it, Rutherford building. BOOM. It's good for cheap drinks, alcoholic or not. Most English classes meet in the Rutherford seminar rooms, and the bar is just a few steps away, so it's very nice for pre or post-class snacks/drinks, including paninis, pizzas and nachos. Full menu at <http://www.kentunion.co.uk/goingout/rutherfordbar/>
- **Gulbenkian Theater/Café**: The Gulb is a classic. Part cinema, part theater, part restaurant/café/bar. They show really good (cheap) movies and serve tasty food. Try the pesto panini, or if you're really hungry the fish 'n chips doesn't disappoint. Full menu at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/gulbenkian/cafe/index.html> (find more information about the Gulbenkian at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/gulbenkian/>)
- **Mungo's**: Mungo's, in Eliot building, serves burgers and baked potatoes in a club-like environment. I went twice, and once was my first day on campus after not sleeping for 24 hours so my perception was a bit off. Full menu at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/catering/where-to-eat/eliot.html>
- ...And many more! Go to <http://www.kent.ac.uk/catering/index.html> to find out more about eating on campus.

Drinking in England

As you've probably gathered, the English drinking culture is very different than in the US, since the drinking age is 18. Obviously, this means that all your third-year friends will have been drinking out in the open for two of three years (but, honestly, probably *much longer* than that). Any casual drinking that you did in high school or college, well I'm sorry to tell you it *does not compare* to English drinking. They can hold more liquor than you, or at least they think they can. You'll probably encounter what I can only describe as hooliganism, that is, roving bands of drunks on the weekend. It's how many young Brits (and Americans, and international students) have their fun. If you decide to join in, just remember to be safe and make good choices.

Kent Uni Societies

This is something I regret—not getting involved with more societies on campus. It's a wonderful way to meet people and keep up your extracurriculars.

Here is a very small sample of societies you can join at Kent Uni:

- Animal Rights Society
- Art Society
- Belly Dancing Society
- B-Movie Society
- Christian Union
- Conservation Society
- Cooking Society
- Feminist Society
- Film Society
- Fine Dining Society
- LGBT Campaign
- Latin American Society
- Liberal Democrats Society
- Live Music Society
- Military History
- Musical Theater Society
- Religious Studies Society
- Salsa Society
- Secular Humanists Society
- Sky Diving Society
- Tudor Society
- Vegetarian and Vegan Society
- Wine & Whisky Society
- Yoga Society

There are a ton more. Check them out at <http://www.kentunion.co.uk/societies/>

MONEY, BUDGET, AND FOOD SHOPPING

Since you will be buying and cooking your own food, probably for the first time in your life, you will spend more money than you are used to spending. This can be a shock to the system at first, but if you budget smartly your money can go a long way.

While prepared food is quite expensive in the UK (watch out for this!), groceries are not. Of course it's fun to eat out, but if you're worried about spending too much money definitely buy your own groceries as much as possible.

There are a multitude of grocery stores in and around Canterbury. I'll describe them in order from the cheapest to the most expensive:

- **Asda:** Asda is the Walmart of England. It's actually owned by Walmart, so it's virtually the same thing. However, their grocery department is *extensive*, much more so than any Walmart I've ever been in. There are tons of choices (especially in produce) and it's the cheapest of all the grocery stores. The fact that it's essentially Walmart might turn some people (especially Vermonters) away, but once I realized how much money I was saving I did all my grocery shopping there. Asda is located right outside of Canterbury, and it involved a short bus-ride from the city center (or two short bus ride if you're coming from campus). If you have a UniRider [see below], this is definitely worth your while. Just ask the bus driver to stop at ASDA when you get on the 6 or 6X bus.
- **Tesco:** Tesco is probably the most used grocery store in Canterbury because it's located so conveniently in the city center, right near the bus station. It's inexpensive, but more expensive than ASDA. All of my flatmates did their shopping at Tesco, and if I was downtown and only needed a few items I'd stop in before taking the bus back up to campus.
- **Sainsbury's:** Sainsbury's is very close to Tesco in price, but a bit nicer and a bit more expensive. There is a Sainsbury's very close to the ASDA right outside of town.
- **Marks & Spencer:** Ah, good old M&S. Otherwise known as Marks & Sparks, this store has been around since the late 1800s and is a staple of every high street. The food is very good quality and therefore more expensive than ASDA, Tesco, or Sainsbury's. M&S also functions as a department store and even has a money counter for international currency exchange. It's located right across the street from Tesco, close to the bus station.

Money/Debit Card/Bank Account in the UK

If you don't already have a Bank of America account, get one. Bank of America has an agreement with Barclay's Bank in the UK, which stipulates that you can take money out of a Barclays ATM with your Bank of America card without being charged. This is how I took out all of my money. I dealt exclusively with cash while abroad, which might not appeal to some people but this made me much more aware of how much I was spending, plus I didn't have to worry about being charged a fee for paying with my debit card (and unless you have an out-of-this-world bank, you *will* be charged). You and your parents can set up a

joint account so they can put money in on their end and you can take money out on your end. Barclays used to have an ATM right on central campus, but unfortunately this closed down last year. There is still one downtown on High Street, it's just not quite as accessible as it used to be.

Opening a bank account in Canterbury

I'm going to be brutally honest here: don't open a UK bank account unless you absolutely need to. The only reason I can think of for doing this is if you have a great-paying job and you know you'll be ranking in the big bucks—er, pounds. But it's quite a hassle. You have to have a ton of documents to prove who you are, where you live, why you're in the country, etc, and it's just way more complicate than in the US. I opened an account at NatWest bank because I thought I'd get a job but I ended up volunteering instead so I didn't put any money into it. At least my account was free—if I had paid anything for it I'd have really been kicking myself.

TRAVEL: LOCAL AND REGIONAL

Taking the Bus

If there's one thing you can say about the Brits, it's that they know how to do public transportation. While in the US taking the bus might be something you do only when you don't have access to a car, in England this is not the case: EVERYONE takes the bus. You'll see students, schoolchildren, senior citizens, families, people doing their morning shopping, people going to work, etc.

Kent has a wonderful bus system called Stagecoach. Most of the buses are double-deckers, which are so much more fun than regular buses (especially for the incredulous American passenger).

Here's some information on the different types of tickets Stagecoach offers:

- A normal "one-way" ticket from the Kent Uni campus to downtown Canterbury is £1.40. A "return" (there and back) is £2.50, called a UniDay. This allows you to go back and forth as many times as you like between campus and downtown within one day. A UniWeek (same idea) gives you unlimited rides between the Uni and downtown for £16.00—a good deal if you have a job downtown and make multiple trips a week. Remember to do the math for yourself so you know if you're saving money by buying a UniDay or UniWeek.
- If you are going to be in Kent for the entire year, I'd highly suggest buying a UniRider. This is a special bus pass that enables you to travel on any Stagecoach bus in Kent and East Sussex. It's a lot of money upfront (mine was £155.00 and as of 10/1/12 they are £160.00) but even if you take the bus downtown twice a week it's still saves you money. The £160.00 price is only with a special student deal when school opens in September, so buy it ASAP once you get on campus. The "normal" price is £240.00. Do NOT buy your Unirider online. It will take about a week to get to you and you'll have to pay the normal fee for the bus until it arrives. Stagecoach sets up a stand (complete with a double-decker bus) near the Venue on campus and accepts cash and credit card payments right there. You can get your UniRider on campus that first week you're in Kent. NEVER LOSE THIS. You will become a sad shell of a person if you do. Well, at least you'll have to pay £25.00 for a replacement fee, and that's not fun. (My friend was unlucky enough to lose her Unifier but lucky enough to do it in the last few weeks of school, after using it nonstop for eight months.) Students at Kent for only one semester can also buy a UniRider, but it'll cost you £160.00 for just that one semester. It still might be worth it, depending on how often you take the bus. I'd definitely suggest it for second-semester students, but maybe not first semester students.

Here's the website for Stagecoach Bus System of Kent and East Sussex:

<http://www.stagecoachbus.com>

And here's the UniRider website:

<http://www.stagecoachbus.com/Unirider%20Uni%20of%20Kent.aspx>

Taxis

It's always good to have taxi numbers in your UK phone. You never know when you'll wimp out and not want to hike back up the hill after a late night out with friends. As in the US, taxis are quite expensive if you take one alone, but manageable if you're sharing with two or three friends. Here is the number for Cab Co to get you started: 01227 455455. I used them throughout the year after the first call they'd answer the phone "Hello Beryl!" Very friendly service. Cab Co taxis cost anywhere from £7.00 to £15.00 to get from Westgate Towers (one end of the city center) up the hill to Park Wood; it varies on traffic.

Getting to London

Getting from Canterbury to London is easy. There are two options:

Coach-National Express runs buses about every hour to London from the Canterbury bus station downtown. These are very nice buses, similar to Greyhound in the US. You can get fares as cheap as £5.50 one-way if you buy in advance. ALWAYS BUY ONLINE. If you buy in person they jack up the price. (I learned this the hard way, and had to pay £25.00 to get to and from London one crazy day in November 2011.) Luckily, buying coach tickets online is very easy. Go to this website and fill in your travel details:

<http://www.nationalexpress.com/home.aspx>

Train-Similarly, national Rail trains leave Canterbury West station about every hour for London. If you take the high-speed, you can make it in fifty-five minutes. Regular speed takes a little longer. For train travel it is not as important to buy online in advance, but it does make it a little simpler for you. Go to <http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/> and pop in your travel details. If you know you'll be taking the train a lot, it's probably worth it to buy a student railcard. This ID card gives you 1/3 off each train journey, and costs about £28.00. You can find out more information here: <http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>

Traveling in London

Once you arrive in London, you will probably want to buy an Oyster card to use on the London Underground. Much like NYC's Metrocard, the Oyster card functions as a reusable ticket on which you can put as much or as little money as you want and use when you need it. The card itself costs £5.00, but you can get that money back if you return it once you are done with it. Using a pay-as-you-go Oyster card is much cheaper than paying for individual tickets, and it's definitely worth it if you are spending a day or more traveling around London. Here is the Oyster card website: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/14836.aspx>

Visiting Dover from Canterbury

I'd highly suggest visiting the White Cliffs of Dover at least once during your time in England. After all, they're famous for a reason. If you use the Stagecoach bus it only takes forty minutes and costs £6.00 for a Day Explorer, which you can use on any Stagecoach bus in Kent (or East Sussex) all day. While you're there make sure to visit Dover Castle, overlooking the English Channel. The admittance price is steep (£14.90 for students) but completely worth it. Try to give yourself two or more hours to explore the castle, grounds, and World War II tunnels. Don't forget the view from the castle roof! Here's the Dover Castle website: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/dover-castle/>

Getting a Job

This is a tough call: should you get a job while you're abroad?

Obviously there are a bunch of good reasons to work while in England:

- Most importantly you'll have pocket money which will come in handy once the exchange rate starts to get to you, and it might make it unnecessary to call home to ask for money from your parents. (Something that might be happening A LOT).
- I know this sounds like a career catalogue, but the truth is that working is a great way to fill your free time to stay motivated and engaged. I had a lot of unexpected free time since my courses were only on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, and having a weekly commitment besides classes definitely helped me not go crazy.
- For those of you in the UK for the whole year, you'll have a work visa included in your student visa. So you can actually apply for "above-board" jobs working downtown in cafes, bookshops, retail, etc. If you don't have a work visa but still want a job it might be best to go with babysitting or something like that. Then again, some employers probably don't care and will let you work without a visa.

My friend Kait, who was with me in Canterbury for the entire 2011-2012 school year, worked as an Ibiza Angel masseuse on ferries crossing the English Channel. Here's her experience, in her own words:

I made a good amount of my travel money from working on ferries across the English Channel as an on-the-spot masseuse. I found the job on the "Jobshop" website with KentUnion, I applied, went to an interview, got trained, and started working. I loved this job, I always left a long day (sometimes I'd do 3 trips, or 6 crossings) still energized by all the people I'd met. I gave massages to grandparents, mothers, fathers, musicians on the road, businessmen on trips, teachers on field trips, athletes on their way to tournaments, soldiers on their way home from the Middle East, travelling students, and many other out-lying and interesting characters. The company's mantra is "Once touched, never forgotten" and it's true, I learned a lot about the power of touch and its lasting vibrations when it's been instrumental in revitalizing someone's day and refreshing their outlook. There was no fixed rate, but the clients are asked to pay "What you think the massage is worth to you." I would make between pocket-change and £40 in only 10 minutes. On a good day I'd make almost £200, I'd also get life advice, spiritual blessings, personal stories, passionate views on all kinds of issues, business cards, I even got a band's first CD once, and all for making someone feel good. Travelling abroad is the adventure you make it out to be, but sometimes you're limited to a lot of time with other wide-eyed students just like you. Having a job like this to interact with people of all ages and backgrounds going to all kinds of interesting places, holds more meaning for me than some of my own most anticipated destinations. And the best part of all of this was that I was getting paid. –Kait, BOSP 2011-2012

Volunteering

If you can't find a paying job, or don't want to work whatever the minimum amount of hours is for a normal part-time job, then think about volunteering. I didn't have a paying job while I was at Kent, but I did volunteer at the Oxfam Bookshop on High Street. It was a nice little hole-in-the-wall with books bursting off of the shelves. I worked the cash register,

shelved books, and helped people who wanted to donate books.

People Who Can Help You at Kent

There are many people on the Kent campus who can help you if you run into problems with any aspect of your experience. Here is the contact information for two of them:

Hazel Lander

International Office Coordinator, Welfare and Exchanges Officer

International Office

The Registry

University of Kent

Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NZ, UK

Tel: (+44) 01227 827994

Fax: (+44) 01227 823247

Email: h.lander@kent.ac.uk

Emma Marku

International Support Officer

International Office

The Registry

Tel: (+44) 01227 824088

Fax: (+44) 01227 823247

Email: e.l.marku@kent.ac.uk

Web: www.kent.ac.uk/international

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!



Soaking up the epicness that is Canterbury Cathedral
(This will be you soon!)

That's all from me. If you have any questions that haven't been addressed in this handbook, please don't hesitate to email me. As you can probably tell, I will never get tired of talking about my year in Canterbury. I hope you have an amazing experience abroad!

Cheers,
Beryl

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