



Binghamton University

Notes of Guidance for Exchange Students

Please check information on host University's website for accuracy

The university is located in the Southern Tier of New York State, near the Finger Lakes Region, and about 3½ hours northwest of New York City. The university, located in the Town of Vestal, is part of the Triple Cities area of Binghamton, Johnson City and Endicott. We are one of four University Centres in the State University of New York system, enrolling more than 12,000 students, in six schools or faculties, in programs leading to bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees.

Further information: <http://www.binghamton.edu/home/about/overview.html>
<http://www2.binghamton.edu/oip/incoming-exchange/index.html>

Study Dates 2012/13

The academic year at Binghamton is split into two semesters.

Fall Semester: 4 September – 21 December

Spring Semester: 28 January – 17 May

Further information: <http://www2.binghamton.edu/about/university-calendar.html>

Orientation Programme

There is a very comprehensive three day International Exchange Student Orientation in the fall, the week before classes begin. A fee of around \$275 is charged to all undergraduate students in their initial semester and covers supports services and events for new students including New Student Days and other welcome events and First Year Experience courses, as well as orientation programs. Your student bill is issued after you register for courses.

Further info: <http://iss.binghamton.edu/>

Academic Work

Selection of Courses

Students would select courses in consultation with an academic advisor at Binghamton. Students are required to take a minimum of 12 credits per semester and may take up to 18 credits. 12 credits per semester is considered to be a full load, but many students take 16 credits per semester. Most courses are four credits, so the minimum number of courses is usually three.

The Office of International Programs coordinates the admissions procedure for the exchange students and assigns each student a faculty academic advisor. Students should be encouraged to explore University homepage where all departments list their courses, and where the schedule of classes for the next semester appears, <http://www.binghamton.edu>.

Your final course selection must be approved by the University of Edinburgh Business School and a Course Registration Form is available on http://www.business-school.ed.ac.uk/data/assets/word_doc/0016/16054/course-registration-form.doc.

Please ensure that you keep in regular contact with your School during your year abroad.

Registration

Registration for courses normally takes place just prior to the start of classes, after consultation with the academic advisor. However, if possible, we will register exchange students during our early registration period soon after their admission. Students should identify a number of second choice courses in case the most desired courses are closed or restricted. There is a short "add" and "drop" period, during which the student may adjust their course selection at the beginning of the semester.

Studies

Standards at Binghamton are high and it is competitive. Participation in class is essential, and can be part of the overall grade. There is much more group work, presentations and continuous assessment. Professors and Teaching Assistants are required to hold regular office hours each week, and generally very much welcome student initiative to speak to them.

Assessment

Course assessment depends on the instructor; however, most use continuous assessment (throughout the semester) and the grade may be based on some combination of shorter written assignments, quizzes, mid-term and final exams, and term paper.

Finances

Financial Evidence

Students on exchange from Edinburgh are required to show proof of approx \$7,835.00 for the academic year and complete a <http://www2.binghamton.edu/oip/incoming-exchange/4a%20-%20Undergrad%20Financial%20Statement.pdf>

as part of the application process. Suitable accompanying documentation might include:

- An original letter notifying you of the award of a maintenance grant and/or student loan.
- An original and signed letter from a bank stating your current financial situation.
- An original and signed letter from a parent or friend's bank stating their current financial situation, coupled with a letter from the bank account holder confirming their willingness to provide a stated level of financial support.

Costs

You will be required to pay for the following (**all figures are approximate**):

- Tuition fees to the University of Edinburgh – contact the agency which is paying your fees (e.g. LEA/SAAS) and ensure that payment is arranged.
- Accommodation plus meal plan, approx \$5,626 per semester depending on choice.
- Books – these are normally purchased, not borrowed from the library, so can cost around \$500 for the year.
- Health insurance – around \$454.00.
- SEVIS fee \$200.
- Orientation fee - \$270
- Return air travel to US - £500 approximately.
- Everyday personal expenses - \$ 740.00 per semester.

Further information:

<http://www2.binghamton.edu/oip/incoming-exchange/Costs%20Edinburgh.pdf>

Employment

Students are allowed to work a maximum of 20 hours per week, except during vacation periods. Approval is required in the first instance and this can be granted by the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) and further information can be found here <http://www2.binghamton.edu/iss/employment/emprule.html>. Many students work on campus in the dining halls or cafeterias, or in the bookstore.

In general J-1 students will be exempt from Social Security taxes by declaring non-resident status for tax purposes. Authorisation to work must be done in advance, before work begins, failure to do so is a serious violation of your status.

Grants and Loans

If you are in receipt of a maintenance grant and/or a student loan, you should inform the awarding body that you have been selected to participate in the exchange. As the academic year at Binghamton begins in September, rather than October, you should request that payment be made early. The awarding body will need payment instructions, namely details of a bank account into which it can be paid directly, or a nominated individual to whom cheques should be posted. If payment is made to a UK bank account, you will need to make arrangements for money to be transferred to an American Bank. Do not forget to obtain the necessary grant or loan application forms for the following year.

International Student Exchange Identity Card - ISE Card

The ISE Card is a student discount card which allows students to enjoy discounts, concessions, or other benefits at transportation companies, museums, attractions, national parks, accommodations, restaurants and numerous other venues all over the world.
<http://www.isecard.com>

Banks

Opening a bank account at a local bank in Binghamton is not difficult for students at the University. If you wish to transfer money from a UK bank you should make sure that the bank is a NATIONAL, not a local bank. Some banks in the US operate within one state, not nationally. You will not be permitted to accumulate an overdraft. Money can be transferred to an account in the US, but this will take around 48 hours and carries a charge. You should take sufficient travellers cheques to cover expenses during your first month and sufficient cash in dollars for your first few days. Your UK bank should be able to recommend counterparts in Binghamton, so seek advice from them. There is a bank on campus.

A credit card such as Visa will prove useful for emergencies and you might consider increasing your credit limit. In addition to shops and services, credit cards can be used at certain banks (or in the case of American Express at their offices) to obtain money immediately from a British bank account.

Insurance

The SUNY health insurance fee is \$90.80 per month. The cost for the fall semester is \$454 for five months. The cost for the spring semester is \$636 for seven months, and includes coverage through the summer. However, students leaving earlier may receive a partial refund upon presentation of proof (in the form of an airline ticket) of earlier departure. Refunds will be mailed to the student's home address after the end of the term. Remember to take out travel insurance to cover the few days before you are formally matriculated and try to have a dental check-up before you leave the UK as dental treatment in the US is expensive. If you intend to stay in the States beyond the end of the academic year, you may need to take out additional insurance provide cover for this period.

Visas

All students should check the US Embassy/Consulate website for up to date information <http://london.usembassy.gov/exchange.html>

Useful Embassy details:

Embassy Website: www.usembassy.org.uk

On no account should students enter the USA on a tourist visa.

Students with Green Cards, a US passport, or Canadian nationals do not need to apply for a visa. Canadian's will still need an I-20 or IAP-66 OR DS-2019, which will be issued automatically.

All students must attend a US Embassy for an interview.

Housing

Costs vary for housing and meal plans according to selection. The prices given above under "costs" are for a standard double room in the residential colleges and for a standard meal plan. A student may choose a more expensive housing option (break housing in the residential colleges, a room in the Mountainview Community, or a room in an apartment

community such as Hillside or Susquehanna Communities). Meal plans are not required for students who are housed in Susquehanna or Hillside Communities.

Students who are 22 years old or older may not live in the residential colleges. They may live in either the Hillside or Susquehanna Communities, or off campus. Information on off campus housing can be found online at <http://occ.binghamton.edu>. Please note that the residential colleges, except specifically designated break housing areas close during official university breaks and vacation periods. Students not living in break housing (or the Hillside and Susquehanna Communities) are obligated to find alternative housing during these periods. Many students choose to travel at this time. The cost of travel and alternative housing during the breaks is not factored into this estimate of costs and should be considered by the student when determining a budget for personal expenses. On-campus room and board options and costs are explained in the publication *Residential Living* and on the Residential Life and Dining Services web sites: <http://reslife.binghamton.edu> and <http://budining.com>.

Travel

Tips on travel for arriving in Binghamton will be included with your Acceptance Pack. <http://www2.binghamton.edu/oip/incoming-exchange/travel-information.html>.

Safety

We hope your stay at your exchange destination will pass without any undue incident with regard to your safety. However, as you will be staying in a different environment and culture, you should be prepared to take necessary precautions if appropriate.

We would advise you to consult with the Study Abroad Office on your arrival and also look at the following website which will give you up-to-date government information on the country you will be visiting.

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/>

If you find yourself without any access to cash, without your passport, or in any other serious kind of trouble, the British Consulate will try to help. In the unlikely event of you being arrested for a serious offence, insist on the Consulate being informed; a consular officer who can advise on local procedures etc will contact you as soon as possible.

Please also inform the International Office and your DOS of any problems relating to your health or safety whilst on your study abroad exchange.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

Some destinations may be more accessible than others for disabled students. If you require any adjustments due to disability or specific learning difficulties and you wish to study abroad please contact the Business School in the first instance (adjustments@business-school.ed.ac.uk). We will liaise with you and the Disability Office at Edinburgh to explore the help available at your host institution. It would also be helpful if you discuss this with your Director of Studies and the Disability Office.

Contacts

Alberta	Edinburgh
Caroline Simpson Student Exchange Program Liaison International Exchange Office Room 3-21B, Business Building School of Business University of Alberta Edmonton, Alberta Canada T6G 2R6 Tel: +1 (780) 492-4895 Fax: +1 (780) 492-0280 E-mail: caroline.simpson@ualberta.ca	Lorraine Edgar/Janet Ellis The University of Edinburgh Business School Undergraduate Office 29 Buccleuch Place Edinburgh, EH8 9JS Tel: +44 (0)131 650 3828/651 3798 Fax: +44 (0)131 650 8337 Email: Lorraine.Edgar@ed.ac.uk or Janet.Ellis@ed.ac.uk

These notes are for guidance only. We have tried to keep them up to date, but it is very difficult to do so without your input. So, if you can keep notes of any inaccuracies in this information we should be glad to hear of them on your return to Edinburgh. Any other observations and impressions about your stay will also be useful and will help those students who participate in the exchange in future years.

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The University of Edinburgh Business School
29 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh, EH8 9JS

Tel: 0131 650 3900
Fax: 0131 650 8337

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