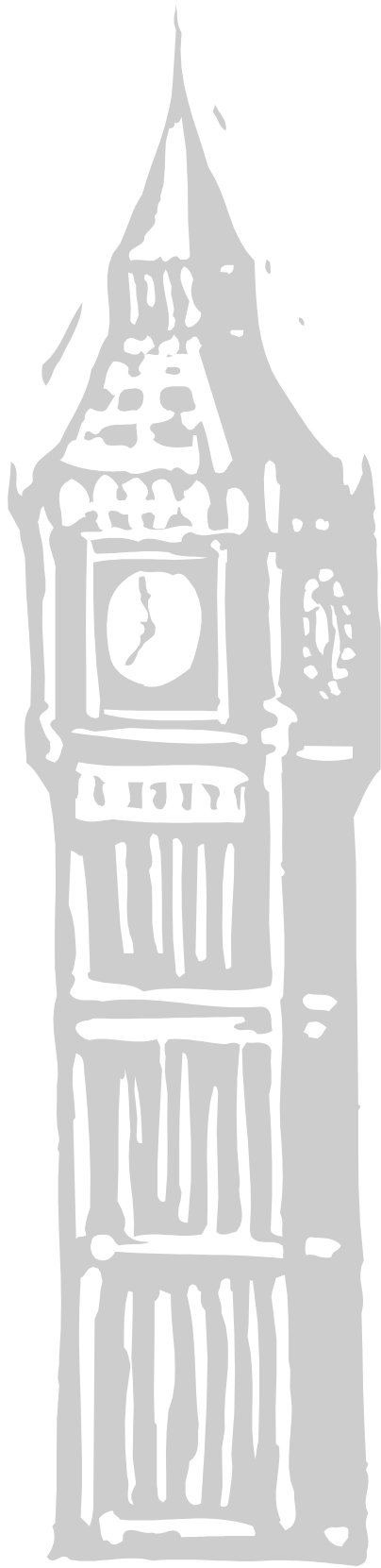




DIRECTOR'S HANDBOOK

**FIRST-YEAR
EXPERIENCE IN
LONDON**

FALL 2009

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Skidmore's First-Year Experience in London is designed for a group of 36 first-year students to study abroad in the fall and to join their class in Saratoga for the spring term. The program provides an enriched academic and cultural experience for these students under the supervision and direction of two Skidmore faculty members and the staff from the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES). The main goal is to offer students a substantive "Skidmore" experience during the fall to help prepare them for their first semester in Saratoga. The program also serves to help us attract and retain the interest of quality students who will join us in January. Through the First-Year Experience in London, students are introduced not only to their first college semester but also to the myriad of cultural differences of one of the most international cities in the world. Thus the program offers ongoing opportunities for students to gain cultural understanding, flexibility, and personal resourcefulness.

The program provides a wonderful opportunity for Skidmore faculty, who help create a true learning community in London. The faculty directors work closely with a small group of new students on their academic and personal development. In this setting faculty can develop seamless connections among their various responsibilities: teaching, social and cultural programming, academic advising, supporting students with personal and cultural issues, and preparing students for the wide range of Skidmore's academic, social and co-curricular expectations. The necessary blending of these areas forms a learning community that is unique within the Skidmore experience.

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

GENERAL

The role of the directors of the First-Year Experience in London is one that brings many rewards and challenges. While IES will deliver much of the curricular and co-curricular programs, the faculty directors still play a very active role in the academic and personal lives of the students in London. You are called on to handle a myriad of personal, administrative, and strategic issues, as well as deliver an academic program to students for whom this is the first college experience. You must be prepared to work closely with new students in a foreign setting and across a broad range of their academic, social, and personal growth patterns. This position breaks down the traditional barriers between academic and student affairs concerns and asks you to become involved in the students' lives on all fronts. Thus it is important to become very familiar with a number of issues common to the student affairs experience, including exploring and responding to students' ordinary adjustment problems as well as more serious mental and physical health issues, the challenges of alcohol and drug use among students, and student frustrations with living in an environment with more limited residential, counseling, computer, and classroom resources than are available at home. You must be prepared to be visible and available to the students for any and every personal and academic issue. You will be faced with all of the developmental issues that are tied to first-year students, plus the adjustment issues inherent to study abroad. This is not an easy task! Patience and flexibility are critical, as is open and clear communication with the students, with OCSE, and with the staff at IES.

The faculty directors work primarily with the OCSE Program Coordinator in Saratoga and with the IES staff in London. For administrative functions, the faculty directors report to the Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges. The faculty directors coordinate academic, programmatic, budgetary (limited), and personal advising aspects of the program in London; attend to the general health, safety, and well being of the Skidmore students in London; and teach one Scribner Seminar each. The faculty directors receive their full Skidmore salaries for the semester in London plus a stipend to assist with living expenses. (Consult with OCSE for the exact amount of the stipend.)

The faculty directors, in conjunction with the staff at IES, also plan and deliver significant cultural and social programming for the first-year students. The programming should focus on introducing the students to the wealth of resources in London. Simultaneously, it should give the students an opportunity to interact with the directors and the other participants. One of the goals of the program is to help the students develop a “cohort” on whom they can rely when they come to campus in January. By providing them with meaningful programming while in London, the students will be encouraged to get to know each other and, hopefully, develop friendships that will continue on the Skidmore campus.

DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES BEFORE THE PROGRAM BEGINS

Each faculty director should:

1. Submit to the Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges a course description for the course you will teach in London in the fall. The course will be a Scribner Seminar and, therefore, **MUST** follow the guidelines for the development and implementation of a Scribner Seminar. The course will be reviewed and approved by the appropriate committees in line with guidelines for approval for all Scribner Seminars.
2. Arrange for any course-related materials to be available for students upon their arrival in London. (Details are given later in this handbook.)
3. Become familiar with the literature that describes the resources at IES. Become familiar with the Skidmore Program guidelines and expectations for students.
4. Attend briefings with the OCSE staff regarding financial and logistical arrangements for the program.
5. With the aid of the OCSE Financial Manager, arrange banking for program purposes. (Personal banking needs are the sole responsibility of the director.)
6. Secure housing in London, independently or with the limited assistance of IES.

DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES IN LONDON

NOTE: The faculty director should be prepared to respond at any time of the day or night should a serious issue arise, to follow up with our students if requested by the IES staff, and to respond in a timely manner should further conversation/action regarding a student be needed. It is critical that the faculty directors be involved in these issues and represent the best interests of the students and Skidmore at all times.

1. Arrange to be in London a few weeks before the students arrive – by mid-August – in order to complete program and personal arrangements, to get acclimated to the city, and to greet students as they arrive in London.

2. Meet staff and director at IES London Center soon after arrival to get oriented to IES London and to receive the full schedule of IES London events. Also get to know the Student Services staff and their resources. Ask the Student Services staff to keep you informed regarding any serious student issues.
3. Set up the office at IES with appropriate supplies. Ensure Skidmore's office computer and printer are up and running.
4. Upon their arrival, provide each student with a letter including the following information: your address and phone number (for emergencies), office and teaching hours at IES Center, notice of the first social gathering place and time, and a tentative list of cultural and social activities for the semester (or at least the first six weeks). This is a good time to clarify with the students such program arrangements as monthly stipends and details regarding use of stipends, ordinary safety precautions, emergency contact protocol, etc.
5. Attend and participate in program orientation. Arrangements will be made by IES; however, directors are expected to take an active part in the orientation program. **NOTE:** Although the "official" orientation program takes place during the first week, orientation should be thought of as a semester-long process.
6. Establish and post your teaching schedule and office hours at IES each week (6-7 hours per week). As the faculty director's main responsibility is to oversee and enhance the students' experiences in London, the obligation is to make oneself available to the Skidmore program students at least three days each week, including the teaching days. You will see students in class, but it is important that they have time outside of class that is available for other discussions. **NOTE:** The faculty director functions not only as the students' academic advisor but will be called upon to provide more personal guidance than is common on campus in Saratoga. You should not hesitate to enlist the resources and guidance of the IES staff.
7. Each week of the academic program hold one regular group meeting with students to discuss recent events, ask questions, or just share their experiences in London. The meeting is a chance to announce upcoming cultural and social activities and to touch base about academic and cultural adjustment.
8. Oversee and track all budget allocations for the Skidmore in London Program using the established reporting system and check register.
 - Keep receipts and an account of all "program" expenses.
 - Keep receipts and a separate account for all personal expenses.
 - Be sure that total student and program expenses do not exceed the established budget (supplied by the Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges and Finance Manager).
 - Consult with the Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges and Finance Manager regarding any budget questions or unanticipated program expenses or other financial issues.
 - At the conclusion of the program (no later than January 31), deliver all budget records and receipts, both for program and personal expenses, with appropriate budget summaries, to the Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges and Finance Manager who will review the records and transmit them to Financial Services.
 - **NOTE:** There are funds for social events with the students. However, you should **never** purchase alcoholic beverages for the students.
9. Provide academic and personal advice to students while in London.

10. When you are away from London for a long weekend or break, you should make on-call arrangements with IES, alert students to the contact and itinerary arrangements, and make your cell-phone number available to appropriate people. You should plan to stay in London at the beginning and end of the program, as these are crucial periods for our students, and also during the bulk of the semester. You can, of course, travel occasionally on the weekends and during the semester break.
11. Hold regular meetings with IES staff to stay up-to-date regarding student and programmatic issues. Communicate with OCSE as needed to ensure that the home office is aware of emerging concerns.
12. Alert the OCSE Program Manager and the Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges immediately to any problems, emergencies or illnesses in London, or any dangers that seem to be emerging as the result of local or international events.
13. In conjunction with IES and in consultation with the OCSE Director and staff, oversee special safety precautions, emergency or crisis responses should the need arise.
14. With help of IES, hold a final gathering/dinner for program participants before they conclude their academic program and leave London.
15. In general, act as Skidmore's ambassador with the faculty and staff at IES.

DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES UPON RETURNING TO SKIDMORE

1. No later than January 31, deliver all budget records and receipts, both for program and personal expenses, with appropriate budget summaries, to the Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges who will review the records and transmit them to Financial Services.
2. No later than January 31, submit a written report/assessment of the London Program, especially providing advice for the Off-Campus Study & Exchanges and for future faculty directors in London.
3. Serve as faculty advisor for program participants during the remainder of their first-year at Skidmore. (NOTE: This means that each director will be advising approximately 18 first-year students during the spring semester.)

PREPARING TO GO

THE SCRIBNER SEMINAR IN LONDON

You will be asked to develop and present OCSE with a description for the Scribner Seminar you teach in London during the faculty director application cycle. Once directors are appointed, they must submit detailed course proposals, following the Scribner Seminar guidelines. The official proposal must be submitted to the Administrative Coordinator of the FYE by November 1 of the year preceding their semester abroad. The proposal is vetted by the FYE Curriculum Committee/CEPP sub-committee for Scribner Seminars. The proposal is then forwarded to Curriculum Committee for final approval. Curriculum Committee will complete review and approval of all Scribner Seminars by December 15. See <http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/curric/ccallcollcurric.htm> for details and the official form. Any questions regarding the Scribner Seminar should be directed to the Director of the First-Year Experience.

OTHER IES COURSES

Students enroll in one of the Scribner Seminars offered by the Skidmore faculty directors. Students also enroll in three additional courses offered by IES. All of these courses are open only to Skidmore's first-year students. Courses have been developed by IES specifically for Skidmore's FYE in London and have been vetted and approved by Curriculum Committee and the appropriate departments on campus. Students select and are registered for courses prior to departing.

All courses, including the Scribner Seminars, are worth four credits giving students a total of 16 credits for the semester. **Students may NOT drop below 17 credits without approval from the faculty directors, IES and the OCSE.** Requests for withdrawals will be considered only if a student is experiencing personal or academic difficulties that require a reduced load.

BOOK ORDERS

As soon as you know what course you will be teaching, you will need to think about ordering the books for that course. IES London does not have a bookstore that can accommodate book orders for your course. Some books will be available in London through local bookstores; however, you might want to consider having students purchase books in the States. You should work with IES to determine the best way to handle students' textbook needs.

WORK PERMITS

OCSE will work with IES to provide work permits for faculty directors in London. This immigration process is on-going and ever changing, and IES works closely with the British consulate to ensure accuracy. You should work with the OCSE FYE Program Manager to confirm that all documents are submitted in a timely manner. OCSE will receive the work permit and deliver it the faculty directors prior to departure.

HOUSING

Finding housing in London is always an adventure. To ease the burden, we have enlisted the help of IES London. The staff there will assist you in locating housing as needed. You will find that securing a flat in London can be nerve-wracking – it is not at all like renting an apartment stateside. Many realtors will not rent for short periods or will not guarantee a rental until 2 or 3 weeks before you arrive in London. Given these challenges, we recommend you begin your search early and approach the process with incredible patience and flexibility.

You may, of course, secure your housing without IES's assistance. If you use the help of IES, you will need to communicate directly with them (rather than through OCSE). You should be sure to let them know if there are any specific concerns or if you need specific accommodations. Do not make assumptions about access to internet or other amenities you are looking for.

Once you have found a flat, OCSE will help you with payment of your rent. We will need you to send us an invoice from the person leasing the flat to you. You should get an exact figure – including any necessary deposits, which usually includes a deposit fee,

the semester's worth of rent (typically 5 months), and a damage deposit – and the information needed for Skidmore to transfer the amount into that person's account in London. Once OCSE has all of that information, we can wire transfer a portion of your stipend to the appropriate account in London. The remainder of your stipend will be deposited into your stateside account.

GROUP FLIGHT

As the director you will be arriving in London in mid-August. The students will arrive in late August on a group flight. (Dates are available from OCSE.) We strongly suggest that the students travel with the group on the flight that we arrange after orientation on Skidmore's campus. However, they are not required to do so. You will need to meet the group flight in London and gather the students together; a representative from IES will join you at the airport as well. From the airport, the group will travel to the IES residence hall. Students will settle in and on-site orientation will begin right away. Therefore, the program officially begins when the group arrives. If there are students who are not on the group flight, they are responsible for meeting the group at the residence hall at a pre-arranged time. (OCSE will provide the time once the group flight is finalized.) OCSE will let you know who is not traveling with the group and will give you their flight information and arrival times.

The return flight date is pre-arranged as well. However, many students decide to stay in London or Europe after the program ends. In most cases students will be allowed to change their return date for a fee. Students should work directly with the airline to make arrangements. Any charges or fees incurred due to changing the return date are the responsibility of the student. We suggest you remind students in October that they should make any ticket changes right away. In the past, students have assumed they are able to change the return date to whenever they want and are surprised when there are no free seats around Christmas or New Year's Eve. Please be sure to warn them of this problem ahead of time. It is also the responsibility of each student to get to the airport on his/her own at the end of the program. We do not arrange for a group bus to take the students to the airport.

For Skidmore and IES purposes, the program ends the day the group flight departs. Any students staying on after that date are no longer the responsibility of the program, IES, Skidmore or the director.

ON SITE IN LONDON

ORIENTATION

The program will begin with a mandatory week-long orientation session that provides detailed information about academics, health and safety in London and Britain, cultural adjustment, housing, and other important topics. There are a number of presentations and activities designed to help participants get to know their fellow students, the IES staff, and the city of London. Orientation will acquaint the students with expectations and teaching methods of British professors and with the educational format of the program.

In addition, the faculty directors will be expected to begin their Scribner Seminars during this week. Time will also be allotted for the faculty directors to meet with the each student individually to begin the advising/mentor relationship.

An overnight excursion to Oxford is also included. Details will be finalized and discussed before you depart.

STUDENT SUPPORT

As mentioned previously, the students on the London First-Year Experience are dealing with many distinct challenges: their first college experience, their first experience away from home, the cultural adjustments of being in London, and the possible feeling of unfairness because they are not in Saratoga and see themselves as “second-best.” At various times throughout the semester the students will be vulnerable to homesickness, disappointment, euphoria, confusion, and any host of other emotions. Some of them will be unprepared for the exciting, sometimes intimidating, experience of life in London. With this in mind, you should take for granted that the students will need ongoing reassurance and support – to a much greater degree than what is expected of faculty members at Skidmore.

Throughout the semester you will be called on to talk to the students as a group about various behavioral expectations, including alcohol, drug, and safety issues. Former directors have recommended that these subjects be approached in a straightforward and candid manner. They recommend a pragmatic and practical, rather than moral, approach. The students have seemed prepared to understand and respect the views and roles of the directors as the people responsible for overseeing the program.

The IES London student services staff will be available to assist you throughout the semester. They are professionals who have been trained in the issues mentioned above. While we want to depend on them to handle many of the concerns students have, we also want to be sure students feel a “Skidmore” presence in London. Also, some students may feel more comfortable sharing concerns with you, their advisors, than with the IES staff.

You should meet regularly with the IES student services staff to ensure student issues are being addressed. You should bring any serious concerns to the attention of the OCSE immediately.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Emergencies

You should discuss emergency contact protocol with the IES staff as soon as you arrive. The residence hall has a full staff of professionals to handle emergencies. However, you will want to be involved in extreme emergencies and informed of all cases. You will repeatedly need to remind the students of your flat and cell phone numbers and of the IES contact numbers to ensure that they know who to contact in an emergency. They have this information in their pre-departure handbook as well. (See Appendix A.)

You should plan to stay in London at the beginning and end of the program, as these are crucial periods for our students. You can, of course, travel occasionally on the weekends and during the semester break. If both directors will be outside of London, you should

inform IES and share your contact information with them. While they are able to handle emergencies, you will need to be informed immediately of any severe problems. Please be prepared to respond accordingly if any serious emergencies occur while you are outside of London; this might mean returning to London to support the affected student. In all cases follow the advice of IES. Also, do contact OCSE as soon as possible so that we can be informed of and can participate in and support any decisions that might need to be made.

Health Services

As the director, you are Skidmore in London. This role will require you to offer students support that you would not typically offer while in Saratoga Springs. This is the case in medical emergencies. Fortunately, IES has a full time residential staff that is able to assist our students with minor medical issues. It is important that you meet with the staff and discuss what the protocol is when a student is in need of medical attention. When do they want or expect you to step in? We recommend you follow their lead but also be actively involved when the circumstances dictate. If there is a true emergency, we ask that you join the student and staff in the dorm or at the hospital. If a student is hospitalized, we ask that you accompany him/her to the hospital and serve as his/her advocate. You should, of course, be accompanied by someone from the IES staff as well. However, the student will need a familiar face and the institution will need someone to help ensure the student is receiving adequate care. Again, initial conversations with the IES staff will help to clarify expectations and roles.

We do provide the URL of Skidmore's online self-help health guide to the first-year students on the program (<https://hudson.skidmore.edu/selfcare-login-only/index.htm>). This guide simply helps to put things into perspective and allows students to make decisions about their own care. It can be a helpful tool considering you are directing a group of first-year students who may or may not have had to make these decisions on their own before.

Drugs and Alcohol

Our students will be "legal" in London – they may drink alcohol as they wish. The vast majority of the students have been able to handle this newfound freedom responsibly. Our advice is to talk regularly with the student affairs staff at IES and keep an eye on the students who are exhibiting problematic behavior. The IES staff is well-prepared to intervene as needed.

Drugs are not legal in any case. IES has a zero-tolerance policy concerning drug use or possession. There are no warnings; they simply expel the student from the program. Please reinforce this idea with the students and urge them to abstain. If you do have a situation of this nature, immediately contact the Director of OCSE. She will work with you and with the Dean of Student Affairs before recommending any action.

Medical Insurance Coverage

Students will be covered by IES. IES will provide details regarding coverage and policies. IES will also assist students on site should any questions about coverage arise.

Directors are covered by AIG International Services through Skidmore. (See Appendix B for details.) Call AIG Assist when you:

- require a referral to a hospital or doctor
- are hospitalized
- may need to be evacuated or repatriated
- need to guarantee payment for medical expenses
- experience local communication problems

AIG International Services can be reached by calling an International Operator to place your call at (01-713) 260-5508, or access an international operator and call collect 713-260-5508. OCSE will provide you with an insurance card. The insurance information is listed below as well as on your insurance card:

Insurance carrier: Worldrisk AIG International Services
 Name of Insured Organization: Skidmore College
 Policy Number: EX55000272

The coverage is valid outside the US or Canada as long as you are on “Skidmore Business”. Most emergency medical treatment, excluding treatment for any pre-existing conditions, psychological, cosmetic or routine care, is covered by this policy. Reimbursement is typically how this piece is handled. Bills and receipts must be translated into English if necessary. Copies of receipts/bills along with an explanation of treatment can be sent directly to AIG at the following address:

AIG Worldsource
 80 Pine Street, 11th Floor
 New York, NY 10005

Or claims can be scanned in and e-mailed to William.Wymes@aig.com. Please make sure that each claim references the College's policy number: EX55000272.

NOTE: There is a \$100 deductible and a \$10,000 maximum on all claims.

There is also an Emergency Assistance Service which should be used if you need emergency hospitalization, a doctor, evacuation, repatriation, etc. For this type of assistance please:

- 1) Call the Operator and ask for an International Operator.
- 2) Specify that you wish to make a collect call to the U.S.
- 3) Then request 713-267-2525.

Please make sure that you reference the College's policy number: EX55000272.

Safety

Safety is one of the top concerns of parents and students these days. As the world situation continues to be unpredictable, we must be sure to educate our students as to the potential hazards they face here and abroad. To that end we include a Safety Checklist in the students' pre-departure materials. (See Appendix C.) Throughout the semester it might be helpful to distribute copies of the precautions again to remind students of what they should and should not be doing.

IES will register the group with the American Embassy upon arrival. This is an important step. By registering the group, they inform the U.S. government of the program's

presence allowing them to include the group in their plans in case of an emergency or evacuation. Also, throughout the semester, OCSE will forward you any Department of State warnings or advisories we receive. IES will also monitor global and local conditions and communicate any potential problems to you. You may share the DOS warnings with the students as you see fit. The point is to maintain the students' awareness of safety as a real issue without creating a sense of dread. It is a difficult balance. We have found in the past few semesters that students are very aware of the new challenges of being an American overseas. For the most part, students have handled the world tensions with maturity and have used this as an opportunity to learn more about the world and themselves.

Finally, the students should let you know where they will be and how you can contact them when they travel outside of London. This is not an attempt to check up on them; rather it allows us to respond quickly in case there is an emergency in London or at home. It also allows you to have frank conversations with those students who may not be making the safest choices concerning travel destinations. Although we do not want you to "police" the students, we do count on you to remind students of the dangers of travel to certain areas of the world. If you are ever in doubt about the safety of a certain destination, please check with IES and/or OCSE. We will be glad to discuss the plans with you or the student.

It is also a good idea to meet the students as a group before the semester break. During the meeting you could cover the safety precautions again and obtain any travel forms that are still outstanding. Students definitely must submit travel forms to you for their semester break.

Replacing Passports in London

The U.S. Embassy recently incorporated an internet-based appointment system for all U.S. passport services that require a personal appearance in their London office. This includes replacing lost, stolen or damaged passports. Due to service demands, any applicant requesting service without an appointment will experience long delays, as they will be served after all applicants who booked an appointment. To book an appointment, please log on to their website at www.usembassy.org.uk. When you book an appointment, you will be given a confirmation page that you should print and bring with you on the day of your appointment. For more detailed information, forms, and instructions please see the Embassy website at www.usembassy.org.uk.

CULTURAL/SOCIAL GROUP ACTIVITIES

Students will have the opportunity to participate in a multitude of cultural and social activities throughout the semester. Typically these events and activities are scheduled in the late afternoon or evening or on the weekends so as not to interfere with students' courses. (Please note that faculty programming responsibilities will often drift into evening and weekend hours.) The activities are categorized as follows:

Required activities that are linked to courses: Each course will offer five required cultural activities. One of the goals of these events is to expose students to the vast cultural resources available in London. These will be planned and delivered by IES faculty and staff. They are part of the program fee charged by IES and will not cost the students or the program additional money. While the instructors themselves will most definitely have ideas about what these activities should be, you might also want to be involved in the

planning discussion. We should also look for “economies of scale” in terms of the number of activities students are expected to attend in one week. If there is an opportunity for one event to support two different courses, it is a good idea to plan it with both courses in mind. When appropriate you should plan to accompany the students on some of these activities. It is important that they understand there is a consistent Skidmore presence. It is also important that you are aware of the quality and type of activity IES is offering. (Plus most of them are fun and free!)

The Scribner Seminars should also offer a variety of cultural activities. These activities should be funded through the course monies allocated to all Scribner Seminars. IES can help you plan and deliver these activities as needed.

IES-sponsored optional activities: IES will plan a variety of social activities that are not required or linked to any course. These are simply opportunities for students to get to know London and each other. These activities typically carry an additional fee that is not covered by Skidmore program funds; students will be responsible for covering the costs themselves. IES strives to keep costs to a minimum to ensure all students are able to participate.

Skidmore-sponsored social activities: The budget includes a small discretionary fund to help support a few group activities during the semester – whether they be cultural or simply social in nature. (OCSE will provide you with a final budget before you depart.) The group activities should focus on London and its resources. **The program will not pay for activities outside of London and its surrounding area.** The main goal of these activities is to create opportunities for the students to get to know you and each other and to come together as a group for mutual support and plain old fun. As a faculty director, you will be the students’ main support system. These events give you an opportunity to check in with the students in an informal way (as opposed to the classroom setting.) **NOTE:** During these social events, the director should never buy alcohol for the students; but you may purchase some pub food. (Appendix D has some suggested activities from past directors.)

In addition to group activities, you are able to use the discretionary funds to support individual students. There could be an occasion in which an individual student is having a particularly difficult time adjusting. You may want to invite that student out for tea to talk with him/her to see what is going on. This will probably be rare, but you should keep it as an option. Again, expenses for all of this type of activity should come from the director’s discretionary fund. As the funds are limited, you will want to budget wisely throughout the semester.

One specific social activity that has worked well in the past is a pizza party around the time the students need to register for classes for spring. Since all of the students will need to meet with you to finalize their schedules, it is a good idea to bring them together as a group first and explain how registration will work. This gives them the opportunity to ask questions and to work through any issues and be better prepared for the individual meetings they will have with you. Thanksgiving dinner is another nice event that directors have organized in the past.

COMMUNICATION

One of the benefits of having the students in classes with you is the ability to interact with them on a regular basis. In this program, the classroom sometimes becomes a place to touch base with the students and communicate important information about the program. While this is an important avenue of communication, we encourage you to use other means of communication as well so as not to have program business monopolize class time.

Cell Phones

Most students will purchase cell phones. Please encourage all students to get one! The students will also have phones for local calls in their dorm rooms. Please collect students' cell numbers and keep them with you at all times. It is critical that you be able to contact the students in case of an emergency in London or at home. Please share the list of numbers with the OCSE Program Manager.

Listserv

It is important to maintain regular and clear communication with the students. For that reason, we have set up a listserv for the program. The listserv will consist of students' Skidmore email addresses. The listserv is an excellent way to remind students about group activities and events. More importantly it serves as a way to contact students with general announcements concerning security in London or events at home. While we will depend on you to have the cell phone numbers of all students and call them immediately, if there are any serious issues, we also suggest the listserv be used to disseminate important information throughout the semester. OCSE will create and maintain the listserv – and we will use it occasionally to communicate with the students and director. We will let you know the exact name of the listserv once it is established, which can happen only after we have final confirmation of participation from all students. It is important that students check their email accounts regularly in order to get messages from the listserv. Also, remember, students will have internet access in their dorm rooms and plenty of access to computers at the IES Center. There should be no reason for students not to receive messages sent to the listserv.

Communicating Travel Plans

Students must inform you of their travel plans during weekends and breaks. This serves several purposes. First, it allows us to contact them in case of an emergency in London or at home. Students do not realize that life goes on at home and there are times when parents need to talk to their children immediately. We need to be able to respond to those parents and indicate where their children are and when they are expected to return. Second, we want to be sure students are smart in their destination choices. While most of Western Europe is relatively safe, you may certainly discuss concerns with students should you think their travel plans could put them in danger. IES and OCSE will be able to advise you as needed on this point. **NOTE:** Students should never travel to countries where there is an active Department of State warning.

In the same vein, you should communicate with students when you will be out of London and for how long. It is not necessary to give them details, but they should be aware of the dates of your trip and of an emergency contact they can call while you are gone.

Communicating with Staff at IES

It is important to work closely with the student services staff at IES. While very competent and professional, the IES staff typically deals with junior study abroad students and might not be accustomed to the special needs of first-year students. Active

communication with those at IES will help all those involved better handle the adjustment and developmental issues that arise during the semester. Be sure to stay in touch on a regular basis.

SKIDMORE'S OFFICE AT IES

You will be given access to an office at the IES Center or its Annex (a building around the corner from the Center). This office is reserved solely for Skidmore directors. The office includes a desktop computer, a printer, a desk, a small bookcase, and a few chairs. Again the office is small so it is important to plan office hours in conjunction with the other director to ensure students and directors have adequate space to meet and talk. Reminder: You will need to hold regular office hours and be available on campus in the office three days per week.

Computers

OCSE will arrange for you to get a loaner laptop from CITS before you leave. We suggest you use your laptop at home and use the desktop while at the office. There is a printer for the program located in the office at IES. There is also a program printer that one of the directors can use at home as needed. IES can support the desktop computer but not your laptop. Any problems should be addressed to the CITS helpdesk at Skidmore.

Internet

You will have internet access in the office. You will probably want to set up an internet connection in your flat also. The program will pay for that. You can use the program P-Card if that option is available. Be sure to ask about internet connection and accessibility when you choose a flat.

Cell Phone

The program will cover the cost of a cell phone for you. Share the cell phone number with the students as soon as they arrive to be sure they can reach you in case of an emergency. Each director should leave his/her program cell phone in the office for the following director to retrieve. The phone should be the type that uses phone cards. You can purchase phone cards throughout London. The cards used for program business can be purchased using Skidmore program money. We suggest you purchase two cards – one for program business and one for personal business. The cost of the personal card can be covered by your living stipend. Keep all receipts.

The students are required by IES to obtain cell phones as well. Collect the cell phone numbers for all students and keep them with you. You will want to be able to reach them immediately in case of an emergency. It is a good idea to share those phone numbers with OCSE as well. We will keep them in the students' files.

Photocopies

You will be able to use the copier at the IES Center. While there is secretarial help at the Center, that person is not assigned to our program. Please be considerate of this. It is probable that the secretary will be able to offer some limited assistance. However, you should expect to handle administrative tasks yourself.

FINANCES

PROGRAM FINANCES

Budget

The faculty director oversees budget expenditures in London that deal with the discretionary funds. OCSE will supply a budget in advance; any significant departures from the approved budget must be approved by the OCSE Director in advance. Both directors need to be familiar with the program budget and expenditures should be determined together. However, we recommend one director be designated to oversee and track all budget allocations.

Adirondack Trust and the Skidmore Account

There is a Skidmore FYE in London program account at Adirondack Trust. This is a basic checking/debit account. The main purpose of the account is to allow you to obtain cash through your AT debit card. You will not be able to write checks. The good news is that most of the expenses for the program will be handled through the program P-Card (Visa card). In the case of an emergency, you may take a cash advance on the program P-Card. (See section on P-Card.) Before you depart for the UK, you will complete paperwork that allows you access to the Skidmore account. You will also be given a debit card prior to departing. All of the program banking needs will be settled before you even leave the country!

Account Number

OCSE will give you the account number and other information you need before you depart.

Debit Card

Again, the main purpose of the AT account is to allow you access cash for program purposes. You will be able to withdraw a maximum of \$1,000 (approximately 500 pounds) per day using the AT debit card. There is a fee for each withdrawal so plan accordingly. Please track all withdrawals to be reconciled against the monthly statements and track them on the monthly expense report sheet. If there is a problem with the debit card, please inform OCSE immediately. We will work with AT to find a solution.

P-Card

The P-Card, or purchasing card, is a Visa card that is specific to the Skidmore FYE in London. It can be used for any purchases for which a Visa card is accepted (hotels for excursions, office supplies, etc.). The P-Card is limited to \$2,500 (dollars not pounds) per purchase and is available for all vendors. (Skidmore has lifted all limitations regarding travel or entertainment vendors.) If you need to increase the card limit, please contact the OCSE Program Coordinator. S/he will work with Purchasing as needed.

The P-Card may also be used for cash advances. As the fees are high, this type of transaction should be used only in the case of a true emergency if there is no other way

in which you can obtain sufficient funds. Inform the OCSE Finance Manager of any cash advances immediately.

OCSE will give you a London P-Card before you depart. You must sign the card upon receiving it; merchants in London always check the back of the card for a signature and are unlikely to honor an unsigned card. At the end of the program, when you return to campus, you must return the P-Card to OCSE as soon as possible. Each semester we need to request a new P-Card for the incoming faculty director. We cannot do this until we cancel the card from the previous semester. Therefore, the incoming director cannot receive a card until we destroy your card.

All P-Card purchases must be reported on the monthly expense register mentioned below. There will be an actual column in which you can record P-Card expenses. OCSE will receive the credit card statement and will reconcile the account against your purchases at the end of each month using the check register as a guide.

Reporting Expenses

Skidmore's Office of Financial Services and OCSE have worked to develop a register that serves as a monthly reporting record for our overseas sites. The spreadsheet, created in Excel, gives you clear choices and attempts to make the process as easy as possible for all those involved. This register replaces any expense reports you would do. It is the only reporting system you will need to use to track expenses. OCSE will provide you with an electronic copy of the register that you can bring with you to London.

Your contact regarding the spreadsheet and reporting system will be JEN CAPRON in Financial Services. Her number is (518) 580-5828. Her email address is jcapron@skidmore.edu.

A few tips to using the register:

- The register has a "pick list" of account numbers that may be used. These are the only account numbers that can be used for reporting expenses.
- You should report expenses in pounds. Financial Services at Skidmore will convert the figures to dollars. The register has a declining balance at the top. This will be converted from U.S. dollars to pounds so that you can track the expenses in pounds.
- Expenses should be reported at the end of each month by sending the completed register to Jen Capron via email. A copy should be sent to the Director of OCSE and the Program Manager.
- The monthly reports should only include the month just ended, rather than a running report of the year. For example, the first week of November you should send the report that includes only October expenses.
- You will need to submit all original receipts to Jen Capron at the end of the program. Please keep them all.

PERSONAL FINANCES

Living Stipend

Skidmore pays the faculty director's full salary for the term in London plus a living stipend. This stipend is designed to assist you with the increased cost of living associated with residence in London. It is not meant to cover all personal expenses

while overseas; nor is it meant to cover costs associated with family members who are accompanying you. The stipend does not cover any costs associated with faculty research while abroad. This is not a research grant; rather it is a living stipend. Please check with OCSE for the exact amount of your stipend.

The **program** budget will cover the following expenses. These should be paid for using program funds – not personal stipend funds:

- Transportation within London (tube passes and taxis as needed for program business)
- Cell phone and international calls as needed for program business
- Internet access in residence

The **stipend** may be used to cover the following living expenses during the director's semester in London:

- Housing (rent and necessary deposits)
- Telephone in residence and personal international/long distance costs
- Utilities
- Roundtrip airfare to/from US and London (for initial trip)
- Limited entertainment costs (2 plays/concerts per month)
- Most food costs
- Shipping costs totaling \$500

The stipend **does not** cover the following:

- All food costs
- Travel outside of London (except for program business)
- Additional travel to and from the States
- Excessive entertainment costs
- Excessive costs of eating out
- Costs associated with faculty research while overseas

The stipend will be deposited into a bank account designated by the faculty director two weeks prior to the director's departure. OCSE can transfer a portion of the stipend to cover your rent for the semester or to cover the cost of airfare to London. You must make arrangements to have this happen and inform OCSE of the details as soon as possible. OCSE will then deposit the remaining amount of the stipend into a US or London-based bank account in accordance to the director's wishes.

At the end of the program, no later than January 15th, the director must submit **original** receipts for all expenses to be charged against the stipend. This is necessary so that the IRS will not tax you on the stipend as if it were income. Skidmore will not be able to cover living expenses above the amount of the stipend. In addition, in accordance with the policy established by Skidmore's Office of Financial Services, any unused portion of the stipend will be returned to Skidmore at the end of the program.

Getting Money while in London

It is important that you plan how you will access your personal funds while in London. You should work with Payroll here at Skidmore to determine where you want your paycheck to go while you are away. You might also want to consider giving someone here power of attorney so that he/she can handle any financial emergencies while you are gone. (The power of attorney application can be found online.)

Many people depend on debit cards while they are abroad. Most people find that debit cards are the easiest way to access their money. It has been suggested that you bring more than one debit card to be able to more easily access U.S. funds. Before you depart, check with your local bank to be sure you understand how your debit card will work overseas. There are limits to the amount you can withdraw in a 24-hour period. This means that debit cards are not a good choice for handling rent and other big items. Also be sure you understand the fees associated with your specific bank card. (London banks are not allowed to charge a fee for use of their ATM machines but your home bank will.)

Traveler's checks are a good idea too. They are very useful as emergency money. Having said that, we suggest taking a limited amount in traveler's checks as banks charge a significant fee to cash them. Personal checks from your account in the U.S. will not work in London.

We do NOT recommend you take cash advances from your credit cards. The fees and penalties are very high and interest begins accruing immediately. Credit cards (mainly Visa) are widely used for purchases, but not for cash.

Your Personal Bank Account

It is now impossible to establish and access a personal bank account in London, especially a short-term account (which yours would be considered). Since 9/11, banks are highly suspicious of short-term, personal, international accounts and will no longer allow them. What this means is you will have to plan for your expenses carefully and not depend on having a personal account in London. **Before you depart**, you can arrange with OCSE to have your stipend money deposited directly into your stateside account. You should contact OCSE and let them know your account number and the wire transfer information. OCSE will send a wire transfer to your account totaling the amount of your stipend. OCSE will first deduct from the total stipend amount any money we have sent to London for your housing (if applicable).

Paying Bills from London/in London

Consider paying off as many bills as possible before you depart or establish electronic access of your bills at home. All of this needs to be set up before you depart. You could also consider assigning power of attorney to someone here in case there is important business that needs your signature while you are away. Once in London, you should be able to pay monthly bills with a credit card or cash.

Shipping

Shipping costs to and from London are very high. Because of that, Skidmore can only cover a limited amount for the cost of shipping materials before and after the program. You can use up to \$500 of your living stipend to cover personal shipping costs. Before you depart, OCSE will send a box of Skidmore stationary, catalogs and other college-related materials you might need while in London. We will include advising folders for each student also.

STUDENT FINANCES

Housing/Meals

Our students are housed in the IES residence hall, typically in double rooms. The students room with other Skidmore program students. The rare exception would be that the Skidmore students are housed with other IES students. You will be expected to help the students work out any housing issues that arise. Having said that, the students must try to work out any problems themselves through the IES residential life staff. We would reserve your involvement for serious issues that students cannot resolve themselves.

There is no meal plan for the IES residence hall. There are, however, full kitchen facilities on every floor. IES will provide the students with a monthly living stipend. A portion of that stipend should be used to cover the students' food. The stipend is sufficient to cover most meals if prepared by the students. It will not cover extensive eating out or all meals for the entire semester. Students should budget accordingly. (IES will provide a workshop during the first few weeks that teaches students how to shop and cook on their own. This will help students get an idea of what they are able to do within their given budget.)

Transportation

IES will provide students with a monthly living stipend, a portion of which is meant to cover a transportation pass. The students will purchase their own transportation passes. The pass should include access to the tube and the bus system. They must purchase the student discount pass.

Reminder: Faculty director tube passes should be paid for using program funds, not your personal living stipend.

APPENDIX A

LONDON CONTACTS

(add copies here)

APPENDIX B

INSURANCE POLICY INFORMATION

(add copies here)

APPENDIX C

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Your safety and security are always important when traveling overseas, but at this time we ask students to be particularly aware. Please keep in mind these safety precautions for Americans studying abroad:

- Avoid traveling in large groups and always check the Department of State web site before traveling outside of your host country.
- Avoid speaking English in public if that is not the native language of the country you are visiting.
- Do not stand out by wearing typically American clothing (college sweatshirts, clothes with American symbols, shorts, etc.); try to dress as the locals do.
- Avoid highly trafficked tourist attractions and American establishments such as fast food chains and typically American bars.
- Be aware that anti-American sentiments do exist and do not get drawn into arguments. Avoid all conflicts.
- Be constantly aware of your surroundings and those around you. Remove yourself immediately from situations you suspect may be dangerous. Report any suspicious activities to your program director.
- Use caution when talking about yourself and other members of your program. Do not offer information freely regarding your program or anything that might link you to an American organization.
- Communicate regularly with your family in the States, with Skidmore's Off-Campus Study & Exchanges, and with the school sponsoring your program overseas.
- Register yourself at the local United States Consulate or Embassy and know how to contact them in an emergency.
- If you travel away from your program site, leave a detailed itinerary with your family and an official from your program. Be sure to stick to your itinerary.
- Formulate a plan for what you will do in an emergency. Know the direct numbers of whoever is supervising your program abroad.

These cautions make good sense at all times; however, they are even more critical now. Again, please rely on your on-site support staff to guide you as needed.

APPENDIX D

SUGGESTED GROUP ACTIVITIES

High Tea

The Savoy Hotel – very fancy high tea; students should dress up; about £24 each (expensive!); Charing Cross tube stop.

The British Museum – nice; less formal than the Savoy; less expensive than the Savoy.

Harrod's – nice; less formal; less expensive.

Theater, etc.

There is a program that offers discounted theater tickets for those under 25 and over 60.

- The web site is: www.OfficialLondonTheatre.co.uk
- The phone number is: 0870 840 2468.

Greenwich Theater – small room over a pub; very intimate and intense; £8 for students.

English National Opera

Royal Opera House

Royal Ballet

Shakespeare in Regent's Park – you might be able to catch one of the last summer productions at the very beginning of the program.

London Eye – nice way to introduce students to London within the first week; tickets can be booked on line.

Museums

Suggestions for group or individual student visits:

Courtauld Institute

Dali Universe Museum

Hayward Gallery (South Bank)

National Gallery

National Portrait Gallery

Royal Academy of Art

Tate Britain

Tate Modern

Victoria and Albert Museum

Restaurants That Accept Big Parties

Regent's Refectory – will do Thanksgiving dinner and birthday parties.

The Villandry- will do Thanksgiving.

Primrose Hill Pub – will do a Thanksgiving dinner also.

The Globe Pub – across from Baker Street tube stop; have a "function" room.

Wagamama – noodles; inexpensive and fun; Knightsbridge tube stop.

Khan's Restaurant – located on Westbourne Grove.

Day Trips

London – bus tour of city during first week or two; takes half day or so.

Bath – about 1½ hours outside of London by train; round-trip train fare is about £30.