Study abroad review

I arrived in Leicester in January 2013 for the start of my last semester as an English major. Before I left for England I started compiling a binder full of documents and papers that I needed. I would highly suggest doing this and starting your paperwork early. England allows you to study for up to 6 months on a visitor visa for no fee, or alternatively you can pay a fee and get a visa that allows you to work or volunteer abroad. I opted for the visitor visa and had no problems.

Leicester offers a welcome trip to London before the first week of classes but because of date conflicts I couldn't go. If you choose not to take part in it, don't worry about missing out on the opportunity to make friends. I had no problem once reaching uni (Oh ya, its uni now, not university, so use that slang when you get in). There is also a welcome program the first few days before school starts where you can meet new people and mingle. When classes do start, be prepared to adjust to a new school system and administration. The registration process for classes in Leicester is completely different than SFU and I would advise having a few back up classes in mind in case the ones you choose conflict with others.

For accommodation I chose to live in catered residence in Beaumont hall. I am so glad I made this choice. The dining hall is a social place, there is a great community feeling and I made some amazing friends because of living there. However, if you've lived on res before don't go into the experience comparing it to dorms at home. The ones at Leicester are a lot more run down and older. Overall, I would say if you want community and fun and don't mind older buildings you should live in Beaumont, but if you want new and improved accommodation choose John Fosters building. Residence is located about 20 minutes off of campus. There is a bus that runs on weekdays every 10 minutes and I would advise buying a 4 week pass or term pass to get into class and into town. In comparison to other places in England and Europe, Leicester doesn't have the most to offer historically. If you wanted to study somewhere old like Oxford or Cambridge, this isn't it. But the city centre is quite big and it has an awesome university nightlife.

Culturally, England isn't dramatically different but there are some changes to get used to. New currency, new slang and new food were probably the biggest. Be aware of the exchange rate before you go and factor this into your budget, England is expensive! Also budget for last minute trips on the weekends or different things that come up along the way. While I was abroad I managed to go to bath, Stonehenge, Manchester, Nottingham and Birmingham on weekends. Leicester is kind of unique in that it has a 5 week Easter holiday in the middle of spring semester, so if you want to do some more travelling this is a perfect time to do so. I even stayed around after semester finished and went to Spain, Italy, Greece and Germany, among others. Be sure to keep all your travel documents with you and I also found it helpful to bring “SFU’s timeline of things to do during and after exchange” with me.
The weather in Leicester is colder than Burnaby. When I was leaving for Easter break in March it had snowed the past 2 days, so pack warm. Also pack with a bit of extra space in your suitcase for things you'll buy on your travels. Keep in touch with friends back home. I found this helped a lot, especially when I first got there. But definitely do NOT spend all your time connected to social media. You only get this opportunity once, say yes to everything and take it all in because it goes by so fast. The thought of packing everything up and moving to a foreign country halfway across the world to take part in exchange is definitely a scary one, but I am so glad I choose to go abroad. My exchange experience has undoubtedly changed my outlook on the world in the smallest and biggest ways possible.

One of the houses in Oadby village where a residence is
Beaumont House (residence)

Stonehenge
Registrar Building on Campus