



## Central College Study Abroad Bangor, Wales Summer Survival Guide

Introduction.....	1
Required Travel Documents .....	2
Flight Arrangements .....	2
Wales Program Academic Information.....	2
Packing .....	3
Housing .....	4
Arrival.....	4
Local Transportation .....	5
Communication .....	6
Maps.....	7

# Introduction

This handbook describes as completely as possible the Wales Outdoor Pursuits summer program and anticipates questions you may have about studying abroad. It is important you understand how the program is designed, what opportunities it offers and how it can all be integrated with your personal goals. You should know the information here has been modified and adjusted each year by students, directors, and the staff of the Central College Study Abroad. There are many significant changes in the program from previous years, and it should not be assumed that what you have heard from returning students continues to be the case. This is one of the reasons why it is extremely important for you to read and understand the student survival guide. Some of the material will be important to you immediately because you will have to make important educational plans. Other parts of the book may be more pertinent once you arrive in Wales, but **read the whole student survival guide and be sure to bring it with you to the program.** The better prepared you are before you leave for Wales, the easier the integration and adaptation to the culture.

The student survival guide's most important purpose is to help you understand the goals of the Central College Abroad programs: to acquire a broader perspective of the world and an understanding of another culture by living in another country; to learn how to cope with different sets of attitudes, values and beliefs; to study formally and informally the history and culture of another people; and to come to terms with essential differences.

We are here to offer advice and help with your pre-departure plans. Please do not hesitate to call, e-mail or write to Central College Abroad if you have any questions.

We wish you the best of luck!

## MAIN OFFICE

Central College Abroad  
Campus Box 0140  
812 University  
Pella, Iowa 50219  
Tel: 800-831-3629 or 641-628-5284  
Fax: 641-628-5375  
E-mail: [studyabroad@central.edu](mailto:studyabroad@central.edu)

## PROGRAM ADVISER

**Brian Zylstra**  
E-mail: [zylstrab@central.edu](mailto:zylstrab@central.edu)  
Toll-Free: 800-831-3629

Direct line: 641-628-5641

## PROGRAM ADDRESS ABROAD

**(this is not the student address for mailing)**

Meggan Lloyd Prys  
Central College Office  
International Education Centre, Bangor University  
Room 355, Neuadd Rathbone  
College Road  
Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2DF  
United Kingdom

## PROGRAM DIRECTOR

**Meggan Lloyd Prys**  
Mobile: 07842 117162  
Office: 01248 382189  
E-mail: [meggan.lloyd.prys@central.edu](mailto:meggan.lloyd.prys@central.edu)

# Required Travel Documents

## *Passports*

A valid US passport is required for travel to your program. Your passport should be valid for up to six months past your anticipated departure date. Application for a passport should be made at least *three months before departure*. If you don't already have a passport, you should apply for one immediately. To obtain a passport application and to review all of the requirements for obtaining a passport, please check online at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

## *What if your passport is lost or stolen abroad?*

Should your passport be lost or stolen abroad, report the loss immediately to the local police and to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. If you can provide the consular officer with the information contained in your passport, it will facilitate issuance of a new one. Therefore, keep a photocopy of the issue page of your passport in a safe place. Leave a second copy of the passport with a relative or friend at home.

For the most recent updates on the travel documents and visas please check the U.S. Department of State's travel website at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

# Flight Arrangements

One of the early considerations in planning your time abroad is to make travel arrangements. **Please consult the Program Calendar in your online account before scheduling flight arrangements.** Check with several airlines, travel agents and websites – it's a good idea to shop around for the best deal! Do not assume that the first price you hear is the best — fares may vary by several hundred dollars. For more information check out the 'What to Know Before You Go' sheet in your online acceptance packet.

# Wales Program Academic Information

## *Wales Outdoor Pursuits Summer School*

This Central College Abroad sponsored program in Wales is intended to give you the opportunity to learn about outdoor activities in Wales as well as learning about the Welsh people and their culture and history. This program is open to students from any disciplinary background. The content of this four week field school is as follows:

- Experiential learning in the outdoors
- Excursions
- Three excursions, which will include (weather permitting) an outdoor experience in the beautiful Snowdonia region, a weekend trip to Ireland and visits to places of cultural and historical importance
- Housing accommodation (residence halls at the Bangor University, which include private rooms/bathrooms and a shared kitchen area)
- Pre-departure advising and consultation
- On-site orientation, advising and oversight with program director
- Cultural activities

During Outdoor Pursuits not only do you get to have some adventure, you get to explore the amazing country of Wales. Along the way you may learn a lot about yourself.

Learn about the skills, knowledge and attitudes appropriate to the safe and enjoyable conduct of a variety of outdoor recreational activities in this four-week course in the outdoors. Follow a process of experiential learning where students are required to be self-motivated and

responsible for their own development.

Throughout the program students are challenged physically, mentally and socially and by the end of the course are required to demonstrate skills in problem solving, communication, group and team work, leadership and most importantly, reflective thinking. You can expect to learn much about yourself.

Course content includes rock climbing, kayaking, canoeing, sailing, raft building, abseiling, camping, mountaineering, and hill walking. Possible complementary activities include gorge walking, sea traversing, orientation/navigation, scrambling, zip wires, indoor climbing wall, and high and low level ropes courses. Each activity is structured along a learning continuum of experiences that progresses from the level of basic skills, knowledge and attitudes through to the beginnings of intermediate level work in which core learning is developed and applied in more challenging and self-reliant situations.

Bangor is situated on the doorstep of Snowdonia in the hauntingly beautiful mountainous region in northwest Wales. Here is found the highest mountain in England and Wales – Snowdon. The Snowdonia National Park, with its mountains and lakes, fast flowing rivers and rugged terrain, is famous for its outdoor pursuit opportunities as is the coast of this region for sea going pursuits.

One of the most exciting aspects of this type of program is that it allows you to learn in a way that is seldom available on campus. You will learn by actually doing, and you will be learning several things at the same time – about the new culture and physical skills. **You will earn six semester hours of credit.**

Daily class attendance is mandatory. In order to receive a final grade, you cannot miss more than 10 percent of the classes. The professor will evaluate students based on participation, journals and how the student responds to challenges and his/her interaction with other members of the group. A positive attitude is all important.

Students will be involved in different outdoor activities for four days each week: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursday and Fridays. Wednesdays will be rest days and two fieldtrips will be organized on these days. All weekends will be free.

## Packing

### *Clothing*

Please note that the Conway Centre, from where the outdoor activities will be coordinated, is able to provide most of the clothing and all the equipment required for the activities. However, this clothing cannot be used when the students are not involved in activities and so the following is good advice:

There is limited storage space for clothing, and many students find that they have brought far more than necessary. Pack clothing that is easy to care for and can easily be mix and matched or layered. A few basic items include:

- A good pair of walking shoes.
- Flip flops or shower shoes are a great thing to have when traveling.
- Casual wear will be the norm for this summer program.
- Swimming suit. Even if you're not studying in a warm destination, you never know where you may travel!
- A few well-selected pieces of costume jewelry will suffice for the year. Precious jewelry might get lost or damaged, so leave it at home.

- Bring an extra sweatshirt or t-shirt with your home college logo; you can do some trading of items like these with new friends.
- Depending on where you are from, you may find life in Bangor a bit more “outdoorsy” than you are used to. Bring a warm jacket, preferably waterproof.
- Bring along a good pair of hiking boot. They are cheaper to buy in the U.S., and you’ll make good use of them on excursions and exploring the area surrounding Bangor.
- Pack summer-weight clothing as it is warm and balmy during June. By that we mean that temperatures can get well into the 70s which in Britain is a heat wave.

### *Linens*

You will need towels and wash cloths as Bangor University will not provide you with these. They are available cheaply in Bangor. Bedding and pillows are provided in the dorms and will include a comforter, cover sheet, pillow and pillow case.

### *Toiletries*

Generally speaking, you do not need to bring an excess of toiletries. Bangor has excellent downtown shopping, and you can buy anything you need in the way of toiletries. However, if you have a particular brand of shampoo or toothpaste that you cannot do without, you may want to bring some, as you cannot be guaranteed of getting the same brands in Wales.

For more information on packing, check out the ‘What to Know Before You Go’ sheet in your online acceptance packet.

## **Housing**

The resident director arranges all housing in Bangor University dormitories in advance. The resident director has no direct control over dormitory rules or policies. Students should also be aware that the quality of the experience of future generations of American students depends on maintaining a good relationship between the program and Bangor University.

All students on the program will be housed at the Ffriddoedd campus housing site in Upper Bangor in self catering accommodation which means meals will be prepared on your own. The accommodation consists of a single room with private bathroom facilities, single bed, desk, chair and internet access. There is Wi-Fi in all dorms. The rooms are part of an apartment style accommodation which consists of between 6 and 8 rooms on each floor and a well-appointed kitchen with the regular kitchen facilities. Students are provided with a catering pack for each flat which contains cooking utensils, silverware and china; this has to be returned at the end of the stay. It might be necessary to add to the pack by buying additional kitchenware. These can be bought very cheaply in downtown Pound Stores (the equivalent of the American dollar stores).

All residents are subject to the rules and procedures of the residence and agree to accept the consequences of failure to observe and follow them. The resident director has the right to dismiss students from the residence.

## **Arrival**

All students on the program should fly into Manchester International Airport in Manchester, England. This is the nearest international airport to Bangor. However, this is not required as some students might want to arrive early or stay later and other airports might suit them better. Heathrow Airport in London is only about

4 hours by train from Bangor and it is an easy journey. Normally, flights from the U.S. leave for the U.K. in the evening around 7 or 8 p.m. You will arrive in the U.K. about seven hours later from New York and correspondingly longer from the Midwest or West Coast. There is a time difference of five hours from New York, six from the Midwest and eight from the West Coast. On arriving at the airport, you will need to allow yourself **at least** an hour to go through customs and immigration and collect your luggage.

### Telephone:

Public telephones are few and far between and students are required to have access to a cell phone whilst on the program. The resident director will guide students as to the best providers and value for money in Bangor. Students in the past have found that purchasing a phone in the UK and setting up a plan here is much cheaper than bringing a phone over from the USA ... but this would be a personal decision.

### By Train:

You can travel directly from the train station at Manchester International Airport to Bangor, and this usually involves one or two changes at Manchester Piccadilly and possibly at Chester station. The train takes about 3 hours and a single/one way ticket will cost about £30. Just follow the signs at the airport to the railway station and ask the agent which would be cheaper, a single (one way) ticket to Bangor or a “day return” ticket. Do not buy a first-class ticket. The difference in comfort is not worth the price.

### Once in Bangor:

When you arrive in Bangor by train, you will find taxis waiting outside the station in Bangor. **Tell the driver you would like to go to the security lodge on the Ffriddoedd accommodation site in Upper Bangor.** There may or may not be taxis available at the bus “station,” which is situated in the center of town. There will be no one there meeting buses, as we have no way of predicting which bus you might be on. If you are traveling to Bangor on your own and plan to take the bus, make sure to let the resident director know which day you will arrive.

## Local Transportation

### *Taxis*

These are freely available in Bangor, and you might want to use a taxi when you have heavy luggage to carry. Bangor is a small town, and it is not far to walk from one end of town to the other. There are many taxi firms in town, and you will be given a list in your orientation packet after you arrive.

### *Buses*

There is a central bus station in downtown Bangor, and this provides the cheapest option for short distance local traveling. Bangor is surrounded by many outlying villages, and there are many bus routes and bus companies that operate services on a local level.

On a national level, Bangor is served by the National Express coach service, and this operates between Bangor and many larger cities. Traveling by national bus is cheaper than traveling by train, but it takes much longer. It is possible to buy a student discount card for traveling on National Express. You will also be advised of bus travel during orientation.

### *Trains*

There is a mainline railway station in Bangor which connects with all mainline stations throughout mainland U.K. It is by far the easiest way to get about and to travel to the airports. In your orientation packet, you will be given an application form for a student discount card, the **16-25 Railcard**. This costs

around £28, and you will get a 33% discount on all railway journeys that you make within the U.K. It is well worthwhile to buy these cards.

## *Ferries*

Traveling to Dublin, Ireland is easy from Bangor by train and ferry. Ferries leave up to four times a day from the ferry port of Holyhead – about 25 minutes by train from Bangor. The ferry will take passengers directly to Dublin. Students can also purchase travel tickets directly to Dublin from Bangor railway station, and the train from Bangor will meet the ferry. Once in Ireland students can travel to all parts, including Northern Ireland and Belfast. You can also purchase train tickets to all train destinations in Ireland at Bangor railway station. The resident director will advise you about traveling by ferry during orientation.

# Communication

## *Mail*

Regular airmail generally takes five to 10 days to travel between Europe and the United States. When you address letters to the United States, remember to write “U.S.A.” on the letter as well as “airmail” or use an airmail sticker. Lightweight airmail writing paper and envelopes, which are available at stationary stores, will help keep your postage costs lower. Packages might take much longer to be delivered and since students are only here for a month they are advised not to have packages sent over as in the past these have arrived after the students have left at the end of the program.

## *E-mail*

All students will be given an e-mail account on arrival at Bangor University. As all students live on campus, access is relatively convenient, but most students prefer to continue using their existing e-mail accounts from home. Internet hookups are available in each dorm room, and there are also several computer labs on campus.

## *Skype*

The best way students have found to communicate is via *Skype*. It is a very affordable way to speak to friends and family via the internet. Visit [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com) to set up a free account and to learn about using the program.

## *Good Communication Management*

Communication with your friends and family at home is easy and accessible through the internet and cell phones, but this can be both a blessing and a curse. While these lines of communication allow you to stay in touch, they can also interfere with your adaptation to the local culture and give you an easy out when you're feeling homesick. Below is a basic list of Dos and Don'ts for managing your communication home:

- Do call your family to assure them you have arrived safely at the program site.
- Do remember to factor in the time difference so you're not calling Mom at 3 a.m.
- Do remember to call or answer for all pre-arranged phone calls.
- Do use the internet to stay in touch by email or start blogs to share with those at home.
- Don't use the phone as your first line of defense for problem solving. First think, make a plan and solve your own problem. This is a great step toward independence!
- Don't make calls from hotel phones. There is usually an expensive surcharge.
- If you do call a friend or family member when you are feeling down or during a problem, be sure to call them back to let them know you are feeling better or the problem is solved.

- Limit your time on the internet. Don't use the internet as a way to avoid your new surroundings. Spend your time developing friendships with those around you!

For more information on communication, check out the 'What to Know Before You Go' sheet in your online acceptance packet.

In case of an emergency, call the resident director first!  
Do not call someone in the U.S. first in case of emergency.

## Map

It's good to know as much about your host country as possible before you go abroad. Here are a few maps to familiarize you with the area.

