

IAP PARENT PROFILE

LONDON, ENGLAND

Susan & Neil's daughter, Sophia, studied abroad for a semester in London, England.

How did you feel when Sophia first mentioned studying abroad? We were excited for her to experience the opportunity and a little concerned about the cost. We were not surprised, since she talked about studying abroad even before she started college. She had always expressed the desire to travel and was able to visit her older brother when he studied abroad. After that, it was just a matter of when and where.

Did you have concerns? We were concerned about her being so far away if something went wrong. Physical safety and emotional well-being is always a parental concern. Being able to communicate with her on a regular basis helped overcome these concerns.

What advice do you have for parents concerned about cost? The added cost was a bit of a challenge, but well worth the investment because of the benefits. Keep in mind that although studying abroad is considerably more expensive than regular tuition, the cost of the same opportunities after completing school would be much more. It is wonderful to have lodging taken care of, resources nearby and the many fellow travel companions in the program.

What benefits did you see in study abroad? Our daughter made new friends and had fantastic experiences she will remember for the rest of her life. She was exposed to a diversity of people and cultures that definitely expanded her world view. Most importantly, the self-reliance required during her time in London helped her develop a new level of maturity.

How did you keep in touch? We used email, Skype, and instant messaging. We used instant messaging most frequently. It worked as long as she could connect to WIFI. We Skyped about every other week. That was great to be able to see her. The connectivity for Skyping from her flat was a bit spotty, but usually worked well enough. Email was slightly problematic due to time zone differences, but great for sharing itineraries and such.

Any other advice for parents? I suspect that for most parents, this is the first time their child is travelling such a long distance alone. While the thought of that can be a bit overwhelming, the important thing to know is that UW-Madison has developed long-term relationships with programs and universities all over the world. It is an amazing and unique opportunity that is readily available and most likely, unforgettable.



Sophia with her parents and brother while abroad.

“It is a wonderful opportunity to foster independence while having some structure in place and resources available, if needed.”

