

The Danenberg Oberlin-in-London Program
A Handbook for Faculty
2022

The information in this Handbook is current at the time of writing and is provided in good faith. However, Oberlin College takes no legal responsibility for any omissions or errors. This is a living document; please send comments or corrections to london@oberlin.edu. Revised 08/2022.

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About the Program

For decades, the London program has changed the lives of Oberlin faculty and students. Evolving through several distinct structures (see “history” below), the program has stimulated its participants through synergy and inquiry in an exciting urban environment.

The London program contributes to the college in many ways. It helps to internationalize the curriculum, building on over forty years of experience in sending Oberlin students to study with Oberlin faculty in the center of one of the world’s great cities. It assures students of an Oberlin-taught study-away experience of high quality. It provides an experiential base to the curriculum by emphasizing the centrality of the city as a site for learning. It develops interdisciplinary and collaborative learning by bringing faculty together to team-teach around issues and subjects that demand collaborative and multiple viewpoints.

Oberlin faculty teaching on the program have found this to be a unique, exhilarating, and inspiring experience. The interdisciplinary team-teaching component in the semester allows a faculty member to learn from a colleague both in pedagogical and disciplinary methods. Teaching with and amidst the great resources of London has been for many faculty a stimulating experience of field-based and experiential pedagogy. The program, involving a more focused semester for both students and faculty than usual on campus, creates a lasting bond among students and faculty, and a sense of education at its best as an extended and in-depth communal search for knowledge. For many, the experience has led to changes in their pedagogy, increased interdisciplinary and collaborative work, and new developments in their scholarship.

Students find the program to be intense and focused. Studying in London alerts students to the importance of a dialog between knowledge and the world. For many, it is the interdisciplinary aspect that matters most: surrounded by London’s multiplicity, they begin to recognize how crucial it is to sustain a multiple and flexible approach to understanding. It can be a time for students to pursue depth in their major; it also has the effect of helping students see how general education and the pursuit of knowledge beyond their major can be important to the liberal arts education.

History

The first Oberlin-in-London programs were conducted in the 1970s and ’80s by the English Department, sending one faculty member in the fall semester only, with about 18 students. These semesters were minimally administered; faculty designed their own budgets; a recent graduate often went along as an administrative assistant; the faculty member found a place to live and a place to teach (sometimes the same).

In 1983, the program was expanded. That expansion was initially funded by a significant gift, but the donor, interested primarily in innovation, insisted that the funds be spent over a limited period rather than endowed. At that point, the college was expanding its interdisciplinary programs, and London was seen as a vital place to create team-teaching partnerships among faculty and to teach students interdisciplinary ways of thinking. The program was named the Danenberg Oberlin-in-London Program (DOILP) in honor of recently deceased Oberlin president Emil Danenberg. For about twenty years, the program ran both semesters: each semester, two Oberlin faculty would normally co-teach one interdisciplinary course, and each would individually teach a second seminar. Each student would enroll in the team-taught course

and one of the seminars. The program was housed in various rented facilities and administered by a former Oberlin College Residential Life administrator, Gwyneth Love, who served as Resident Director in London. Neither the facilities nor the administration were shared with other programs; the Oberlin program was self-contained. Generally, enrollments were high – in the 20s – and student and faculty interest were strong. The program ran for two decades until closed down suddenly for budgetary reasons in 2005.

The program was reconfigured (with considerable reduction in the budget) to begin again in fall 2006, now in collaboration with Grinnell College. Grinnell had been running a two-semester London program, but had recently cut back to fall semester only. Meanwhile Grinnell and Oberlin had recently become collaborators on a Mellon-funded faculty career enhancement grant. So it made sense for Oberlin and Grinnell to connect their programs. The Oberlin program moved to Florida State University's large quarters (centrally located in Bloomsbury and shared by a number of American programs), and hired Donna Vinter, Grinnell's resident director, as its new Resident Director, following the retirement of Gwyneth Love.

In 2010, the program was again restructured, partly for budgetary reasons, but primarily to provide a clearer focus and definition for the program in order to boost enrollments. The collaboration with Grinnell was been discontinued, and Oberlin now sends students and faculty to London only in the spring semester. Dona Vinter continued to split her time between Grinnell and Oberlin serving as the resident director of both programs, one each semester. In Spring 2020 the COVID pandemic forced most of the London students and both faculty back to the United States and the first remote learning module to be created and implemented. This semester also ended Donna Vinter's time as resident director and this model of London support. After a two year hiatus and significant restructuring of its administrative elements, the program recommenced in Fall of 2022. Florida State University International Programs now provides administrative and pastoral support for the program.

A list of the Oberlin faculty who have taught on DOILP since 1983, and the titles of courses they offered, can be found on the program [website](#) under "Previous Courses," and is recommended for faculty starting to think about a possible London program.

Curriculum

In the fall semester Oberlin sends two faculty members. The courses can follow several alternate models. In one model, the two faculty co-teach a six-credit course (the equivalent of 1 ½ full courses) which all students take. They also each teach a separate six-credit seminar course, and students choose between the two at the time of applying. In another, the team-taught course could count as two full courses, and the individually-taught courses as normal full courses. In the final model, the two faculty each individually offer two 6-credit courses (totaling the equivalent of 3 full courses).

Students also elect one full course taught by London faculty, either The London Stage, taught by Gemma Miller, Ph.D. or A History of London, taught by Katy Layton-Jones. Katy Layton-Jones, who began teaching for Oberlin in 2011, earned her Ph.D. in History from Cambridge.

The scheduling of courses is limited by classroom availability and the pre-arranged schedules of adjunct London faculty. Oberlin faculty should take this scheduling into account when planning

field trips and other activities outside the classroom. Oberlin faculty should not disrupt the teaching schedule of the adjunct faculty. Coordination with the other faculty is necessary when planning longer field trips which, because of the full schedule of classes Monday to Thursday, can only take place on Fridays and at weekends (see the section “Field Trips, Theater, and Other Programming” below).

The course schedule for the fall semester typically looks as follows for the model comprised of two Oberlin led 6-credit classes, one joint, and one individual:

- Monday & Wednesday mornings: History of London (1 ½ hours each meeting)
- Tuesday & Thursday mornings: The London Stage (1 ½ hours each meeting)
- Monday & Wednesday afternoons: the Oberlin team-taught course (2-3 hour meetings, at faculty discretion)*
- Tuesday & Thursday afternoons: Oberlin faculty individual courses, normally 2 hours each meeting; e.g. one course meets 1-3 pm; the other 3-5 pm)*

Other models may vary the afternoon scheduling of the teaching classrooms but should not disrupt the adjunct’s schedules.

Support for Faculty

Oberlin faculty teaching in London receive their regular Oberlin salary, and are also reimbursed for certain additional expenses:

- Round-trip coach airfare for the faculty member within reasonable limits (that is, shop early and carefully for the best fares)
- Reasonable ground transportation for faculty and family from airport to flat and back (one round-trip). (Faculty should consult the relevant section of the student handbook for relatively affordable means of making these trips, rather than taking an expensive taxi.)
- Housing in London in a flat that is reasonably centrally located, beginning two weeks before the program begins, and extending a week after (16 weeks total), to a maximum of £600/week, including utilities.
- Reimbursement for the cost of broadband internet in their flat
- Zone 1 & 2 weekly or monthly Travelcards for the duration of the program (16 weeks)
- A stipend of \$5,000 (2022) for each faculty member to offset additional costs associated with living abroad.

Airfare for family members traveling with the faculty member is not reimbursed by the program. Admission costs for family members participating in program activities must also be paid for by the faculty member and discussed with FSU as soon as possible for booking purposes.

Faculty who have taught on the program in recent years are good resources for information about flats (and much more).

Planning & Proposing

The selection of faculty to teach on the London program is made by the Dean and Council on the basis of recommendation from the London Program committee. The selection process works 2 years in advance: that is, in fall 2021 the committee will consider proposals for 2023-24.

A number of factors go together to create a successful proposal, including:

- Exciting courses, with clear and appropriate goals outlined. While the committee does not expect syllabi, we appreciate detailed information about the content and pedagogy.
- Ideas about how the coursework will use London as a basis for learning. While we realize that some faculty may not know London in detail, we need to know how the experience will be linked to being in London and the UK.
- Overview of how the proposed curriculum will appeal to students. We need courses that will attract students and serve their curricular needs, such as major requirements, and distribution requirements for graduation. It is important that prerequisites be clear and accessible for enough students to fill the program (a target of 25 students). Keep in mind, too, that most students will be applying in the fall of their first or second year, before most have declared a major, so courses should be geared to the sophomore/junior level.
- A sense of the semester as a whole. The Oberlin-taught courses should relate to each other in some way; we are looking for how the program amounts to more than the sum of its parts. If the faculty elect to teach two separate programs in tandem, then each program needs to be coherent and well-structured.

The following statement about the program was approved by the London Committee and EPPC in 2009:

Given the challenge of recruiting students for the London program in recent years, we believe our highest priority must be to offer a curriculum and faculty team that will have broad appeal among Oberlin students. In order to attract the strongest possible applicant pool, the program needs to have a strong and consistent curricular identity; students must be given a clear curricular reason for choosing this program instead of the myriad other programs abroad. Therefore, in selecting faculty for the program, the committee will give priority to curricular proposals that are centered in the study of British culture, history, politics, and society, and which are likely to appeal to a large number of students. Equally important, the curriculum of the program needs to be genuinely site-specific, making extensive use of the particular but highly diverse resources of London, in order to give students clear incentives for studying there.

Faculty should be aware from the outset that Oberlin students enter the UK with the status of “Short-Term Students.” This status stipulates that they have no entitlement to work while they are there. “Work” includes unpaid work, and therefore unpaid internships and some volunteering. The program is not currently licensed as a Tier 4 (General Student) Sponsor on the Home Office ‘Register of Sponsors’; possession of a Tier 4 Student visa is the only legal route to internships. Thus, sadly, including internships as part of the curriculum is not an option.

No proposal springs full-blown from the heads of the inventors. We encourage faculty to contact the committee early in the process to discuss options. We would also recommend that faculty interested in putting proposals together contact other faculty who have submitted successful proposals to discuss their ideas.

Recruitment

Recruitment starts with faculty planning a program with broad appeal both to their departments' majors and also to students generally. Indeed, the potential to fill the program is a major criterion by which the London Committee evaluates proposals from faculty. As faculty, you need to work actively with the London Committee and the Study Away Office during the period of recruiting, which begins in the fall a year in advance of the program. The goal is 25 students; we want to have a significantly larger application pool in order to be selective and to anticipate attrition.

During the fall a year before the program, the program is actively publicized, applications are distributed and accepted, and the list of accepted students is created. To accept a place on the program, students must agree to a charge of \$500 in their student account if they later change their minds.

Recruitment entails getting students interested, advertising, attending the study away fair, running informational meetings, visiting key classes in your discipline to interest those who will be sophomores and juniors during your program. We count on you as faculty to help prospective students understand the nature of the program, its relationship to their majors and their education, and the process of application.

Student Logistics, Finances, and Housing

It is helpful for faculty to become familiar with at least the basic outlines of the administrative impact of the program on students. Faculty should familiarize themselves with them by reading the student and faculty handbook in detail. Meeting with the study abroad office, and FSU is also advisable.

Accepted students are given ENR status (Enrolled, Not in Residence). This differs from ALOA (Academic Leave of Absence) status which is used for non-Oberlin study-away programs. ENR means that they register for courses and interact with the college in much the same way that they would if studying on campus. It also means that courses they take in London are reported on their transcripts with grades, unlike courses transferred from other study away programs.

Students are charged regular Oberlin tuition and student activity fees for the semester. They are not charged the normal room and board fees. If they are receiving financial aid, this is continued: the financial aid office also works to reconfigure their package to take account of higher living costs in London and the fact that work-study is not available there. Through recent gifts to the program endowment, high-need students are awarded grants to help with the costs, in addition to the financial aid they would normally receive.

The website gives estimates of how much a semester will end up costing a student. Since Oberlin now charges all students studying off campus Oberlin's own tuition rate for any approved academic leave of absence (ALOA) semester, there is no longer the financial disincentive that there previously was for choosing the London Program. And there are distinct advantages to

being on ENR: students are taught by Oberlin faculty; the credits earned are Oberlin credits, not transfer credits, and so they appear on transcripts as graded credits, which transfer credits do not; students do not need to apply for ALOA status and essentially leave the college for a semester.

After a period of allowing students to find their own flats in London, it became apparent that this was unproductive and stressful. The program now finds housing for students through a pre-arranged housing agent, Anglo, except in very unusual circumstances. Students are charged for their housing on their term bill. Housing will be more expensive in London.

Faculty will administer a housing preference survey and subsequently arrange students into flats and rooms.

The Student Handbook (on the program website) contains much helpful information about the program and about life in London. Faculty should refer students to this handbook if they have questions or concerns. It also contains practical information that faculty will find useful.

Field Trips, Theater, and Other Programming

Support for field trips and other academically related expenses for students and faculty in the program is part of the London program budget. To the degree possible within the budget, the program will support the use of London and areas beyond as part of the learning experience. This includes, when relevant, coach trips to sites beyond London, entrance fees to museums, tickets to concerts or theater events, and honoraria for visiting lecturers. While the program does its best to make the programming possible that will support the education of the students, not everything can be supported on a limited budget. The budgeted amounts for each semester, moreover, need to cover a number of types of programming, not just those for the courses taught by the Oberlin faculty. The faculty has much influence on how their portion of the budget is allocated so that they can design a program that meets their curricular goals. The programming of field trips and other activities needs to be worked out in consultation with the Resident Director in order to budget for course needs as well as the expenses of orientation, the courses taught by adjuncts, and other programming needs.

The specifics are discussed between the faculty, the London Committee chair, and FSU staff as part of the overall planning for the semester. The chair of the London Committee will discuss the budget for programming with faculty during planning times, and has some recent ballpark figures to give faculty a sense of how much various events might cost. Faculty are encouraged to work well in advanced of the program's starts, perhaps 6-9 months in advance, for planning programmatic events, to suggest trips or events, or to consult on logistics, expenses, and feasibility in general. FSU is responsible for keeping track of the program budget and handle the details of booking trips and events.

Office, Classroom, and Other Facilities

The program rents classroom and office space in the Florida State University (FSU) Centre in Bloomsbury, a block from the British Museum (99-103 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LA). The building comprises a series of late 17th-century houses that have been converted for academic use, linked together by a basement-level corridor. The website for the FSU Centre is <http://international.fsu.edu/london/campus.html>.

The program office, Room 29, has two desks, networked to a printer. Faculty can use this office for course preparation activities, for internet access, and for meeting both with students and with one another. There is a fax machine located at Reception in the FSU building that faculty may use.

The building has a number of classrooms of various sizes. Oberlin typically hires one classroom for our scheduled teaching days during the term. Billing is for either half-day (9-1; 1-5) or full-day use. Classrooms have whiteboards, computers, and built-in digital projectors. There is wireless access in all classrooms and throughout the building. If VCR technology is required, that can be requested.

Students and faculty have access to a library and two computer labs in the building. These facilities are shared by all programs that rent FSU space. The library is small, but with holdings that are well targeted to the sorts of courses that tend to be taught on study-abroad programs. Its stock includes academic books (about 10,000 books) and travel books; a good selection of classical music CDs (about 250), as well as some sheet music; and about 1000 DVDs and VHS (including many useful for teaching). The library also operates reserve shelves for courses requiring books to be kept on reserve. FSU can advise you on how to reach the library staff as needed.

A core collection of books owned by the Oberlin-in-London Program, many associated with courses that have been taught in the past, is available on site (likely in boxes so only if you unpack & repack them). Some travel guides are also included.

Administration

In Oberlin, the program is administered by the Oberlin-in-London Program Committee, the A&S Dean's Office, and the Office of Study Away. The London Committee, a CF Committee with Conservatory representation, is responsible for setting policy, curriculum, and budget, and recruiting faculty and students. The dean's office is responsible for general administration and budgetary oversight, as well as support for faculty teaching on the program. The Study Away office, in combination with faculty teaching on the program, helps in recruiting students and preparing them for the semester abroad. Twila Colley, who also serves the Biology Department, provides administrative assistant support for the program (Science Center K123).

In London, the program is administered by Kathleen Paul, Resident Director of the program and associated Florida State University employees. Among many other things, she runs orientation, manages the finances of the program, schedules classes and facilities, formally hires the adjunct faculty, and handles health and student life issues.

The program has its own Advisory Board. That board includes college representatives as well as persons in London not formally associated with the college (though with various affinities to Oberlin). The board takes an active interest in the program, its administration, and policies. Members of the board also take an interest in the actual semester programs, meeting with students and faculty and they are sometimes able to make academically helpful opportunities available to students. The board currently comprises alumni Anita Avramides, Nicholas Baumgartner, Tracy Chevalier, Margaret Nelson, and current faculty members Marc Blecher and

Maureen Peters, as well as emeriti faculty member, David Walker and former Oberlin-in-London Program Director, and faculty, Donna Vinter.

Normally, Oberlin College faculty teaching on the program are expected to provide a brief report about the semester at its conclusion that will be shared with the Advisory Board. They are also encouraged to contact the Advisory Board members to seek guidance on how to find appropriate resources in London to support their learning goals.

Student Welfare

FSU has primary responsibility for student welfare and crisis management. Oberlin faculty should discuss any concerns with the FSU staff and follow their suggested protocols for reporting unusual or concerning behavior.

Reimbursement

Oberlin requires itemized receipts for reimbursement. Any receipts for reimbursable expenses before leaving for London (e.g., airfare) should be submitted to Twila Colley. Receipts for expenses en route to or after arrival in London should be submitted to Kathleen Paul. These include transit to and from the airport, and Oyster travel cards (or FSU may purchase the monthly cards for you).

Income Tax Implications for Faculty

Earlier editions of this handbook described a significant tax deduction available to faculty teaching on the program, since the entirety of the semester qualified as a business trip. But, since the 2017 federal tax bill eliminated the unreimbursed business expenses deduction, this benefit is unfortunately no longer available.

Medical Insurance for Faculty

Faculty are covered by CISI insurance, as are the Oberlin students, through the agreement between Oberlin and FSU. Family members can be added to the group coverage. Family members must pay for their CISI coverage. Inquire with FSU on how to arrange insurance coverage for any dependents and other family members.

Faculty are encouraged to determine how CISI and Oberlin's healthcare plans will function in relation to their anticipated healthcare needs, and any unexpected events while abroad. The faculty committee is unable to provide guidance on these complex matters.

UK entry guidance

Please note that there is no longer an option of requesting a Tier 2 work Visa as was done prior to 2020. The restructuring of the program's London administration and the dissolution of the London Board's UK Charity Status makes this entry option no longer available.

Faculty will enter the UK on visitor visas and no formal paperwork is necessary. It is prudent for individuals to understand how to respond to potential questions from an Immigration Officer when you land in the UK to ensure that no entry problems are encountered. Documents and advice on this matter are handled by the Dean's Office and FSU. Be sure to consider this well in advance of your departure from the U.S.

General advice on immigration into the UK

- Your letter from the Dean (or FSU) , verifying your Oberlin College faculty status and your appointment to NOT "teach" on the Danenberg Oberlin-in-London program.
- Proof of your return ticket to the US (or to some other non-UK destination if you are travelling after the end of the program). Have a printout of this with you.
- Documentation of where you will be living.

Keeping your passport safe

It is extremely important to keep your passport safe and undamaged while you are in the UK. If you lose it, or – for example – inadvertently put it through the washing machine so that it is severely damaged, you will have to pay a fee to the US Embassy to replace your passport. Also note that you won't be able to travel outside of the UK while a replacement visa is being issued, a process that will take several weeks.

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