



THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN ENGLAND

GETTING STARTED:

- • • a practical guide for new faculty

Spring 2006

**Produced initially by the
TASIS England Faculty Benefits Committee;
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Preface

Welcome to TASIS The American School in England from the entire faculty. We hope this simple publication will help you in adjusting to your first few weeks. Remember, we have all been in your shoes at one time or another.

This is the sixth edition of our faculty information booklet, *Getting Started: A Practical Guide for New Faculty at TASIS*. If you discover other information that should be included in this publication, please let us know. Additions, corrections and up-dates are welcome. Early in the year, you will be asked to help up-date this publication for the following year's new faculty.

Please Note -- All information and suggestions in this booklet are provided as a guide only, and reflect the knowledge, beliefs or opinions of individual faculty members at the time of publication.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London also publishes a useful booklet of essential information for people from overseas intending to stay for more than six months. It is called "Residence in the UK". A copy of this will be sent to you.

The unit of currency in the U.K. is the Pound Sterling (£). Prices in this booklet are quoted in pounds. The rate of exchange constantly fluctuates.

The rate of exchange for July 31, 2006:

\$ 1.00 = 0.54 GBP

GBP 1.00 = \$ 1.87

However, when it comes time to buy things in the U.K., you will often find pounds equal to dollars. (If it costs \$17 in the U.S., you will pay £17 here.)

Contents

Getting Ready	4
Electrical Options	6
Computers	7
Shipping personal belongings	8
Arrival in the United Kingdom	9
Work Permits and Entry Clearance	10
Housing	12
Taxes	15
Motoring Information	15
Health Insurance Information	17
Insurance	18
Telephone	18
Banking	20
Paycheck Information	21
Financial Planning	21
Value Added Tax	22
Local Churches	23
Child Minding Information	24
Post Offices	24
Area Maps	25
Local Transportation	25
London Guides and Helpful Publications	26
Pax House Resources	26
Faculty Orientation Week	27
Index	28

Getting Ready

Important Personal Data

Start to compile the following lists pertaining to personal matters, both in the U.S. and the U.K., before departure and maintain them as you are settling into the U.K. This can be very useful in the event of an emergency (accident, fire, theft...). Having a record of these details makes it much easier to file a claim or get lost documents replaced. Make one or several copies and keep them in a safe place.

General (Leave one copy of this information in the U.S.)

- Social Security number(s)
- Passport number(s) and renewal date(s)
- Employment Identification
- Work Permit
- Insurance policies
- National Health Insurance number

Financial

- Checking account number(s)
- Savings account number(s)
- Other bank account number(s)
- Safe Deposit Box (location, number, key location)
- Investments
- U.S. credit and charge cards (name, number, address and international telephone numbers to report loss)
- U.K. credit, charge, check guarantee, cash cards

Automobile

- Driver's License(s) (It is not necessary for holders of a U.S. driver's license to get an International license).
- Car Identification
- Car Registration
- License plate number
- Car insurance and renewal date
- Road Tax renewal date
- AA/RAC Membership and renewal date
- MOT Test Certificate and renewal date

House

- Deeds
- Mortgage
- Insurances
- Landlord
- TV License renewal date
- Serial numbers of audio-visual and hi-fi equipment, cameras, musical instruments, computer equipment.

What to bring

What to bring to TASIS is an individual decision. We can only give you examples of things you might want to bring:

- Special eye glasses, contact lenses, and related products
- Special cosmetics and beauty products, particularly dermatologist-recommended ones
- Special holiday decorations, any American history holiday/event that is not celebrated in the U.K. (Children's Valentine exchange cards, Easter egg kits and Thanksgiving items are not available or are difficult to find here)
- American-style measuring utensils if you plan to cook using American recipes
- A letter regarding your car insurance and driving record. It is essential and possibly may save money when applying for a U.K. car insurance. (This is a standard letter with which all insurance companies are familiar. They should know exactly what you are requesting.)
- Extra 2 x 2 photos for registration, visas, etc.
- Medical prescriptions--wise to bring them on the airplane
- Children's/adult's over-the-counter medicine that you particularly like to use (Tylenol, Nyquil)
- Favorite personal teaching materials
- Universal electric converter plug is good for travel in Europe
- Small battery operated alarm clock
- Butane curling iron is handy upon arrival and also when you travel

Housekeeping has some hand held hairdryers and curling irons to loan until you can purchase your own. Dorm residents are loaned irons, microwave ovens or mini-cookers, toasters, lamps and electric teakettles to use while they are living in residence.

Additionally, residents are provided towels and bedding which includes sheets, mattress pad, and duvet. Towels and sheets are exchanged weekly.

Apparel

Students in the Lower School and Middle School wear uniforms. Upper School students follow a Dress Code for classes that includes a sport coat or v-neck sweater and tie for boys and skirts, dresses or trousers for girls. No denim or tennis shoes are allowed. This attire is worn during the academic day and during Community meals for the boarding community.

More casual dress, defined as "Smart Casual", is allowed for off-campus school sponsored activities. Smart Casual includes Chino pants, Dockers, loafers, blazers, skirts. No tennis shoes or denim.

Generally TASIS faculty follow the Dress Code guidelines when teaching or chaperoning school events.

Suggestions for dress at other related school events include:

Dressy - cocktail dress, pretty dress, smart suit, coat and tie. Dressy clothes are needed only RARELY during the school year - for events such as the TASIS Faculty Banquet, Parents' Council Cocktail Party, Christmas Dance or Senior Prom.

Smart (or Neat) Casual – skirt or trousers, and collared blouse or shirt. No denim.

Casual - whatever you want - sweats, trainers, nylon warm-up suits, shorts, sandals.

Practical items that you may want to bring include:

Plenty of warm-weather and cool-weather raingear, a warm coat, warmer clothing and snow boots for Scotland or Wales travel, hiking boots, Wellies for the mud (may be purchased here inexpensively), wool socks, silk long underwear, hat, scarf, gloves.

Notes from a first year teacher:

Londoners wear lots of black! Heeled boots, black jeans, blazers, wool sweaters, boas, long scarves. You can wear your wool most months of the school year. Even summer weather can be cool and colors are usually subdued. "Wellies" keep your feet dry; "jumpers" keep you warm (they are sweaters!) Pack that Lands' End parka and Polartec!

Electrical Options

A few faculty have brought electrical equipment. Understanding what is necessary to make your appliances work will facilitate your decision making.

Adapters: An adapter allows you to plug an American appliance into an outlet in Great Britain. Plug adapters are available for U.S. equipment with special 110/240 (dual voltage) capabilities.

Converters: A device used to increase or decrease the voltage of an electrical appliance. Converters are primarily used with personal care appliances, such as rollers and hair dryers, which have a heating element. Converters can be unreliable and with long use may burn out the appliance, so you may prefer to use a transformer.

Transformers: A device used to increase or decrease the voltage and the frequency of the cycle currents of an electrical appliance. It is necessary to change an American appliance with 110 volt, 60 Hz current to English use at 220/240 volt, 50 Hz. Transformers are available. The size you need depends on the wattage of the appliance for which it will be used. Prices on used transformers can range from £15 to £30 per transformer. New prices can start at about £80 for a one-plug transformer.

Do Not use the lightweight (so called 1600W) "chopper-converter" units which are widely available. They simply crop the top off the local voltage and leave a distorted wave form which can upset or destroy electronic equipment such as hi-fis and computers.

Computers

TASIS England uses Apple computers throughout the school, in both classrooms and offices. The school has a site license for a number of software programs, including Microsoft Office, AppleWorks, HyperCard, Internet Explorer, Outlook Express, and Netscape, all of which are freely available on the school's Macintosh computers.

Computers in most locations are linked to the campus network with either 10/100 Base-T Ethernet or AirPort connections. All three libraries, most offices, the computer labs, and all dorm rooms and classrooms are connected. Since the school possesses a direct connection to the Internet, all computers linked to the campus network are also connected to the Internet. All faculty, as well as Upper School students, are given the opportunity of having an e-mail address using the school's mail server (e-mail addresses are in the form of yourname@tasis.com). There is also a school Intranet used for sharing and transmitting school and academic information and for creating classroom webpages.

Middle and Upper School teachers write their quarterly grade reports with an easy-to-use HyperCard program. Lower School teachers use AppleWorks or Microsoft Word for their grade report comments.

The libraries in all three divisions are automated with Internet connections. Two of the school's computer labs are used primarily for Lower and Middle School use. The other lab is used for Upper School classes and is to be newly equipped with 16 iMac computers and space for laptop use. Teachers may reserve either lab for their class by discussing their requirements with the Computer Co-ordinator. The School also has a class set of iBooks, the "Virtual Lab", with AirPort internet connection, which may be reserved for class use.

Electrical power in the U.K. is 220-240 volts, so if you wish to bring a computer from elsewhere, be sure either that the equipment is able to run on this voltage or that you can acquire a 1000-watt transformer and an appropriate surge protector. This kind of electrical equipment is not always easy to find here. Many modern computers are dual-voltage or self-adjusting between 110-240 volts, although printers may not be.

Software for Apple is relatively plentiful, either in stores or through mail order. Prices for software and hardware tend to be higher than in the U.S., and there is always VAT (17.5%) to add to the cost.

If you would like to establish an email address before moving to England, contact John Gibbs at jgibbs@tasis.com

Shipping personal belongings

Many new faculty elect to send most of their belongings via surface mail through the U.S. Post Office system. This is usually the least expensive way to ship boxes, but check the insurance and tracking policies carefully. If sent by surface mail in June, your packages should be here waiting for you when you arrive in late August. Mark somewhere on each package "New Faculty," and address the packages as follows:

Your Name
c/o TASIS The American School in England
Coldharbour Lane
Thorpe, Surrey TW20 8TE
England

Write 'used personal belongings' on the customs declaration and on the outside of the package to avoid customs duties. Once your belongings arrive, they will be kept in safe storage to await your arrival.

Every effort will be made to have your boxes delivered to your dormitory residence upon arrival. Teachers living off campus can collect their belongings upon arrival.

Books that you might want to have for your personal library can often be shipped inexpensively in special 'book bags' or 'M-Bags' *Please Note*—Sending books via book bags is a one-way discount process. What is sent to England, at some point, may need to be returned to the States. 'M-Bags' are not available in the U.K.; therefore when returning to the U.S., shipment of your books will be very expensive. Pack carefully! (Check with your local post office for more details.)

Some airlines allow you to take additional luggage and or boxes with you on your flight for a nominal fee. Check with your airlines for their policies and charges.

Arrival in the United Kingdom

Airports

Every effort is made for a staff member to greet you at the airport upon your arrival if you alert us about your travel plans.

The majority of people coming to TASIS arrive by airplane. There are two main airports near the school: Heathrow serves most major airlines and is approximately six miles from the school; Gatwick, which also serves many major airlines and charter flights, is located about 40 miles from the school. The trip from Gatwick is 45-60 minutes.

At the Airport

It is quite a long walk from the landing gates to the Immigration and Customs Control. If you have a large amount of hand luggage, it is wise to have luggage wheels of some kind. Larger pushcarts (trolleys) are available in the baggage hall at Heathrow and Gatwick. There are no charges for the trolley.

At the Immigration Desk (Passport Control) you will submit the British Landing Card given to you on the flight. (Fill it out on the flight to save time.) Your passport will be stamped by the Immigration Officer at this point. The officer will ask to see your travel documents and work permit and entry clearance so that your passport may be stamped accordingly. New teachers always need to show work permits and entry clearance. (See section on *Work Permits and Alien Registration.*) The Customs Officer may ask you a few questions regarding the reasons for your entrance into the country. *Do not be concerned if a time limit is stamped in your passport. Everything will be sorted out when you arrive at the school.*

Once past the Immigration desk, proceed to the baggage hall and check the electronic board to find out the area for your flight's baggage claim. Once you are in the correct baggage claim area, find a pushcart or trolley. Then pass through customs with your luggage and you will walk out into the arrival hall where you should be met by a TASIS representative. Please use the TASIS labels, which will have been sent to you, on your luggage for easier identification.

If the school has advance notice of your travel plans, every effort will be made for someone to meet you. *Heathrow is only a short distance from campus, and it will be easy for us to meet you there upon your arrival.* Since Gatwick Airport is quite a distance from TASIS, it may be necessary for you to take the shuttle bus to Heathrow Airport in order to arrange a pick-up. If you arrive at the airport and there is no one there to meet you, don't panic!. Call the school on 01932-565252 and ask to speak to the Headmaster's secretary. If all else fails, give your information to the school's switchboard operator.

If your luggage (or part of it) does not arrive in a normal length of time, contact a representative from your airline. Lost luggage can usually be traced within 24 hours and will be delivered to the school.

If you arrive without cash in local currency, change some dollars (about \$100) at the airport to cover any immediate expenses, such as transport or meals.

Early Arrival

If you plan to arrive in the U.K. early in order to look for housing, please be advised that it will be difficult for the school to accommodate you while you conduct your search. TESIS holds summer programs throughout July and August, and all campus housing will be occupied until late August. (If there is enough advance notice, however, it might be possible for the school to offer you a room on campus for a few nights near the end of August.) Please let the Headmaster's Secretary know when you are arriving and whether you need a place to stay. She will try to arrange for you to stay with other faculty members or will book you into a bed and breakfast accommodation. She will also be able to give you a short listing of local estate agents if you plan to rent housing off campus.

If you will be a dorm resident, your room may not be ready for you until late August . Please check the exact date on the enclosed school calendar.

Work Permits and Entry Clearance

Work Permits

To be employed in Great Britain as an alien you *must have a work permit and entry clearance*. TESIS will apply for the work permit on your behalf through Work Permits (UK), prior to your arrival, but the entry clearance must be obtained by yourself from your nearest British Embassy/High Commission . Once the application has been approved, a work permit is issued and sent to you. It is difficult to predict how long this process will take. It can take as little as three weeks or as long as 12 weeks. As soon as the school receives your work permit, it will be rushed to you. If time is getting tight, the school may use a courier to send your work permit.

Please remember—You cannot enter the U.K. without your work permit or entry clearance.

Once you receive your work permit, it must be presented to the immigration authorities together with your entry clearance when you enter into the country—your passport will then be stamped accordingly. The permit applies specifically to the job and not to the individual.

Entry Clearance

Entry Clearances are only issued by 3 British Consulates-General: New York, Los Angeles and Chicago.

To begin processing your entry clearance go to the website <http://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk> Complete the application online and then pay by the fees, \$150 per visa and return shipping costs FED-EX, by credit card.

It usually takes 5 working days to process the entry clearance by mail. For a 2 day turn around you can use the facilitators listed on the website of each British Consulate. However, they are expensive. One facilitator we called quoted a price of \$400 for each entry clearance.

Postal Applications

After the applications and payments are completed online, print the application(s) sign and mail by FED-EX, Express Mail, etc., along with all supporting documents, including the work permit, passport, academic transcripts, etc, to the consulate that services your state. (See list below)

The needed supporting documents are listed on the website after the application is finished. Check the requirements carefully. A dependent spouse must complete and sign their own application and will need to send in their original (or certified) marriage certificate and birth certificate along with the other documents. All applications are returned by Federal Express Overnight delivery.

States covered by New York Consulate: Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia and US Virgin Islands. The New York Consulate also covers the Bahamas, Belize, Bermuda, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Nicaragua. (Not sure why Panama isn't on this list)

States Covered by Chicago Consulate: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

States Covered by Los Angeles Consulate: Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Louisiana, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington State and Wyoming, plus Guam and the Trust Territory of the Pacific. Hope this helps.

Save all your receipts for reimbursement. If you need reimbursement before you get to England, contact our Head of Finance, Adrian Bowcher, <adrian@tasis.co.uk>. If he has your account and routing information, he can arrange to have the reimbursements deposited directly into your U.S. Account. You can also save the receipts and submit them when you arrive.

Housing

On-Campus or TESIS-provided Local Residence

Faculty living on campus as dormitory residents or in TESIS-provided local housing will be able to move into their residence before orientation week. A letter from the Headmaster will give you the specific dates and times when faculty residences will be available. Until late August, these rooms will be occupied by students and Summer School Faculty. Once Summer School is over, the cleaning and maintenance staff will prepare the faculty residences.

Residents may stay on campus during breaks and holidays if arrangements are made ahead of time with the Head of Residence. House-sitting for TESIS families is frequently available. During the summer, the campus is quickly turned into a summer school. **Resident faculty members and those living in TESIS-provided local residence will need to pack their belongings for storage and must vacate their rooms and campus for the summer. Some faculty rooms have storage cabinets available. The Head of Residence will give you more information about summer storage during the residents' meetings close to the end of the school year.**

Off-Campus Residence

The size of British flats and homes are small by American standards and have little or no closet and storage space. Most will come furnished and will have eating and cooking utensils available. Washing machines and dryers are rare in rental flats. They may, however, be rented by you from any number of local shops, provided the flat has the necessary plumbing. There are laundromats in the area near the school and small coin-operated washers and dryers which are used by residents and boarders on campus.

TESIS will do "company let" flats. In this case, the monthly rent will be taken directly out of your check. Local Estate Agents. (Realtors) can be provided upon request. Be prepared to spend several days looking, since the market is limited and this area of England is expensive. Few faculty report that all utilities, or even part of the utilities, are included in total rent cost. When meeting with the property agents or landlords, ask what you will be responsible for.

Housing cost

We have asked last year's faculty to give us the following monthly costs for teachers renting rooms/flats/houses. Please remember this often does not include council tax, and prices will depend on the area where you live. These figures are averages:

£350 for a single room with access to the facilities of the house.

£500-600 for an unfurnished studio flat

£650-£750 for a 1 bedroom flat

£900-£1000 for a 2 bedroom flat

£1200-£1400 for a 3 bedroom house

Utilities

Provision of utilities has recently undergone a major change in the U.K., so that consumers now have more choice of utility company. Although this is generally a positive development, it also means that options can be more confusing. All utility bills arrive quarterly; however, you can arrange to pay gas and electricity by direct monthly payments. When moving into an established flat/house, it is advisable to contact each utility company for more information than what is given to you below. All utility companies are listed in the telephone directory under the headings of *Gas*, *Electricity* and *Water*. Only the basic information has been given in this publication. *[The following averages shown for monthly costs were gathered in a survey of TESIS faculty/staff. Remember, the size of house, personal usage, and sharing costs play a great factor in the final billings.]*

Gas

Average monthly costs are £75. Gas is never disconnected when a tenant vacates the premises. There are no deposits or hook-up charges requested for new customers. When you move into the property, simply take a reading of the meter and call your local gas company (found in the Yellow Pages—each area has a different branch and telephone number). Meters are only read every six months, and the quarterly bill you receive will be an estimated cost. Monthly payments may also be made by direct debit, which needs to be arranged with the gas company when you report your reading. When you move in, take your reading and notify the gas company, and ask for your area's *Gas Escape* telephone number. *Gas Escape* is a 24-hour service number and is useful if problems arise. There is no charge when having the gas bill transferred from one person to another.

Electricity

Average monthly costs are £60. Electric bills come quarterly with an option for monthly direct debit. If you are a new customer and decide to pay by quarterly payments, a security deposit of £150 is required. If you decide to pay by monthly payments through direct debit, there is no security deposit involved. As with the gas company, when you move in, simply take a reading and contact your local electric company.

Water

There is an annual Water Rate charged to each domestic property in the U.K. These rates may be included in the rent. (This is difficult to report, as no two landlords rent in the same fashion.) Water Rates can run from £100 to £400 each year. Some properties have a fixed annual charge based on the property value; others have a metered supply and are charged according to consumption. Make sure you know who is responsible for payment when renting.

There are no hook-up or deposit charges for water. Water is never turned off or on by the water companies when premises are vacated. By law, all domestic dwellings must have a standard off/on valve near or under the kitchen sink.

Community Charge (Council Tax)

The U.K. has a property tax based on the saleable value of the property. There is a 'banding system' and this information must be made available to a renter or purchaser. If renting, you need to inquire with the landlord or property holder (agent) to find out if you are liable for this charge (each rental agreement is different). Every borough is different, and it is difficult to say what would be a standard band expense. However, in a survey taken from the faculty and staff, costs averaged from £40 to £140 pounds per month (for a 10 month period). Remember, this cost is shared by the occupants of the house and is different for each area. It is based on the value of the property. This means one property has one community charge.

Television Licenses

All televisions in England must be licensed. A television license will cost £109.00 per year. If you purchase or rent a television in one of the local rental shops, you will automatically receive a bill for a television license. Licenses are for the premises, not the individual television. (In other words, one TV at one address means one license, while three TVs at one address still means just one license.) It is your responsibility to pay the cost yourself. If a license application does not come to you automatically, extra application forms are available at any Post Office. *There is a very large fine (currently about £1000) if you are caught without an up-to-date television license.* Television licenses can also be paid by direct debit from your account annually or every quarter or month.

Television Rentals

Televisions may be rented from any local television rental shop. Costs vary due to the size and kind. Cost for a regular colour television with video can run from £20 to £35 a month. The more you get, the more you pay. Multi-standard televisions and tape players may be rented, but the cost will be more. It is best to check prices with the local companies in the area. All listings can be found in the Yellow Pages or just ask around. *Please note—U.S. televisions will not pick up British transmissions.*

Many of us are only here for nine- or ten- month periods. Most television and video rental contracts run for twelve-month periods. If you decide to rent for twelve months, you are responsible for the full twelve months. During the summer, your rental equipment can be stored in summer storage with your other belongings.

You can get a six-month rental, but they cost more; following the first six months, you can go on a month-to-month basis. It is still best to shop around and check prices before making your final decision. Check to make sure that your rental includes full service repairs!

Video Recorders and Tapes

U.K. and U.S. video systems are not compatible. The school does have a number of video players around campus that may be used to view American and British videos. There are two 24-inch televisions—one is in the Student Center, and the other is in the main Hall. Both televisions are used for everyday educational uses and faculty must sign up to use them during classroom times.

Each Division and many departments have televisions for their own use. If you have any teaching videos you would like to use, by all means bring them. All you need to do is book a television.

Taxes

When you leave the U.S. to live in Great Britain, your tax status changes. Because you live in the United Kingdom, the Inland Revenue (the U.K.'s cousin to the IRS) has primary jurisdiction over your income. Most North Americans will be exempt from U.K. taxes for two years, but may be subject to back taxes on this salary if they continue to work here beyond two years. TASIS pays this for teachers who continue their employment beyond the first two years.

Please Note—During the two years you are employed in the U.K., you still have an obligation based on your American citizenship to continue filing and reporting your foreign income to the IRS. As an expat, you may qualify to apply for a 3 month extension for filing your return.

American citizens, no matter where they live in the world, must file a tax return to the IRS each year—even though you may not be obligated to pay taxes. It is less expensive to organize filing your taxes in the States than in the U.K. Previous experiences have shown that U.K. tax lawyers are quite expensive. It is very helpful to receive professional advice from a tax accountant in the U.S. before moving to the U.K.

A publication called, *Publication 54, Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad*, is available through any IRS or local tax office in the U.S., and the American Embassy in London. **It is your responsibility to contact a local tax office for information on this subject. There is no one on the campus who has the authority or detailed knowledge in this area.**

For more information in England, the United States Embassy Tax Information Office:

United States Embassy
24 Grosvenor Square
London W1A 1AE
Telephone: 020 7499 9000
Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

They will send you information, but it is your responsibility to read and understand it.

Motoring Information

Driving License

A valid U.S. license will be acceptable in the U.K. for the first twelve months of residence. After one year, the law requires a U.K. license. Applications for driving licenses and test appointments may be obtained at the Post Office or a driving school. It is advisable to book early for a test as a six month delay is not unusual. Be sure you do apply for an L (Learner) or provisional license if you are a U.S. licensed driver. You will need this in order to get a British license.

It is important to have several driving lessons prior to the test to become aware of the subtleties of driving differences. The school pays for two lessons and the test. (If the test is passed in a car with an automatic transmission, you are not licensed to drive a car with a manual transmission such as our school vans.)

A written theory test of 35 multiple-choice questions about the U.K.'s Highway Code must be passed before you can take your 35 minute practical Driving Test. *The Highway Code* to prepare

for the written test, and *Your Driving Test*, published by the Department of Transport, are useful publications. The latter lists available driving instructors as well as test centres and breaks down the driving test components.

It is recommended that a valid U.S. license be maintained as well. It will come in handy during home visits and re-entry. Inquire with your state's Motor Vehicle Department to find what you must do to maintain your U.S. license. Some states renew licenses by mail.

Automobile Associations

You may consider joining the AA (Automobile Association) or the RAC (Royal Automobile Club) for emergency services, as there is no other way of ensuring service in an emergency. These organizations also offer breakdown insurance for trips to the continent and can even provide legal service.

The Automobile Association, Fanum House, Basingstoke, Hants. RG21 4EA; (0800) 085 2721 [membership office] or consult their web site at www.theaa.co.uk

The RAC Motoring Services, Great Park Road, Bradley Stoke, Bristol, BS32 4QN; (0800 092 2222) or consult their web site at www.rac.co.uk

If you are a member of the Triple A (AAA) in the U.S., your membership can be transferred to the AA here in the U.K. Please contact your U.S. office branch for details. The general cost for joining one of the automobile associations is between £95 each year, depending upon the type of coverage you get. Again, driving records, age, etc. play a big part in the cost. Price check before purchasing!

Road Tax and MOT Testing

Automobiles are road taxed each year. The cost per annum is around £105 per car. Application forms are available at main Post Offices for new cars; renewal forms for second hand cars will be sent by post. Once a car is three years old, it must undergo MOT testing, a safety and road worthiness inspection, carried out by certain garages licensed by the Ministry of Transport. When the MOT certificate, tax form, and insurance certificate plus fee are presented at a main Post Office, a tax disc will be given to you. This tax disc must be displayed on the windscreen. MOT costs can run at least £40.

Car Insurance

Third party insurance (called 'liability' in the U.S.) is compulsory and it is advisable to have comprehensive insurance as well. Bring a standard letter from your previous insurance agency stating that, "Mr. Smith has no record of accidents/claims for the past 5 (or 20) years." It may help in a reduction of cost.

It is recommended that you contact several insurance companies regarding types of coverage and cost. If you plan to drive your car in Europe, be aware that your regular insurance may not cover you there; additional coverage might have to be obtained. This is a requirement. **You must have a Green Card when travelling abroad with your car.** Check with your insurance company before travelling. Some companies offer this service free, while others ask for a small fee.

There are too many variables (age of driver, driving record, size & make of car, etc.) to give an accurate estimate of cost of insurance. Through the faculty/staff survey, it has been determined that car insurance could cost anything from £150 to £700 per annum.

Petrol Stations (Gas Stations)

Petrol stations in Britain will not honour U.S. gasoline company credit cards. They will accept Visa, MasterCard, Access and sometimes Diners Club and American Express. Petrol is quite expensive, costing about four times more per gallon than in the U.S.. A recent survey of faculty indicated an average of £90 a month is spent on gas, mostly just for driving around this area. Remember, this does not include costs such as insurance, Road Tax, and servicing.

Purchasing Cars

Purchasing a new car is expensive in Britain, but there are usually a few second-hand cars available around the campus from previous faculty. If you plan to live off campus, you will need to purchase a car, as using the local public transportation may cause complications in arriving at work when needed. If you live on campus, you can use weekend school shuttles, taxis, friends, or a bike to get to nearby towns. Most residents buy used cars within the first year.

Many local people also buy and sell cars and work on them. Local evening papers, Sunday papers, and specialised trading papers are all good sources. In our faculty survey it was found that a good drivable second-hand car can be purchased from between £1,000 and £1,800. There are a few 'old bangers' available at a lower cost if you're looking for something to drive back and forth to the local towns.

It is advisable to check and see when the MOT and Road Tax are due on the car you are purchasing. It could affect the price of the used car just a little (although England is not a bargaining country). There is a popular local mechanic near the school who will inspect any cars for road worthiness. If it is a car that has been around campus for a while, he will probably know it and be able to tell you about it without having to see it.

Health Insurance Information

The National Health Service

The National Health Service (NHS) ensures that all U.K. residents receive medical care free of charge or pay a minimum fee for some services. This includes:

- General Practitioner Medical Services
- Ante Natal
- Health Visitor Service
- Family Planning
- Well Woman Clinic
- Child Care
- Hospital and Specialists or Consultant Referrals

The following have a small charge:

- Dental Care
- Prescriptions
- Optical Care

If you are living on campus, the school nurse will give you a GMSI "Family Doctor Services" registration form to fill out. You will then be registered under the care of the TASIS school's doctor. Each doctor is designated a geographic area by the NHS, and can only register a patient living in his or her area. Faculty who will be living off-campus in another town should register with a local doctor in that area. You should eventually receive a medical card with your National Health Number on it (this is not the same as a National Insurance Number.)

In general—Should you need a doctor while away from TESIS in any other part of the U.K., you can go to any doctor and be treated as a 'Temporary Patient'. The Temporary Treatment Files will be sent back to your 'Home Doctor' so that all information is complete and up-to-date.

Should you require further medical treatment beyond the scope of your Registered Medical Practitioner, he or she will refer you to a Consultant or Specialist in that particular field. This too will be free. Unless it is an emergency or urgent you may have to wait. At this stage you could transfer to U.K. private medicine if you have U.K. Private Medical Insurance. This, as well as private dental insurance, is available through the school's group policy.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school nurses who may be able to help or advise.

Insurance

As an employee of TESIS, you have access to the following private insurance benefits for employees.

- Private Health Insurance

- Dental Care

- Long Term Disability

- Personal Travel Cover

- Group personal Pension and "Death in Service" Life cover (UK taxpayers only)

- Discounted Personal Insurances

TESIS carries an insurance policy which covers personal belongings for Faculty Residents and, in some cases, for those who live in properties rented by TESIS. If you require cover you could purchase a policy in the U.S. or contact our broker Heath & Brown when you arrive. You will receive complete information once you are here. If you have any questions, please contact Mary Ealey at mealey@tasis.com

Telephone

You can contact TESIS from any U.K. airport by dialing 01932-565252

Inside and around the school

Telephones are provided by the school for the faculty residents' rooms on campus. Local calls can only be made by dialing 9 and then the number you wish to call (For emergencies dial 9 + 999). Incoming calls will be directed to the main switchboard and then will be placed through to rooms. Voicemail messages may be left on telephones, or messages can be taken and placed in faculty mail boxes.

TESIS has professional telephonists covering the switchboard throughout much of the week, although Upper School students run the switchboard on Saturday evenings and all day on Sundays. If you are expecting a personal call at a specific time, make sure the student on phone duty or the switchboard receptionist is aware of your whereabouts. Local calls are free to faculty residents. International calls can be made through the school switchboard or a U.K. long distance company. Residents are allowed £100 allowance in free calls each year.

Long distance phone charges are very reasonable if you use a phone card or long distance company. Your friends and family in the U.S. might want to check various long distance programs to use when calling you.

In the U.K. (from a pay phone)

There are many pay phones located on and around campus. To call to the States, use the following information.

Dial 1188 88 for directory inquiries – cost 20p per minute

Dial 100 for local operator assistance

Dial 155 for international operator

Dial 1188 99 for international inquiries – cost 20p per minute.

Calls connected via the international enquiries will cost 20p per minute.

Do not use this service – dial the number direct once obtained.

Dialing Direct to the States with a phone card

00-1+Area Code+your number (Example 00-1-816-5633022)

The telephone directory lists all of the country codes. From the U.K. dial— 00 + the country code + the telephone number.

If you want to call the school from the U.S. drop the zero of the local code: (011-44-01932 565252)

Pay phones accept phone cards or coins, but not both. You may purchase a *Phone Card* at most newsagents or from the Student Center on campus. Some payphones in the U.K. accept credit cards.

Renting Phones Outside of Campus

Telephones are rented at a flat quarterly rate, plus extra charges (units) for each call made, whether local or long distance. Dialing direct is less expensive than dialing operator assisted, and rates vary greatly according to the time of day. Each phone number is preceded by a code, based upon location. The code for any area varies based upon where the call originates, so you will want to refer to your local code book (or the front pages of many telephone books). This code book is an excellent source of information, not only providing codes, but also a complete guide to the unit cost system as well as information concerning the services available by telephone.

If you are living off campus, be advised that most quarterly phone bills are now itemised in most areas. Although, some bills may simply show the total number of units used during that period, a special request can be made to have any or all long-distance calls itemised. Also, unlike in the U.S., local calls are charged based on length of call.

Although much more efficient now, acquiring a new phone can take a rather long time and is relatively expensive, approximately £74.99 for the connection fee plus charges for the actual telephone and perhaps other costs. It is likely, however, that you will be moving to a property with a telephone line. There is no fee for re-connection, although in most cases you have to take out a 12-month contract.

Phone bills, as well as all other utilities, come quarterly. The standing rental price is £26.80+VAT (as of April, 2002) per quarter. Your calls will be added on top of this quarterly bill. For free information about all the above, dial 150 from any phone within the U.K.

Mobile Telephones

Mobile telephones are readily available from a variety of providers with a wide range of services. If you wish to obtain a mobile telephone, you can get information from local shops, such as Carphone Warehouse, which offer a good range of choices.

Banking

The procedures and regulations of U.K. banks are quite different from those in the U.S., so be prepared to adjust to a new experience.

Banks are generally open from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday; a few are now open 9:30 am to 12:00 on Saturday. It is important to establish a current (checking) account in a branch which is conveniently located. When cashing a cheque at a branch other than your home branch, they will phone your home branch before cashing your cheque, as well as charge you for the call, if you do not have a cheque guarantee card.

Once you open your current account, you will receive a chequebook, plus a paying-in book for deposits. Until you receive your cheque guarantee card, your cheques will only be useful at your home branch. The cheque card is a guarantee for cheques up to £50 at stores and £50 and up to £100 at other bank branches. Your cheque will not be accepted at establishments without the cheque guarantee card, so be sure to insist that your application is processed quickly. Check with your bank for other services available, such as Direct Debit, Automatic Teller Machines, etc. Banks also issue cash/debit cards. These are a convenient means of getting cash from ATMs and you can easily pay in stores with them. The amount is debited from your current account in a day or two.

Current account statements are sent monthly or quarterly, depending on the bank. Cancelled cheques are not returned. Some banks will return them if you request. Allow four working days for U.K. cheques to clear. Cash deposits, however, are credited immediately.

Many of the resident faculty bank at Barclays Bank in Virginia Water or in one of the other banks in the local town of Staines. It will probably be easiest to open an account in these places. We will provide packets for opening an account for several of the local banks and help facilitate your opening a local account early in the faculty orientation period. If you seek banking information sooner than this, please contact Mary Ealey, our Personnel and Operations Manager, at mealey@tasis.com

U.K. Visa or MasterCard debit and credit cards may also be obtained when opening a current account.

Paying U.S. Bills

For those of you who have debts in the U.S. (student loans, credit cards, etc.) and do not have anyone to handle your finances, here are some suggestions.

- Maintain your U.S. bank accounts. It is possible, but very expensive, to open a U.S. dollar account in the U.K.
- You can transfer funds from your U.K. account through electronic transfer (2-4 days) or send international money orders for about £10.
- Bring a good supply of U.S. checks with you.

Travellers Cheques and Money Orders

Travellers' checks and foreign currency can be purchased from all the major U.K. banks; however, it is usually necessary to give a few days' notice. Travellers' checks can also be obtained from Thomas Cook and American Express offices located in Staines, Bracknell and Windsor, and throughout the U.K. Cashing dollar travellers' checks often incurs a large fee if the bank does not have a relationship with the travellers' check company. When cashing or depositing a personal check in U.S. Dollars in your U.K. account, plan to wait until the check clears. It can take ten days to several weeks before the funds are available in Pounds Sterling.

Check prices when purchasing money orders in the U.K. Recent costs have been between £9 to £15 pounds.

Requesting Foreign Currency

Most larger banks carry foreign currency for immediate exchange, but to avoid disappointment it is wise to place an order for the required amount a few days in advance of travelling. Smaller branches may need up to a week to obtain large amounts of a foreign currency, even if it is U.S. Dollars.

If you wish to remit money to the U.S., ask your U.K. bank to draw a dollar cheque (draft) on your behalf against the sterling in your current account. The bank will either issue a cheque in dollars or, for a nominal charge, transfer amounts to your U.S. bank by mail, cable or telex. Please check the current costs of each of these transactions; they have a tendency to vary with each situation. It is possible to have a U.S. dollar account here at Barclays. You can then write U.S. dollar checks on it. Once in the U.S., these checks must be presented to Barclays, not the Federal Reserve, for payment.

Pay check Information

The school offers a direct deposit system into your account. It saves a great deal of hassle rushing to the bank to deposit your pay cheque between classes. For your first year of employment, the school organizes your pay checks in ten monthly payments.

TASIS pays once a month, on the last working day of the month. Should a vacation include the last day of a month, you will be paid on the last school day before the vacation. For example; the pay checks for December are distributed on the last working day before Christmas vacation. **Your first pay will not arrive until the end of September.**

Since you will need to purchase several items when settling in, please plan that September will seem like a very long month. You will be given your relocation allowance upon arrival which will help until payday.

Financial Planning

We once again warn you that Surrey is a very expensive area in which to live. Plan on many goods costing 50% more than U.S. prices. If you are living off campus, be aware that utility bills (gas and electricity) and phone bills come quarterly. Television licenses must be purchased if you plan to have a television. Water bills are semi-annual.

Value Added Tax (VAT)

As in the U.S., there is a form of sales tax on all goods sold in the U.K. Here it is called a Value Added Tax and is commonly referred to as "VAT". Before purchasing items, you must remember to ask if VAT has been included. It is a cost of 17.5% that can be added to the cost of the item you are purchasing. Many 'every day' items purchased in shops will already include VAT. Larger purchases rarely include VAT.

Local Churches

Joining a local church may be a good way to meet English friends and neighbours. In the past, some dorm residents have taken the Sunday church shuttle provided for students if going to the same church. Others have made their own way. The following list of churches was gathered in a survey from the faculty and staff. Specific information on these churches can easily be found in local newspapers, telephone books, or through your local library.

London Area

The American Church in London
Tottenham Court Road, London
St. Mary's of Thorpe

ICC Church (**Inter-Denominational**)
Meets Sunday evenings at

Local Area (Anglican)

St. Mary's Church of Thorpe
Thorpe — Located next to the school

Christ Church of Virginia Water
Christchurch Road
Virginia Water

St Peter's
(shared between the Church of England,
Methodist and Free Church)
Chertsey

Friends Meeting
Lime Road
Egham

Richmond Unitarian Church
Richmond

(Roman Catholic)

Assumption of our Lady
Englefield Green

International Community Church
Rydens School
Hersham

St Anne Roman Catholic
Chertsey

Methodist Church
Staines

St John of Rochester Roman Catholic
Thorpe Lea Road
Egham, Hythe

The Staines Synagogue
Staines

Mormon Church
Staines

Most other denominations can also be found in this area.

Child Minding Information

A great deal of research has gone into investigating child minding (day care). Due to the extensive and involved regulations put forward by the Surrey County Council Social Services Department, TASIS cannot provide space or funding for children needing a Day Care Center (crèche facilities).

Here is a guideline of what is offered in England:

1. *Full Day Care Centres* - Centres which are open for more than four hours a day, for example day nurseries, crèches etc. These are inspected and registered.
2. *Extended Playgroups* — Over four hours' duration. They are also registered and inspected by Day Care Advisors.
3. *Sessional Day Care Centres, Out of School Care and Education Groups, Playschemes, and Occasional facilities* — These are all inspected, registered and supported by Day Care Advisors. Registered Childminders can be found by contacting the local service team in our area.

When you first arrive and need a baby-sitter, the Headmaster's Secretary has a list of registered child-minders in the area. She may also know the names of occasional baby-sitters. Several faculty members have children who are willing to baby-sit. Also, during the year many of our Upper School boarding students will be happy to pick up the extra spending money.

During Orientation Week, faculty members with children usually organize themselves. During that week it is advisable to make contact with other families and learn more about child minding. Word of mouth tends to give the best results. ***The first 10 days are full of meetings and arrangements must be made for children.***

Post Offices

The Post Office (P.O.) offers many services for U.K. residents. Main offices are open from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm (with an hour closing for lunch) on Monday through Friday, and are open until noon on Saturdays. Many small Post Offices already close at noon on Wednesdays. In addition to all mailing procedures, the Post Office provides the following: application form for driver's license, motor vehicle registration, television license, application form for child benefits, money orders, payment of most bills with a Giro account. (A bank account that can be opened at a Post Office. Some bills can be paid through Giro accounts and will cut down on bank charges.)

Many villages have small post office/convenience store facilities in newsagent establishments. There is a local newsagent, the Thorpe P.O., within a five minute walk from the school. It is a small village Post Office facility (closed on Wednesday afternoons). At TASIS, stamped mail may be posted in reception daily, but packages must be taken to the local P.O.

Area Maps

Local maps are useful and can be purchased at almost any newsagent or AA office. Maps of the local area are usually posted on the bulletin boards in the main faculty room, as well as information on specialised or favorite pubs, restaurants, etc.

Local Transportation

Train service into London and throughout Great Britain is convenient from our area. Virginia Water Station can give you a copy of the times. The station is around a £4 fare by taxi and only a five minute drive away from the school. Walking time can be up to 25 minutes. You can often get a ride to the Virginia Water Station with other faculty members going that way after school, or on the TASIS shuttle run.

Most train fares are dependent on the time and day of travel. Prices during the commuter hours (until 9:30 am) are the most expensive. After 10:00 travellers are allowed to purchase a Travel Card, which allows unlimited use of the trains, tubes and buses in London for the day (around £6.00 from Virginia Water and a bit less from Staines).

If you are returning to TASIS from London by train, remember the following: Virginia Water is the closest station, but the taxi rank closes at 10:00 pm. If you plan to return later than 10:00 pm, it is better to get off at Staines where there is an all night taxi stand, (*but beware, at peak times taxis can be busy*). It is a bit further away, but at least you know there will be some form of transportation back to the school. The cost of a taxi from Staines is around £8 during the day and a bit more after 10:00 pm.

London Guides and Helpful Publications

It is best to purchase a good guide book and be familiar with England before you come over. Tourism is a big industry here and there are many guides and publications available.

Here is an excellent publication found while researching information for this faculty publication:

Living in London: Guidelines published by the Junior League of London. It is written by an organization of American women in London, and can be purchased directly from their office. The book is great for information on clothing measurements, cooking conversions, and many welcome recommendations. It has very useful information, and can be ordered by mail. There are also several copies around campus. Check with your divisional head.

The Junior League of London
9 Fitzmaurice Place
London W1X 6JD
England

Price is currently £16 if purchased in the U.K., £17 elsewhere in Europe, and £20 if outside Europe. (Postage, VAT and handling included in price)

Pax House Resources

Many TASIS faculty members have contributed to a collection of brochures on places to see and things to do. The Pax House Faculty Room serves somewhat as a focal point for most TASIS faculty. Some London guides and publications can be found in Pax. A portion of the School's professional library is housed in this building, although some resources are available in the faculty rooms of the Early Childhood Program and Lower School, and of the Middle School. In addition, The TASIS Parents' Council has educational and parenting books which may be checked out.

Faculty Orientation Week

Faculty Orientation Week is a **very busy** time. We thought it would be helpful to have an idea of what you should expect during this week. Agendas regarding dates and times for all meetings and events will be given out with *Faculty Handbooks* when you arrive

New Faculty Meetings—New faculty meet each other and administrators. These meetings start a few days before the returning faculty arrive to attend the *All Faculty Meetings*.

All School Faculty Meetings—New and returning faculty meet.

Department and Division Meetings—Department and Division meetings will also be organized during this week.

Resident Meetings—If you are a dorm or relief resident, there will be meetings to discuss procedures related to boarding students' procedures and arrivals.

Setting up classrooms—As the school runs a separate summer program, many classroom materials and furniture are stored away during the summer and will need to be unpacked by teachers. If you are an Early Childhood Program or Lower School teacher, you will have to find extra time around the other meetings to set up your classroom. Usually one day is set aside for this on the schedule.

National Insurance Numbers—During Faculty Orientation Week, new faculty will register for National Insurance Numbers. You need several passport photographs for this and an announcement will be made at one of the All-School Faculty Meetings concerning how and when to register, as well as whatever else you will need to have.

Other Events—Besides meetings, there will be two "dressy social" occasions: a) The Parents' Council buffet and cocktail party, and b) The TESIS Faculty Banquet. Dress for these events is jacket and tie for men, and a "dressy" outfit for women.

Index

American Embassy, 15

American recipes, 5

Apparel, 5

Area Maps, 25

Arrival in the United Kingdom, 9

Automatic Teller, 20

Automobile Association., 16

Automobile Associations, 16

baby-sitter, 24

Banking, 20

Campus Residence, 12

Car Insurance, 16

cash/debit cards, 20

Child Minding Information, 24

Childminders, 24

Community Charge, 13

Computers, 7

current account, 20

Customs Control, 9

Driving License, 15

Electrical Options, 6

Electricity, 13

Entry Clearance, 10

Faculty Handbooks., 27

Faculty Meetings., 27

Faculty Orientation Week, 27

Financial Planning, 22

Foreign Currency, 21

Gas, 13

Getting Ready, 4

Health Insurance Information, 17

holiday decorations, 5

Housing, 12

Housing cost, 12

Immigration, 9

Insurance, 18

Living in London

Guidelines, 26

Local Churches, 23

Local Transportation, 25

London Guides and Helpful

PUBLICATIONS, 26

Meetings, 27

MOT Testing, 16

Motoring Information, 15

National Health Service (NHS), 17

National Insurance Numbers—, 27

Off Campus Residence, 12

Pax House Resources, 26

Paycheck Information, 21

Paying U.S. Bills, 20

Petrol Stations (Gas Stations), 17

Playgroups, 24

Post Offices, 24

Purchasing Cars, 17

Road Tax, 16

Royal Automobile Club, 16

Setting up classrooms, 27

Shipping personal belongings, 8

Taxes, 15

Telephone, 18

Television Licenses, 14

Television Rentals, 14

The Highway Code, 16

Travel Card, 25

Travellers Cheques and Money Orders,
21

US dollar account, 21

Utilities, 13

Value Added Tax, 22

Video Recorders and Tapes, 14

Visa cards, 20

Water, 13

What to bring, 5

work permits, 9, 10

Your Driving Test., 16