

LEGALITIES

Registration with Local Authorities

The resident alien fee is due only if you stay more than six months. The registration fee is payable at the Police Department.

Laws of the Host Country

Foreign visitors are subject to all local and national laws of their host country. This applies to you in Scotland and in any other country you may visit. Do not expect any special treatment or assistance if you violate any laws.

Customs and Import Duties

Virtually all countries impose duties (import taxes) on items purchased abroad which exceed a certain value (e.g., jewelry) or are restricted in quantity permitted (e.g., tobacco). Items that you bring with you into the host country will be subject to these limitations. You will be given a customs declaration form during your transatlantic flight (or upon arrival at your port of entry) on which you state your compliance with British customs law and voluntarily declare any items that exceed customs limits.

So-called "duty-free" stores are found in most international airports and onboard international flights. Do not be confused by the name. Such stores allow you to purchase certain items (commonly liquor, tobacco, candy, and perfume) without paying any country's consumer tax. This often, though not always, means that you can buy these items for less than you would pay in either a typical U.S. or foreign store. However, these items are still subject to customs limits and applicable import duties. For example, if you purchase one bottle of liquor in a duty-free shop, you may bring it into Britain without paying additional tax. If you bought two bottles, however, that would exceed the allowable limit and you would have to pay an import tax to the customs agent on the second bottle.

Drugs

Laws governing prescription medications vary by country. If you use a U.S. prescription drug that you are taking to the U.K., you should bring along the actual written prescription of your doctor. A doctor's letter of explanation about the purpose of the drug is advisable if there is any question about the acceptance of the drug in foreign countries. The import, purchase, sale, or use of illegal drugs is a criminal violation. Penalties imposed upon a violator by the U.K. and other European countries are much more severe than those imposed by the U.S.

U.S. Laws to Remember

You are responsible for obeying all U.S. laws that apply to you during your term abroad. Some provisions of U.S. laws vary when a citizen resides abroad, although these differences usually do not affect college students.

If you had U.S. income in a calendar year but will not return from abroad before April 15 of the following year, don't forget to file appropriate tax forms. Usually your parents can handle most of this for you, but you are required to sign your own form.

You can request absentee ballots from your local Board of Elections to participate in any voting procedures for which you are normally eligible. Be sure you are registered to vote before you leave the U.S.