

The Abbey College Summer / Easter School

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is included in the course fees?

The course fees include everything essential for a student during his or her stay on-campus. Tuition (at least 16 hours per week in class for juniors up to 20 hours for adults), accommodation, all meals on-campus (3 per day, except when on full day excursions, with brunch on Sundays,), airport transfers to/from Heathrow (during travel hours), 2 excursions per week, weekly laundry, welfare, basic healthcare, course materials, optional extra conversational classes, art and photography, use of computers with broadband Internet and the full range of mainstream on-site activities are included. Examples of what is not included are entrance fees to certain places on outings, meals whilst on full-day outings, additional excursions including a London trip at around £25-£30, some off-site activities (such as golf and horse riding) and general pocket money. If a private visit to the doctor is required then the taxi cost is not included and should be paid for by the student.

2. Do I need to pay a deposit?

A deposit total of £50 is payable by ALL students in cash on arrival. £10 is for a room key and meal card, refundable when the items are returned on departure. £40 is for potential damages, theft and exceptional cleaning, with students being jointly and severally liable for their rooms and houses. This £40 is also refunded in full on departure if no loss or damage has taken place.

3. When do you collect students from the airport free of charge?

Transfers are included for flights scheduled to land or take off between 10:00 and 17:00 on Sundays, to and from Heathrow airport in London. There are normally two collections to and from the airport on each travel day; one coach for morning departures/arrivals and one coach for afternoon departures/arrivals. Students may need to wait for others to be collected. A private collection, with no waiting time, can be arranged for an additional charge.

The College can also arrange collections to/from other airports and, as this is usually a private taxi service, additional charges will apply. If a large number of students are arriving at the same time, outside the hours of 10:00 and 17:00, the price may be reduced or withdrawn altogether, depending on the number of students. Students over 18 years old arriving at Gatwick airport within the travel times may wish to take the direct bus between Gatwick and Heathrow, costing around £25 and taking less than 1 hour. The 'Pre-arrival' section on the Abbey College website gives advice to those who wish to travel independently.

4. How much pocket money is necessary? What is it used for?

This depends entirely on the age and the personal preferences of the student and their family. We recommend approximately £30 to £50 per week for under 18 year olds (in addition to the £50 necessary for the deposit). They should not require more than this unless they wish to take up a lot of extra excursions or off-campus activities. This pocket money is for general spending (additional excursions, snacks from the shop, souvenirs, etc). Adult students may use their own discretion to judge how much they will need. Note that visits to London are always offered but are optional, and cost around £25 - £30.

5. What is the average age?

The college runs separate programmes for three different age groups. These are Children (aged 8-11), Teens (aged 12-17) and Adults (aged 18 and over). Although it depends greatly on timing, and total numbers do vary from time to time, very approximately 20% of students are Children, 65% are Teens and 15% are Adults.

6. How many students are at the College?

Again, this depends on the time of year, but as a guide we may have 150-200 in June and August with around 250-300 in July. The greater numbers in July do not affect the class sizes, since we employ more teachers during that month. In Easter we tend to have a much lower number of students than those listed above.

7. What is the best time to be there?

Our programmes and provisions change little between different times for Vacation Courses. However, the greater numbers in July allow for an even greater numbers of options in terms of choices of activities, variety of nationalities and general socialising. June, August and especially Easter time are more peaceful with shorter queuing times for meals and with more space available in the accommodation.

8. How will you place me in the right class?

The application form is only used as a very rough guide. On the first Monday of the course, all new students take an English test. The current test we use has been written specifically for this purpose. Based on these results, students are placed in classes according to age and ability. If teachers agree that a student is finding lessons too easy or too difficult, they can quickly be placed in a higher or lower class.

9. What examinations do you offer? Will I receive a certificate and report at the end of my course?

In the summer there are few public examinations. We can offer the TOEFL and the Trinity Orals. Both of

these exams can be taken monthly, but early registration is required and additional costs apply. We are able to offer private tuition (not the exam) for FCE, PET and CAE. All students receive a report and a certificate of attendance from The Abbey College in any event.

10. We are a family – what accommodation is available to us?

Most families chose to live separately from each other in standard or ensuite accommodation, whilst coming together for activities, social events and excursions. The College also has a very limited number of apartments available on-campus. These are available for an additional supplement. It should be remembered that whilst the accommodation is clean and comfortable it is nonetheless part of a residential school and therefore not like a luxury hotel! The College may, if enough notice is given, help families to find accommodation outside the college campus, such as hotels and rented accommodation.

11. What about private bathrooms and superior rooms?

In our standard accommodation, rooms share communal bathrooms. However, rooms with a private bathroom may be booked, if available, for males and females of all ages. The prices depend on how long a student wishes to stay and also whether they wish to share with anybody else. A full list of costs is available on the Fees List and on the College website. Our superior rooms, at an additional supplement, offer extra facilities. They are all single rooms (or twin if preferred) and all have a private bathroom, but they may include a television, wireless Internet, an electronic safe or have a better view. They may be larger than other rooms. They are also decorated to a higher standard. Superior rooms and single rooms are only available to students over 21 years or age during our Summer School. The College should be informed at the time of booking if a particular facility is preferred.

12. How and when can I pay?

Payment is normally due 30 days before the course begins, unless a late booking is made. Payment MAY be able to be made later, but permission to do this needs to be given by the College in writing. Payment is usually made when the College sends an invoice for the total cost of the course. Fees can be paid by bank transfer, cheque, traveller's cheque, credit card (3% surcharge), debit card or cash in pounds sterling – subject to prior arrangement. The College account details are on the website as well as on the fees list. Unfortunately it is not possible to pay in instalments on our Vacation Courses.

13. Do I need insurance?

Although this is not compulsory, the college strongly recommends you to take out insurance. This should cover travel, fees, excess medical expenses and any personal valuables such as jewelry and electronic goods. The college does not accept liability for loss or

damage to students' personal property, or property on loan to them. We advise students against bringing unnecessary valuables. Students can take out an insurance policy from their home country or from a UK company. Some advice is given on the college website.

14. What is the weather like?

In the summer, the weather is mild to hot. England is a small country, so the weather is fairly similar wherever you are. The temperature in the daytime varies between approximately 16 and 28 Celsius. During Easter, it tends to be around 7 degrees cooler on average.

15. What kind of clothes do I need?

Students should bring a variety of clothes if possible, for both hot and cool days. Students should remember to bring sports clothes/shoes, swimwear, two towels, and if possible some smart clothes for occasions where the College has a Show or a formal Dinner/Dance. T-shirts and other casual clothes are always useful. Students may also like to bring their own sports equipment.

16. When can I start the course / What is the minimum length of stay?

The recommended minimum length of stay is two weeks, although one-week stays are possible. If a one-week course is booked the airport transfers are not included in the course fees. There is no maximum stay. The Abbey College offers great flexibility with course dates. During the summer, students can start a course on any Sunday and finish on any Sunday after that.

17. Can I take academic classes during the summer?

Computing, art and photography classes are available in the summer, but are not taught at an advanced level. However, these subjects, as well as Mathematics, can be taught at any level on a 1:1 tuition basis by the Abbey College's excellent academic staff at a charge of £35 per hour. This can be very useful for some students who require some extra help with schoolwork at home. Other subjects may also be available on this basis; please enquire if you may want this service. In any case, 1:1 tuition does usually require advance booking.

18. How do I register?

A completed application form should be sent either by fax, e-mail attachment, post or online through our website, together with a Registration Fee of £50 and two passport-sized photographs. We will then send you a booking confirmation with an invoice for the course fees, which should be paid at least 30 days before the start of a course (unless a late booking is made).