



INTERNATIONAL  
EXCHANGE

PERSON NAME

DWIGHT RICHARDSON KELLY

FROM

USA

TO

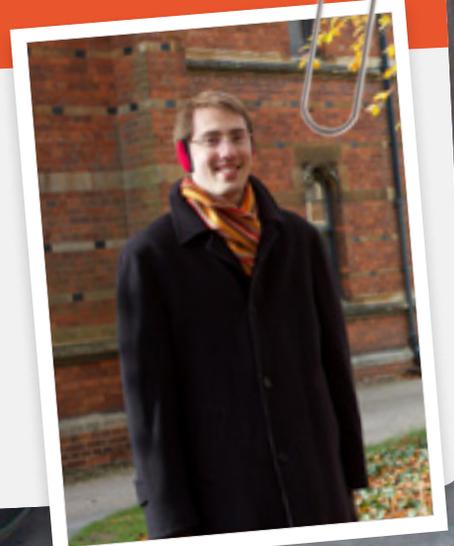
UK

PROGRAM

STUDY ABROAD



0123456789



# Accessing Information and Insight

## One of the Big Challenges is Finding the Services

One reason Dwight Richardson Kelly chose his study abroad program was to work on his writing. The writing intensive aspects of the Oxford University system were appealing, even though he knew with his learning disability he would need the right accommodations.

“I absolutely wanted a rigorous experience, but I knew that without appropriate accommodations I would spend all my time writing the required essays and wouldn’t be able to experience the other parts of the program, which is really important, like the cultural pieces and to integrate into the university.”

While Oxford could provide the academic adjustments and services he needed and more, he did not know for certain this would be possible until he arrived in England.

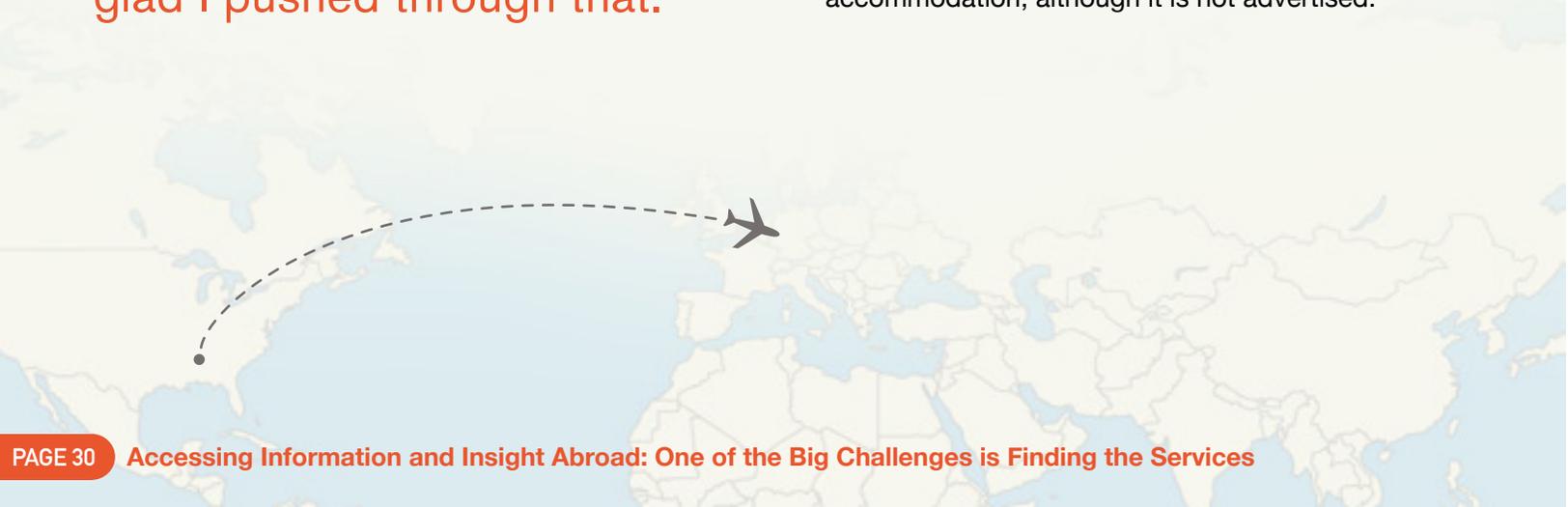
My home school didn’t really provide information on what kind of services would be provided, and for whatever reason seemed unable to get it. I was pretty frustrated and nearly at a point where I thought maybe this wasn’t going to work out, and I’m really glad I pushed through that.

Despite students with learning disabilities studying abroad at the same rate as other students, their numbers are still small enough that the process to get answers can be drawn out. Study abroad offices at both the home and host universities were not the only ones involved in his disability-related arrangements. Disability offices on both sides and the administration at the individual college Dwight would attend at Oxford all factored into the determinations.

He contacted Mobility International USA to find out about his rights under the Equality Act in the United Kingdom (U.K.), and got the support of his academic advisor at Sarah Lawrence College. His disability office provided him adaptive software to bring along.

“I got to Oxford a little early for an orientation, so I was able to meet with the disability office there; as soon as I was able to make that contact, things really fell in place.”

Oxford is a very big university and a lot of the colleges are autonomous with a labyrinth of support structures. Dwight found that by asking “What is available for my disability?” there were useful accommodations not available at his home college. A department in the library scanned books rapidly or got them directly from the publishers, so he was able to get everything needed well in advance. He also received dedicated workspace in the library as a disability accommodation, although it is not advertised.



“Unlike in the U.S., it is common in the U.K. for college students with dyslexia to be provided with tutors who are particularly trained to work at the post-secondary level, and that was a service I was able to take advantage of and which proved to be incredibly useful.”

He had a weekly meeting for an hour with a tutor to work on writing. This included learning new processes, such as physically outlining written assignments with the use of arrows and post-it notes. Tutors also reviewed his past assignments to point out changes he could make for clarity and gave him new strategies to assist with his spelling.

He also found Oxford schedules required less class time than in the United States; courses were one-on-one tutorials with professors, doctoral students, or researchers. All the professors Dwight worked with provided flexible deadlines and alternative oral assessment. Slowly over the year, he started to do more writing and supplementing it with fewer oral presentations.

**For the first time in my education, I felt like I was putting in the same amount of time as my peers on those assignments and that opened a whole bag of opportunities.**

Dwight participated in site visits and traveling, and he became involved with the disabled students advocacy campaigns at the university, which he ended up chairing in his last two terms. The group produced a disabled student’s guide to better inform incoming students about how access varies between individual colleges at Oxford.

Dwight’s career interests also shifted during his time abroad. Originally focused on going into academia either researching dyslexia or critical disability studies, his experience leading up to and once abroad, made him shift into wanting a career in disability services.

“I think the approach in the U.K., particularly with the tutors, is where the U.S. could improve. Why wouldn’t we be providing these services to someone who needs it? That applies to various disabilities. It instructed my thinking about disability services and what I would hope to do going forward.”



**Read more about Learning Disability Accommodations**

[www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/ldaccommodations](http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/ldaccommodations)