General Information for All Programs

The Application Process
Students must complete a written application that is signed by her parents to indicate their approval of her participation in an exchange program. In choosing finalists from among the applicants, faculty will consider academic strength, especially motivation and the ability to do independent work, and personal qualities such as openness, flexibility, perseverance, and independence. Families must also be aware of their responsibilities to the incoming exchange students (please see Host Families section).

After acceptance to an exchange program, students will receive more information about her particular program and host country, including a suggested packing list specific to the country’s climate and school’s dress code.

Academics
Depending on the exchange, students will be expected to complete enough courses and requirements at the exchange school to keep up with the curriculum at Westover. If the curriculum differs significantly, students may be required to complete additional work specific to a Westover class. Whatever the work is, Westover girls are expected to do their best.

If needed, Westover and the exchange school can arrange for standardized testing, such as the SAT, to be administered in the host country so as not to interfere with college planning.

Note for seniors: Seniors accepted for exchange must have all their college applications finished and submitted before leaving Westover.

Communication with Home
The host schools and most homes have computers and telephones, so e-mail and Skype are two inexpensive options for staying in touch with family. Depending on the country, American cell phones that are set up for international calls can be used, but calls to the US will be expensive. Girls may purchase an international phone card that is usually cheaper and more manageable. Facebook and other social media sites are often used to connect with their families and friends. One potential issue with communication is the time difference, but if calculated carefully, it should not present a major problem.

Host Families
Depending on the program, students may live full-time or on the weekends with host families. They provide room and board, so there is no need to bring linens or bedding, as well as transport to explore the local area. More importantly, living with a host family gives Westover students a unique personal view of this part of the world. Host families create a very supportive environment for exchange students and close relationships are formed, which often continue well after their stay. Communicating with the host family early on is the best way to see the places most important to the student; however, in most
cases, they will do most of the organization. Students should remember to consult the family about customs and expectations, as well find ways to participate in the household, such as offering to help with chores. Students must strive to be a family member and not a guest.

In return, families of Westover girls accepted for a program agree to help the incoming exchange student(s) in some way. In the past, families have hosted the exchange girls, picked them up from the airport, helped organize outings and dinners, and invited them to join in vacations or holidays. For families of boarding students who do not live locally, they are asked to participate in other ways, such as sending care packages and visiting when possible.

Food
Some of the food in the host country will be new to Americans, particularly in a boarding situation. Students should be prepared for some repetition and possibly foods that they do not like. Host families will expose students to a lot of new foods, some that they may fall in love with but not have an opportunity to try again. Students should be open to new experiences.

Tuition
Westover families pay to Westover their normal yearly tuition, which covers the tuition at the host school and depending on the school, room and board or placement with a host family. Additional expenses include round-trip airfare to the host country (with the exception of Jordan) and spending money.