

University of Glasgow

Semester 1 2017

Commerce and Arts, majors in Marketing Management and Sociology

The biggest thing about this review is the message, do it. Basically, everyone who does an exchange loves it, including me, and I thought I wasn't necessarily the type to love an exchange, I'm pretty discerning socially, but also get bored with my own company. However, if you make smart choices you cut out any risk of having a bad time. And if you don't love it, which you will, you'll learn a hell of a lot. You won't 'discover yourself', but without sounding pretentious, you do begin to appreciate the world more, and become more open, through travel- it's given me the 'bug' to really see all corners of the globe.

Overall, I loved the exchange, and I would recommend Glasgow- although it's an ugly city (not going to sugar coat it), and the weather is crap, it's a great place for young people. Great bars, friendly people, and just a really relaxed, funky vibe (probably a mix of Wellington's vibe with Dunedin's weather, plus more hard case). It revolves around the pub/Jazz/sports bar type scene, and the pints (proper size) are about 3 pounds each, so you can finally afford to drink in a healthy, sociable manner.

Scotland, especially the Highlands is incredible, and it makes up for the grey days in Glasgow's industrial city. The Highlands are the only place in the world I've seen that top the natural rugged beauty of our own South Island (I'll talk more about these places later).

Accommodation

I was at Kelvinhaugh Street Hostel, which is one of the university accommodation options. I would say use the university options, do not try and go private; it takes all of the social risk away from exchange- you know you'll get like-minded people around you. In reality- you should ONLY consider 2 options. Kelvinhaugh St (my one) or Murano. Kelvinhaugh St was for slightly older and more conservative students, and is a little bit less social- but I still met people who liked to go out and have fun etc. The location is fantastic- right in between the uni and the city- 10 mins each way. If you are independent, and slightly older- and looking for a mix of study and fun- then this is your option. Murano- is the equivalent of UniCol- however, the international section is full of 19-22 year olds, not just first years (the locals at Murano are first year, but you don't see them much). This hostel is in pretty bad condition, and is a long way from uni- 30 min walk, but it has large flats and is very social, people like to party. Don't worry about your age, if you would have enjoyed UniCol, you will enjoy Murano. Downside to both options- very little interaction with the locals- we are segregated as international students. That meant I was socializing with mostly Americans, Aussies and Canadians (we were living with only exchange students outside of Europe, which was a shame).

Oh also, I got one of those accommodation packs that has all the basic supplies like kitchen stuff and bedding- good convenient option, although not crazy cheap (but the quality is).

Money Matters

Used a cash passport mostly, can get one in NZ. But you honestly can just use your ANZ or NZ bank debit card if you can't be bothered, it costs around 2-3% extra though, so probably best to sort a cash passport. If you are going for a year or working, maybe you'll want to open a bank account there- apparently, it's very easy.

You will spend more than you think, you just will. The costs of living is less than NZ, but you are always doing things and going places. Glasgow is actually a good option in this regard, it's cheaper than other large western Euro cities.

Also, you can't properly budget for the mighty Genting Casino either (located a short 10 min walk from my hostel)- one of the crown jewels of Glasgow, if you go, try and win some of my money back please.

Academic/Course Load

I was just finishing off my Arts degree, doing 100 level interest papers, so fair to say I wasn't too busy, and am probably not the right person to ask here. 3 papers there are worth 4 here- I would say each paper was slightly harder than Otago, but considering 3 is worth 4, probably about equal. The style of teaching and assessment was very similar to Otago, no academic culture shock here. I know that for Law students, Glasgow was considerably easier than Otago, if that helps.

Transportation

Use Ryan Air and Flight Scanner for travel. Buses around Europe are really cheap, trains are getting way more expensive. Use overnight buses to London- or throughout Europe, to save some cash and time. I didn't use much transport around Glasgow, I was well positioned at Kelvinhaugh st, and since I'm so Boujee I Uber'd often ha.

Weather

Terrible

Eating

Your local Sainsbury's or Tesco's will sort you out. Pretty cheap, everything you need. In terms of other options, it just depends on your taste, lots of good Indian food all over the place. Do try some of the local whisky if you are a fan, it is so cheap compared to what we pay! And absolutely do a distillery tour, I did Edradour distillery, the smallest in Scotland. It's old school, with great character, and bloody cheap, quality whiskey.

Things to Do

Best thing I did- hired a wicked camper, and spent 8 days with 5 guys living in this little camper van going all round the Highlands- please just do this (ignore how cringe the designs on wicked campers are).

Day trips to the Highlands, Edinburgh, or the Isles.

Football matches- very passionate and drunk old fans!

The unions have all sort of events, whether it be screening sport games, craft beer tasting, or a roller disco- they are always a pretty good time.

The Uni also puts on casual pick up games of sport- different ones each night like volleyball, basketball, indoor football etc.

Try Lawn Bowls at the venue for the 2014 Commonwealth Games bowls, for free! 2 min walk from Uni.

Whiskey and Golf- 2 of Scotland's specialities. Try both, and possibly at the same time.

Lots of cool funky brunch spots.

Jazz Clubs- many options.

Kelvingrove Museum- super interesting.

Casino

Places to Visit

Basically everywhere is great in Northern Scotland, but especially the Isle of Skye- that is a must.

-Go to 'Saucy Mary's pub in Kyleakin, Isle of Skye, hell of a place, it'll do things to you.

So yeah, you really should get a car/camper and do all of the Highlands, and try make it to St Andrews (golf course and the town), Pitlochry (cool little village) and all of the Loch's, like Loch Ness (although others are prettier). Also Edinburgh is great for a weekend or day trip, only an hour away. Lake District, although technically in England, is beautiful too.

Too many places to mention in Europe, but use night buses and Ryan Air, and you will see lots of it!

Last tip: Make contact with the Dunedin people who are over there- as embarrassing as it is, they were my closest mates over there, after living with Trump voters, it helps to see a familiar face. But don't let that put you off, pretty much everyone I met was lovely, and worth having a beer, or even a trip away with. Just go on exchange, you will regret it if you don't!