

**The University of Glasgow
Semester One 2017
LLB; BSc (Microbiology)**

Summary

Glasgow is now my home-away-from-home in the Northern Hemisphere. I cannot recommend the city and the exchange programme enough. With a relatively low cost of living, plethora of events and an incredible nightlife, Glasgow is a fantastic student village where you will feel right at home in no time. I have friends across the world now and wouldn't trade my experiences in Scotland for anything.

Accommodation – Murano Street Student Village

Murano offers flats of 6 or 12. The set up is a little like halls with small 'floors', each of which has a communal cooking area. Arranged in blocks which is why I hesitate to refer to them as 'flats' in the conventional Dunedin sense. Murano is not a catered facility, and was relatively expensive all things considered, but no more so than other university student accommodation options so looking for a flat privately would be the only way around that cost.

All exchange students were lumped in together with no kiwi-host equivalent, which would have been a massive asset in hindsight. The flats themselves were nice enough and cleaned regularly, but did lack a communal lounge area so we spent a lot of time just in the kitchen/dining room. We were a 20 minute walk to University, a 5 minute walk to a huge supermarket, and around 30 minutes to the centre of town.

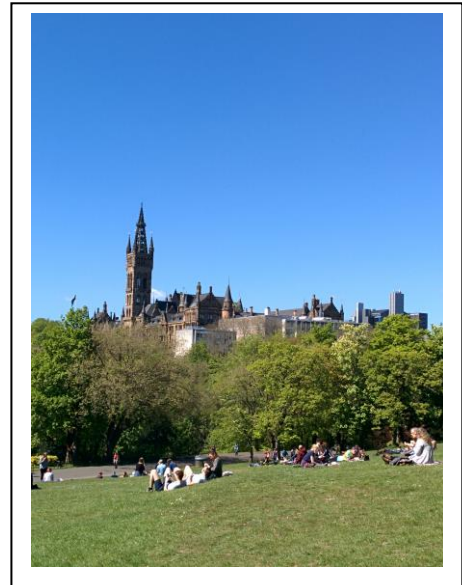
I can't really comment on recommending Murano to specific people to be quite honest. It was warm, and I ended up with a good group of flatmates which meant my experiences were positive, but I had heard of others who were not so lucky. The big flats give you greater odds of good flatmates, but the communal areas were certainly not fitted out to deal with the numbers which became pressuring at times. From what I have heard, Murano was one of the better of the Student accommodations, but was also a bit further from town than the others.

Regardless of the accommodation you choose, the University has huge numbers of clubs you can join and being put in touch with other Otago students was personally massively beneficial as well. A few proactive moves and you can find like-minded people in no time!

University Life

I took one Law paper, and two Science papers. The quality of teaching is fantastic and I personally found the work load lower than at home, but that was more a reflection of the papers I took rather than the courses available. I used my general 100 level credits to give myself more time to embrace the exchange experience.

One piece of advice I would give BSc students looking to go to Glasgow is to avoid taking 300 level papers there. Their majors tend to work differently to ours, in that in your final



year, you take 1 paper per semester specific to your major. This is your entire course load, so is exceedingly difficult to quantify for credits back home.

The University campus was beautiful. Established in 1451 it is one of the oldest English speaking universities in the world, and it shows. The buildings are spectacular and I would often just wander the grounds during breaks between classes.

Glasgow Itself

They say that the people make Glasgow and it is unequivocally true. Glaswegians have a fantastic sense of humour, much more similar to New Zealand than the likes of the U.S. Be prepared to be mocked and ribbed by complete strangers, as the Scots really do have a dry and pessimistic sense of humour which I loved.

The weather is a classic complaint you will hear from the Scots. They take pride in their bad weather. On a sunny day you will be told it's the first sunny day in a decade, when you had a similar blue bird day the week before. Full disclaimer, it is cold and dark in the winter, but it was never as bad as what I was told. I certainly don't look back on my time and remember bad weather being prevalent in my memories. You just get along with it with a rain coat and a smile. The warmer accommodation certainly makes it easier to deal with than here in Dunedin.

If you are into live music, theatre or general night life, Glasgow has it all. Ashton lane is a beautiful spot in the student area with bars cinemas and restaurants, and there is something on in town literally every night. You are never short of events, shows, gigs or festivals, and the Scots sure know how to have a good time!

Things to Do

In terms of seeing what Scotland has to offer, I would recommend looking into Student Tours Scotland. You will no doubt be introduced to Gary in the orientation period but his tours are fantastic and thoroughly enjoyable. In saying that, I would also recommend a balance. The public transport in the UK is fantastic, so get a group of friends together, pick a destination and just get on a bus! Some of my favourite trips were entirely unplanned and impromptu weekends away to Edinburgh, the Isle of Arran and other areas of the country. If you are interested in hiking, get out and enjoy the rugged beauty of Scotland. Would recommend walking Ben Lomond!



If you are planning on exploring continental Europe as well, keep an eye on the budget airlines and find flights for dirt cheap. It is a fun game to play to just find the cheapest flights and hop on a plane for a weekend away. The airport is relatively accessible, but with a group of 3 or more it generally worked out cheaper to just Uber.

The Kelvingrove Museum, Necropolis and the Kelvin Grove Park are all must sees in the city. To be quite honest, Glasgow is an old industrial city; there is not a huge number of tourist activities to do there. While this might turn some people off, I found it authentic and comforting in a lot of ways. It was easy to feel at home and comfortable in Glasgow. The best thing to do is keep an eye online and around the university for events and gigs, these are the things that bring the city to life. For example, I would recommend to law students to join the Glasgow University International Law Student Association (GUILS). Many of my best nights and best friends were organised through this student body and they certainly changed my exchange experience for the better.

Final Recommendations

Transport: Take the time to work out the public transport systems early on, they will make your life endlessly easier and allow you to get more out of your time in Scotland.

Meeting people: Actively join university clubs or sport teams. One of my regrets was not meeting enough local students. The accommodation is not conducive to this, so it will take some active effort!

Say Yes: While you are away, it feels like your life is on pause. You have few obligations, and you **MUST** take advantage of this. Don't let there be weekends that pass by where you do nothing of note. Even if it is going to a football game, a pub crawl or a weekend in Spain, if you are tossing up going, just do it. It is very easy for the time to slip away from you, so take advantage of every opportunity. You will always regret that which you didn't do more than things you did do.

Don't panic: I ended up in some hairy situations on occasion, things don't always go to plan. But people are there to help! Ask for help and work out ways to fix your problems. It is a fantastic opportunity to find out what you can handle on your own, and you will grow from the experience as well.

Skyscanner, Megabus and FlixBus: Download these apps. They will make your life a hell of a lot easier getting around, and will provide inspiration for your travels!