

**University of Strathclyde**  
**LLB/BA (Psychology)**  
**Semester 1 2017**

I went on exchange to the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK. I couldn't have chosen a better university or city to attend and I'd absolutely recommend it to anyone. Due to the fact that this was my penultimate semester and I needed to complete both Law and Psychology papers overseas, my host university options were quite narrow. After factoring in my subjects, and the fact that I wanted to be in a European, English-speaking country I had about seven options to choose from. Strathclyde isn't a well-known university and Glasgow isn't a hugely popular travel destination, but I chose it based on past exchange evaluations and I certainly don't regret it.

The best part of Strathclyde and Glasgow for me was the opportunity for travel. I was away almost every weekend. This was possible because I had only a total of eight hours of compulsory class over the entire semester and there were plenty of resources available online to catch up on anything I missed in non-compulsory lectures. As well as this, Glasgow is a very cheap place to live. Supermarket shopping and eating out were both close to half the price I'd pay in NZ, so my weekly food shops cost around \$45 each, leaving plenty of money for travelling. Getting in and out of Glasgow is also really easy, the airport is a 20-minute bus ride from the city centre and Ryanair and EasyJet offer really good flight prices. Skyscanner was a great tool for finding cheap flights.

In terms of travel I went to Paris, Iceland, England, The Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, Ibiza, Germany, Budapest, Italy, Barcelona, Portugal and all over Scotland. I was lucky enough to have several friends around Europe who were also on exchange who I went to visit (free accommodation!) and who also came to stay with me. I had mixed experiences with Air BnB (make sure you read all the reviews), and all good experiences with Booking.com.

### **Accommodation**

The student accommodation at Strathclyde is set out in a "student village" meaning all the halls take up one block right next to the other university buildings. This worked out really well for me because my close friends didn't end up being my hall friends, but it only ever took a couple of minutes for us to visit each other or meet up so it really wasn't a problem. It was also a really cool atmosphere around the village on nights out and on sunny days when people were out on the lawns etc. There is also a bank, pub, cafeteria and study area in the middle of the village. I was in Murray hall, which is set out more like an Otago hall than most of the others in the village, which are set out like flats. I would have preferred to be in a flat situation rather than a hall, but mostly the problem I had was that I was put on a floor that (aside from me and one other exchange student who didn't really leave her room) all of my flatmates were first-years and around 18, so in their first year out of home. This wasn't a huge problem in itself but it was really not what I expected as throughout the housing application process the university had stressed that they would place everyone with others their age and with the same interests etc. I would therefore suggest sending an email to the housing department during the application process to specifically request anything that's important to you. The impression I got was that we were all allocated quite randomly;

from other exchange students I spoke to the choices they submitted didn't seem to have much effect on where they were placed. In terms of cost the hall was around \$180NZ per week, including power and internet. The service wasn't great for the accommodation as it wasn't kept all that clean despite there being a team of cleaners there every day, and there seemed often be a long wait between reporting problems and them being fixed, for example I went without a wardrobe for about three weeks, and the fridge and oven in our kitchen were broken for days at a time.

However, these issues didn't really bother me because I spent very little time at my hall. Overall it wasn't a very important part of my exchange experience.

### **Academics/Course Load**

I took three papers at Strathclyde, which were equivalent to four at Otago. I found the workload much lighter than at Otago. This was partially due to the fact that there was only one assignment and one exam per paper, and many of the lectures ended up being non-compulsory as I was able to mostly choose which topics I wrote about in assignments and exams. The marking also seemed to be easier than I've experienced at Otago.

### **Transport**

You can walk almost everywhere in Glasgow, and the university and housing is right in the centre city. This was great for getting around uni, nights out and doing things during the day. If I did want to get any further afield the subway is cheap and really easy to use, definitely the most straight-forward I've encountered in Europe. The West end is a really nice area to go and visit on the subway.

### **Weather**

I was continuously warned of the weather in Scotland in the lead up to my exchange, so I was expecting it to be terrible. In my experience Glasgow never got very much colder than Dunedin, but it got into the lower temperatures more often. However if you go during first semester you only get the second half of winter and half of summer so it was fine after a couple of months. The accommodation is also really well heated so it isn't like being in a Dunedin flat! Travelling around Europe in May/June got extremely hot, hotter than NZ summer.

### **Food**

The best food in Scotland is easily in Glasgow, there's a massive range of places to eat (and drink) at and all the food is really tasty and good value.



*Ghent, Belgium*



*Thingvellir, Iceland*



*Versailles, France*