

University of Strathclyde
Semester 1 – 2017
BCOM – Marketing and Economics

Going on exchange, although last minute, was one of the best decisions of my life and by far the best semester I've had in my 3 years at University.

I opted for Glasgow as my exchange destination because I wanted to travel the UK and Europe and thought Scotland would be a good base.

ACCOMMODATION

I lived at Birkbeck Court for the semester; it's the largest hall on campus and is well known as a hall for international students. It's also the cheapest; I paid £99 per week for 22 weeks so around \$175 NZD per week. Birkbeck Court is a self-catered hall, there are 17 blocks and each block contains 4 flats stacked on top of each other, 6 people in each flat. I thought the price was really reasonable as the accommodation was 1 minute from the library and 2 minutes from most of my classes. Included in the £99 per week is power, internet and weekly cleaning, the only difference to the more expensive halls is you share 2 bathrooms between the 6 of you, whereas if you're willing to pay £130 per week you can get your own shower and toilet.

My flatmates were aged 20-24 and came from all corners of the globe, Italy, Ireland, Canada, China and Brazil. They were awesome guys, and we did a lot of travel together.



MONEY MATTERS

Compared to New Zealand Glasgow was cheap. Food was probably half of what it is back home and nights out were a lot cheaper. The student union down the road does £1.50 pints

of Tennent's, which become a staple after 6 months. There is also an Aldi supermarket just down the road which is like the Pak n Save of the UK.

Travel is one of the main reasons I went on exchange and flying around the UK/Europe will cost you a lot less than a flight from Wellington – Auckland. Skyscanner was a life saver for planning trips and with Ryan Air and Easy Jet you could pop over to Spain for a weekend for under £40. Mega Bus is great way to travel around the UK, with fares to Edinburgh costing around £4 and an overnight bus to London for under £10.

I opted for a cash passport while abroad, loading it up every now and then with Pounds and Euros. There is quite a heavy commission but it was definitely convenient and most of the time there were no ATM fees. If I were to do my exchange again I would definitely look into opening a Scottish bank account because a few of my friends did this and on the surface it seemed a bit cheaper than a cash passport.

COURSE LOAD

I took 3 papers at Strathclyde, 1 Economics and 2 Marketing, for which I was credited 1 Economics paper and 3 Marketing papers at Otago because the Strathclyde work load per paper is higher. This is true in regards to class contact, all my papers had 2 x 2 hour lectures each week and 1 x 2 hour tutorial every fortnight, so my weekly class contact time was between 12-18 hours.

The papers are very similar to back home, with around 50% of your grade coming from internal assessment and the other 50% from a 2 hour exam. The best thing about Strathclyde was we finished class on 31st March, had a month study leave, and my first exam wasn't until 28th April, so I was able to travel for the first two weeks of the Easter break.

TRANSPORTATION

The city itself is very easy to get around, the halls are right on campus, similar to Dunedin, and the main drag, Sauchiehall Street, is only a 15 minute walk.

Glasgow has a good subway system that will take you to most areas of Glasgow and it's pretty cheap, around £3 for a return ticket. You can get to the Airport for £10 return from the bus station which is a 5 minute walk from campus.

Glasgow is well connected to Europe and the rest of the UK with most flights available from the main airport, often you can find a good deal for flights leaving from Prestwick which is an hour up the road.

WEATHER

Arriving in Scotland in early January was a bit of a shock, coming from a New Zealand summer into a Scottish winter where it often snows and gets dark around 4pm. The weather does get better, with temperatures hitting the early 20's when I left in mid-May and the sun setting a lot later. Europe's only a 2 hour flight away if you need some sun throughout the semester.

EATING

Food is very cheap in Glasgow, your avocado's, peppers and kumara are affordable, not a luxury like they are in New Zealand. Eating out is also quite reasonable, have a look at the Glasgow deals site www.itison.com they have some great deals with many of the local restaurants where you can get anywhere between 50-70% off meals.

THINGS TO DO

There's quite a lot to see and do in Glasgow, the Tennent's Brewery Tour is worth a look, there's also botanical gardens, cathedrals, the Necropolis and a few museums floating round so there's always something to do. If you get the opportunity head to a Scottish football match, anything where Celtic, Rangers or Partick Thistle are playing is a good watch, completely different to watching a sports match in New Zealand.

PLACES TO VISIT

Edinburgh is just up the road so worth a visit, I never went but apparently the Isle of Skye is amazing, get onto Student Tours Scotland (Gary's the guy who runs it) if you're looking to see more of Scotland. I'd highly recommend Ireland for St Patricks Day but you'll have to get onto it early.

You can get to London for very cheap, as low as £1.50 on the overnight Megabus. Megabus is a great way to travel around the UK.

While abroad I was very lucky to travel a lot of Europe, my favourite places would have to be Italy, in particular Rome and the Amalfi Coast, Spain and Croatia.

