

University of Edinburgh

2016 Full Year

BSc Physics minor Music

## University

The University itself is spread over two campuses, George Square for Humanities and King's Buildings for Sciences with about a 45min walk between or a free shuttle service. I had lectures at both campuses so I had to accommodate this fact with my paper choices. It is a bit harder to match science major requirements, so I ended up focussing on my minor (music) requirements and doing some interest papers. The workload is the same but spread out differently, generally less internal assessment and low contact hours (2 or 3 hours a week). You are mostly expected to do a lot of self-guided study and read a lot. Each semester I did two honours level (300/400 level) courses and one first year level, so as not to have too big a workload. Although you are there to attend uni, it is important to leave time to get out and about.



*Cramond Beach. Do not be deceived by the sunshine, it was cold*

## Accommodation

I stayed at Warrender Park Rd both semesters and subletted from a friend in between. Warrender is university accommodation for first years and internationals in Marchmont which is a

pretty fancy neighbourhood. Don't let the first years put you off though, some of the best friends I made came from that building and there are loads of internationals around there as well if you need conversation with non-freshers. I would highly recommend it, 10 mins from main campus, 35 mins from Kings and 20 mins from town with the lovely Meadows, a publicly owned park, in between. I would also recommend Robertson's Close if you aren't a science student because it is right in the middle of town i.e. super close to the pubs and clubs, but also very close to George Square.

## Money Matters

Edinburgh is more expensive than Dunedin however there are lower food costs and shopping at places like Lidl and Primark and Edinburgh's many charity shops will help you

save some pennies. When travelling save money by cooking at the hostel instead of eating out and find free things to do in cities you visit also if you have any overnight layovers because flights are cheaper in the morning/evening then visit

<http://www.sleepinginairports.net/>



*Scotland vs Argentina at Murrayfield. Rugby has a small but loud following in Scotland and like a yellow coat with purple polka dot trousers, the Scottish team are a very plucky outfit.*

### **Things to Do/Places to Go**

There is so much to do in Edinburgh and Scotland, there are castles and churches and abbeys and mountains. I often made day trips to places around Scotland as the train service, Scotrail, is super reliable and reasonably priced over short distances. Places like Dunfermline, Linlithgow, Stirling, Pitlochry and Glasgow are all an hour or so from Waverly station on the train. Also go to the Highlands and the Isle of Skye which are both spectacular. It gets more expensive the further you go, so I bussed to the Highlands mostly. The city of Edinburgh itself has lots to offer too. Arthur's seat, Calton Hill, National Museum, National Gallery, the many walking tours, the Castle and Holyrood and Cramond and Portobello beaches are all worth a look. In the January semester there is a week titled 'Innovative Learning Week' but don't let its name fool you, it is a great opportunity to travel. Similarly, if you don't have too much exam-wise, there is a bit of a break between end of lectures and exams where I managed to get to Italy and Spain for a week and a half which was a nice break from the Edinburgh weather (grey and drizzly). Best of all was the summer break where I travelled around Europe staying on sofas and backpackers. I returned to Edinburgh in mid-July and found work in Edinburgh during the festival. If you are lucky enough to go on a full year exchange, make sure you are in Edinburgh for the Festival. The Fringe Festival is the largest arts festival in the world and during August all the best performers, comedy, acrobatic, music, acting in the UK and from overseas go to Edinburgh. This also means there are loads of jobs going in hospitality and at all the different venues and events. At worst you can always hand out flyers. It was amazing to be involved in it and

see shows. The atmosphere is just incredible, there are so many people and so much going on.

### **General Tips**

- Get your visa application sent away sooner rather than later otherwise you will be left panicking two weeks before you leave then fall up the stairs and graze your knee when celebrating its confirmation.
- Join some clubs and socs, which Edinburgh is really well known for.
- Got to a ceilidh.
- There are loads of University research studies to take part in that give you money if you are broke. Check on mycareers section of MyEd. I found out about this way too late.
- It's the best year/semester of your life but sometimes it won't feel like that and that's ok.
- The New Zealand accent is ridiculous and you will be mercilessly teased.
- If you are only there for a semester, go for the Otago semester 1. It is a bit longer, has more holidays, and you can enjoy the European summer for a bit before heading back to NZ.
- Attend class. They are few, jam packed with content and give you so much information for assignments, tests and exams.

### **Concluding Remarks**

My exchange is the best thing I have ever done and I'm so pleased I did it in Edinburgh. It is an amazing experience in an amazing city. To all those umming and aching about whether or not go on exchange, I quote the well-known shoe manufacturer, "Just do it".



*View from Calton Hill looking down Princes St with the Castle along the Skyline*