

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM/EXCHANGE EVALUATION REPORT

University of Edinburgh, Fall Semester 2014,

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

- a. I stayed in the Turner House at Pollock Halls. I would recommend staying here, the accommodation was in great shape. Freshman and other exchange students are the only people living in Pollock Halls, so everyone is looking to meet new people.
- b. There was one, two-hour orientation for exchange students. It did not cover anything I didn't already know but it was a great way to meet other exchange students.

2. ACADEMICS:

- a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:
 - classroom structure
 - very similar to UW
 - instruction
 - I had multiple professors for every class. The lecturer is someone who is specialized in one particular area of the course.
 - teacher/student relations
 - Same as UW (except you picked on for being American).
 - grading/exams
 - Keep in mind that a 4.0 is equivalent to a 70%. Any grade above a 70 means that your work should be published. Homework is non-existent. My courses had one essay worth about 15% of my grade and a final exam worth the rest.
 - library, computer, and classroom facilities
 - Some buildings are nicer than others, same as UW, but overall very nice
- b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.
 - All professors were very knowledgeable, although some were more engaging than others
- c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?
 - Paul & His Letters (New Testament Study)
- d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?
 - It didn't. I saved up enough elective credits to just take courses I was interest in.

3. HOUSING:

- a. I could have lived in Pollock Halls of residence, a University flat or finding my own accommodation
- b. I picked Pollock Halls because it was catered and everything was already in place before I got there
- c. It depends on what experience you want. Living in Pollock Halls made my transition very easy- but it is similar to doing your freshman year over again.

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

Edinburgh is the most amazing city. There is not really a specific campus; just beautiful University buildings placed all other the city. The medical and science building were quite far away, but I never needed to go there. Edinburgh is an extremely navigable and inviting city.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

- There was never a time were I felt unsafe in Edinburgh. Yes- it is a big city and you need to be smart, but very manageable

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

- a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?
 - Most of the people living in Pollock Halls were posh London. Even though I was studying in Scotland I only had 1 or 2 Scottish friends. All the people I met were very inviting and I met some of my best friends the very first day. My residence hall organized lots of events, I met people by going to those.
- b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.
 - The hardest thing for me was getting used to British humor- it is REALLY sarcastic. Also, people make a lot of stabs at American- you just have to learn to not take it personally and laugh along.

7. FINANCIAL:

- a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?
 - I set up a credit card with no foreign transaction fees. Make sure to have a chip and pin!
- b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation.
 - It is hard to me to tell- I didn't spend much beyond my housing because food was catered and I walked most everywhere.
- c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:

- a. If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?
 - the office was very effective! My only suggestion is to start the process earlier- I felt that a lot of stuff happened very last minute
- b. If the IP&E did not administer your program, please evaluate the program's administration, both in the U.S. and abroad.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

- Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.
- Need to be an independent person, outgoing

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

- How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?
- This program was everything I thought it would be and more 😊

rec'd. 06-27, 2011
des/ipe

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
International Programs and Exchanges
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INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM/EXCHANGE EVALUATION REPORT

Dear Foreign Study Returnee:

The International Programs and Exchanges Office requires that students enrolled in University of Washington direct exchanges or foreign study programs submit a final report to our office concerning their experiences abroad. This report has a dual purpose: to help us evaluate our current exchange ties and programs and to help us inform and orient students who will be participating on foreign study (or are considering applying) in the future. We ask you to reflect on your experiences abroad by addressing each of the topics in this outline. Advice or comments on other topics are also welcome.

The reports are kept on file in the International Programs and Exchanges Office and are available to any prospective student or interested faculty or staff member. If you wish your report to be read by the International Programs and Exchanges Office only, and withheld from all others, please write CONFIDENTIAL at the top of your report.

Thank you for your cooperation. We appreciate your time and effort.

PLEASE TYPE YOUR REPORT OR WRITE LEGIBLY. IF YOU ARE WILLING TO BE CONTACTED BY THE IP&E OR INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS ABOUT THE PROGRAM, PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR CURRENT AND PERMANENT PHONE NUMBERS AND/OR E-MAIL ADDRESSES. THANK YOU!

IP&E PROGRAM EVALUATION OUTLINE:

-Please list your name, program location, term/year of participation, and your current and permanent phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses at the top of your report.

Direct Exchange at the University of Edinburgh (Edinburgh, Scotland)

Academic Year 2010-11

Haven't got a US phone yet, but you can catch me at

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

- a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
 - b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?
- a. If you decide on university accommodations, I'd suggest self-catered ones, since they're generally right in the city center and much more convenient. On the other hand, the catered ones provide a much closer social scene, pretty much like a freshman dorm situation. Sharing a flat will be cheaper than university accommodations, but for international students upon arrival you may have trouble finding a good room that fast, so be prepared to stay in hostels for more than a few nights while you go flat-hunting.

- b. There's a general orientation for all new international students, which consists of the usual celebratory pomp as well as some general introduction to the university. In addition, your college/school will also have an orientation that covers more academic stuff.

2. ACADEMICS:

a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

- classroom structure
- instruction
- teacher/student relations
- grading/exams
- administration
- library, computer, and classroom facilities

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?

d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?

(OVER)

- a. For required courses, you'll have a big lecture and a tutorial, which is like the quiz section at UW. Instruction, teacher/student relations and such are all very similar to UW as they are both large universities. However, your grade will be based on only the final exam/paper, and perhaps one additional short essay during the entire course, so be prepared to study very hard for them since they make or break your course evaluation. I was disappointed with the administration and the facilities, as you still have to do a lot of stuff in person rather than online compared to UW (course registration, reserving books, etc.). The library, although aesthetically pleasing, was really difficult to use. I particularly had trouble with reserving computers and studying room, since the online booking system is not connected to the individual computers, so essentially it operates on an honor code, and sometimes people refuse to give their spots up. Word is they're planning to overhaul the entire IT system, so we'll see.
- b. I would say it's on par with UW and most large universities.
- c. I really enjoyed Richard Baxstrom from social anthropology.
- d. This was my extra year as I could've graduated last year, so I used the time to take classes that are not in my major. Some of them turned out well, others not so much, but overall it was a valuable experience.

3. HOUSING:

a. What housing options were available to you?

b. Which did you choose, and why?

c. What would you recommend?

- a. The university guarantees accommodation (catered and non-catered) to international students, and you can also look for outside accommodations.
- b. I picked non-catered university accommodations. Even though they're a bit more expensive compared to looking for a flat myself, I decided that it's not worth the trouble to fly to a new country and immediately have to go flat-hunting.
- c. Feeling like an Edinburgh native now, I would say looking for a flat is a much better option, but for a new student university accommodation is a good bet (as most freshmen live in uni accom for a year before moving out).

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

The best part of this exchange is the city of Edinburgh. It is one of the most gorgeous places you'll ever go in the world. The university is right in the center of Old Town blending in with the city. Holyrood Park is a must-see; I go there almost every day hiking. You need to take the time and walk the city street by street to truly appreciate it.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.

Edinburgh is a safe city, just avoid drunken brawls in the early mornings.

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

- a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?
(e.g., clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)
- b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.
(e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

- a. Join clubs and sport societies. Pubs are popular hangouts, much like cafes in Seattle.
- b. There will probably be a fair bit of American bashing in your courses, though none of it is personal and is much better now compared to the start of post-9/11 invasion. I didn't have much trouble with any of the social stuff.

7. FINANCIAL:

- a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?
 - b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.
 - c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.
 - d. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any complications?
If so, how did you address them?
- a. Capital One credit card doesn't charge foreign transaction fees. Bank of America belongs to the Global Alliance ATM system, so if you use it to withdraw money from a Barclays ATM in the U.K. there's no transaction fee either.
 - b. Budget 500 quids for rent, and additional 300 for everything else.
 - c. Nothing really.
 - d. Yes I did, and since it's a direct exchange there's no complications.

8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:

- a. If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?
- b. If the IP&E did not administer your program, please evaluate the program's administration, both in the U.S. and abroad.

It was fine, nothing a few emails can't fix.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.

Someone who is independent and enjoys a large, urban university atmosphere.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

Academically, I expected something similar to UW, and much of that is true. If you're a transfer student from a liberal arts college, then you know a big university sometimes really doesn't offer that high quality classroom experience compared to a small school. That being said, I went to Edinburgh more for the city and the experience rather than the course, so overall I really enjoyed it.

NOV 05 2010

IPE Evaluation Report
University of Edinburgh
2009/2010 Direct Exchange

1 A – I would personally recommend taking advantage of the university provided flats. They put you with other students, saves you the trouble of trying to find a place independently, and gives you some privacy as well.

1 B – N/A

2 A – The classroom structure is fairly similar, at least it was in the chemical engineering department. Classes ranged from large lectures to more intimate settings. One difference is that for larger lectures classes will change professors for different subjects in the class. As far as instruction is concerned, lecturing style felt fairly familiar to what I was used to from the University of Washington. They also had tutorials, though, at least for my chemical engineering classes, they were sometimes taught by the professor themselves which was different. As a fairly independent learner I've never really tested teacher/student relations, and Edinburgh was the same, so I'm not the best judge of this. The grading system at the university was completely different from what I was used to here. For one anything above a 70% is considered an A, which sounds good at first, but it does not necessarily make it easier to get an A. For most of my classes my entire grade was determined by the final examination, which in some cases, only consisted of two questions. I greatly resented this method of assessment. The administration is also quite dissimilar, and in my opinion, much more frustrating. One does not register for their own classes they must go through their Director of Studies to do anything. There is no flexibility in the amount of credits you can take, and electives outside your degree are nearly impossible to take due to scheduling conflicts. They do not offer alternate sections of the same course, which limits ones options as well. The library, computer, and classroom facilities were not unlike what we have here.

2 B – The quality and content of the lectures were usually pretty good, I had a few low quality professors, but that is to be expected anywhere. The courses seemed to contain about as much material as you would find in a class here, though there is less instruction and more independent learning, which I liked. Overall I found instruction worth my time.

2 C – As I did chemical engineering I would only recommend my courses to other students of my degree. I did, however, take one elective, Scotland: Society and Politics, which was an informative class on the nation and something all students might find beneficial.

2 D – The classes lined up fairly well with my degree, I have not had any troubles transferring credits. Though there is one class that I was not able to get an equivalent class to and am now having to work around this setback. Things were also a bit out of order and I did have to teach myself some of the background for certain classes.

3 A – The options for housing basically consisted of living in Pollock Halls, which are similar to our dorms, one of the many university owned flat complexes, or finding a flat on your own.

3 B – I went with the university owned flat, it was an easy way to get a place without having to look and was conducive to my expectations for living: being able to cook my own food, living with other students, and being close to the city.

3 C – I would recommend what I went with

4 – There are actually two campuses: the main one that is located in old town Edinburgh referred to as “George Square,” and another located about two miles south called the “King’s Buildings.” The latter was for science and engineering courses, and consequently where all but one of my classes were. The George Square campus has a lot of beautiful old buildings and is neatly nestled in one of the main parts of the city. It houses the student union building (Teviot) and the main library. The Kings Buildings by contrast is made up entirely by modern architecture and is in the southern suburbs of the city, I found it to be a bit of an anachronism.

5 – I had no real concerns, the city was fairly safe and the quality of life is no different from here. With a student visa you are entitled to use the National Health Service which provides free healthcare. I used it a few times and was not disappointed with it.

6 A – The societies in Edinburgh were a lot better established then what I have encountered here, and there were a lot of social activities that the university put on. I joined the choir, the photo society, and the indie club. I even cofounded the beer society during my stay (which is apparently now blooming). Almost all the societies involve going to a pub and socializing so they are a great way of making friends.

6 B – It is fairly easy to assimilate to Scottish culture, but there are a number of small and minute differences that take observation and time to learn. The vocabulary is different and even at the end of my stay I was still learning some new British words. Also accent is a dead give away over there, which is usually not a problem, but something to be aware of.

7 A – That’s a hard call, I used travelers checks but I don’t know that I’d recommend it. It is fairly easy to open a bank account there and there are usually only very nominal fees for wiring money over from overseas, so that would probably be my suggestion.

7 B – The monthly spending depends a lot on rent, which varies a lot from room to room and you are generally randomly assigned so its hard to predict that. I think my monthly rent was about 320 pounds, but as I was sharing a room, I had one of the cheapest rents possible. Food can be gotten fairly cheaply (i.e. Tesco’s), I probably spent around 90 pounds a month. Unless you plan on taxing back from going out you wont really need money for transportation other than the occasional bus trip if so desired. If you plan on going out, allow yourself a fair amount of money. A night at the bars and/or clubs can range from 10 quid if you’re being stingy (or at one of the union bars) all the way up to 30 or 40 quid. A lot of ones monthly budget depends on how much one is willing to spend and what kind of lifestyle they want to have.

7 C – You do have to pay a monthly fee for a bank account over there, which was unexpected for me. Besides that the only surprise expenses that I can recall happened when I was traveling, the biggest of which was getting stranded in Portugal due to the volcano in Iceland ground all Northern European flights.

7 D – N/A

8 A – The office did arrange my application and enrollment for the University of Edinburgh, and provided some help in preparing me for life in the UK. However I felt like I was on my own for doing a student visa application, arranging transportation, transferring money, finding accommodations, and dealing with the university bureaucracy after my arrival. I feel that more direction, especially on doing visa applications, would benefit future students greatly.

8 B – N/A

9 This is kind of a difficult question to answer, I would say its best suited for any student that wants to experience life in Europe but does not feel confident enough in a foreign language to take classes in it. A student who is out going, open minded, willing to try new things, and capable of balancing a new and exciting social life with their school work

10 My personal expectations were met, and even surpassed. I learned to live life in the UK, and loved it. While the US will always be my home I greatly enjoyed taking part of their culture, and to be honest have been missing it. I made close friends and rarely lacked something to do. The set up of the university allows social connections to be made quite easily. While there I also pursued my goal of backpacking Europe, which was a very fulfilling experience. As far as academic expectations, I felt a bit let down, I had a good idea what I was getting into but I still found the process frustrating, and studying a very strict engineering degree made getting the classes I need and coordinating between both my home and abroad departments difficult. I often felt frustrated but the content of the classes themselves was on the whole was generally good and I was able to get a lot of the credits I needed. So I would say my expectations were fairly reasonable, I knew that doing this might cause some troubles with my degree and that meeting my personal goals would require a lot of initiative and that I shouldn't expect it to be amazing all the time. Upon reflection I don't feel let down at all, nor to I regret any second of it.

READ!

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University of Edinburgh
Academic year 2008-2009

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

At UE, you move into your accommodation before orientation and can get in there quite early. If you do get there extra early, the Budget Backpackers hostel on Cowgate is supposedly good, and Cowgate is a great location if you're there by yourself or with friends: it's one of the pub rows and close to basically everything.

b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?

The new student orientation was very thorough and helpful: it had different orientations for different disciplines, and introduces you to the basics of the department and the university, advisers, and resources. There are also plenty of international student events during Freshers' Week (UE equivalent of Dawg Daze). However, if there's stuff you can't attend, there are also resources on campus and online that can help you out (found on the UE website).

2. ACADEMICS:

a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

- *classroom structure*: If you're taking third year honors courses, the classes will be about 10 people and consist of weekly two-hour conversation- and report-based meetings (at least was my experience in the English department). First and second year courses are usually 3x/week lectures and once a week quiz sections called tutorials.

- *instruction*: Professors absolutely expect you to be prepared and ready to discuss anything that was assigned the class before. If you're not able to discuss topics, both the professor and the students will be surprised and a little disgusted.

- *teacher/student relations*: Basically the same as UW, except one-on-one meetings aren't ever required. Professors are available by appointment or during their office hour, and are generally happy to help out. Students do tend to be less dependent on instructors in general, and often only see them once a week during class.

- *grading/exams*: The grading system can be terrifying until you realize that a 70 is actually very good in the UK. In English Lit, professors seemed to like essays that were more geared toward analyzing already existing critical analyses rather than developing your own opinions about the literature, unfortunately. Exams are ridiculous: in many classes that are only Semester 1, you don't even sit the exam until the end of Semester 2; like you're really going to remember everything from months ago. Exams are usually 1-4 essay questions and last about two or three hours. Usually there is one essay and/or one exam at the end of Semester 1 and 2, and that's about it for course work other than the odd group report.

- *library, computer, and classroom facilities*: UE just completely remodeled their main library (of course, right as I was leaving). Now it's extremely accessible and almost unnecessarily chic, but pretty great. If you want to get textbooks from the library, get them early because they're usually in high demand, but there's a good selection (of everything) and mostly easy to find.

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

This really depends on the professor. You might get the odd wildly intimidating one or one who's just about to retire and couldn't care less, but in my experience at least, the instructors are there because they *really* love what they teach, and you can tell. The education is distinctly British, which to me means a little distanced and old-fashioned, but not necessarily in a bad way. They just expect independence and preparedness, I guess. It's a lot of: here's what you have to do, now do it, and without much more guidance than that unless you seek it out (which is totally acceptable). It's great for people who can rouse themselves enough to not wait till the day before it's due to start an essay (or people who don't mind that they can't).

c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?

If you're doing English, anything with Dr. David Salter you *have* to take. He's the most delightful, excited, sweet professor (and he brings biscuits and tea to class!). Dr. Neill Martin does Scottish Ethnology 1 for Semester 1, and though the second semester of the course isn't nearly as interesting as the first, it's definitely worth taking just to hear him lecture about shotgun weddings and compare himself to George Clooney.

d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?

It gave a different perspective on education in general (and honestly, though I loved the University, it made me appreciate UW's way of instructing), for one. Some of the novels, for instance, in my English classes, were ones that had been referenced or that I had read in English classes at UW, but were approached in an entirely different way, and shed light on the subjects and ways of analyzing literature.

3. HOUSING:

a. What housing options were available to you?

Apparently, most international students took residence in Pollock Halls, which is catered and known as the 'posh freshers' housing, so I avoided it, and everyone I know who did end up there was not too fond of it. There were plenty of other options though, usually larger residences and a few flats – self-catered is the best option, I think.

c. Which did you choose, and why?

I didn't know much about any of the housing, so I requested the cheapest place and the cheapest room they could give me—which they didn't. But I'm glad they didn't, because I ended up in the best (and not too expensive) flat I could have wished for, Roxburgh Place. UE also takes forever to get back to you about housing, so don't freak out if you don't hear by the time they tell you you should.

d. What would you recommend?

Oww, my heart aches for Roxburgh Place. It was ideal for me. It turned out to be, though I didn't know it upon arrival, two floors of post-grads (grad students) and three floors of international students. Literally two minutes walking distance from George Square

(where most of the university's Humanities buildings are located), about 60 people in the building, and big, clean, comfortable rooms (bigger than my room at home), nice kitchens and sitting rooms. Twelve people to a floor, so whom you end up with is crucial, but if you get a good gang, which I was lucky enough to, it's absolutely perfect. (If you end up on Floor 2, use the giant goblet well).

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

Other than the frankly ugly main library and Appleton Tower, the university buildings are gorgeous. George Square and especially the expansive Meadows, two parks on campus, are beautiful and serve as perfect refuge from school, but are also good places to study. People constantly play soccer and barbecue, jog and fence and jump rope there; it's always lively and fun. The area around the university, Old Town, is now my favorite part of the world. Cobblestone streets continue to be charming even when it's pouring and you slip and fall, because, well, you're in *Edinburgh*. Pubs and cafes are everywhere and unrivaled in their purpose; you'll quickly find your favorites (probably all of them). Princes Street, the main shopping area, is not too intimidating even when crowded and has killer shops (though a quick hour-long train ride to Glasgow will get you even more stores at even better prices) and nice restaurants. Even after living there for a year, I never got used to walking around the mall and looking up to see the Walter Scott monument, a huge, beautiful gothic work of art, the Princes Street Gardens, a pretty, relaxing stretch of park, and Edinburgh Castle, which is impossible to take for granted every time you see it. In Edinburgh, you're always surrounded by history and historic buildings; everything with a story. And it never gets old. Grassmarket is a great stretch that gets you quickly to the castle, and has pubs, restaurants and shops. The Royal Mile is touristy but hardly feels offensively so, and is beautiful to walk up or down, and relax outside St. Giles cathedral, sneer at or salute the statue of David Hume (depending on your philosophical leanings) and spit on the Heart of Midlothian. Cowgate is a little dingier but entertainingly so, and endlessly fun at night. George Street has the more upscale shops, restaurants and clubs, but isn't snooty. Snooty? Snooty. Calton Hill has the best view of the city (other than maybe the top of Arthur's Seat) and is home to the Beltane festival in spring that *must* be attended (~~naked people in giant headdresses painted blue and red eating fire and~~ whacking you with birch switches—amazing). It also houses the National Monument, which you should ask different Scots for their opinion on, along with Parliament. Arthur's Seat, a giant, rocky crag by Holyrood Park (near the Palace where the Queen lives when she goes to Edinburgh) is a tiring but amazing climb and maybe the most beautiful place I've ever seen, yet close and easy enough to go to for a jog along every day. At this point even thinking about Tesco (the UK's Safeway) excites in me an achy nostalgia for Edinburgh. I really can't do justice to the landscape of Edinburgh: you'll never stop discovering new places and appreciating or re-appreciating the beauty that refuses to be seen as quaint, but is home to some of the most gorgeous architecture and natural surroundings I've ever seen. Then there's the feeling, the attitude of the place. I know that's a really irritating way to describe a city because it's so intangible, but that's really the best thing about it. It's energetic but relaxed, sophisticated but roguish: just really fun and incredibly inviting. Edinburgh is your quirky yet decidedly classy, unpretentious cousin dressed alternately in tweed blazers and neon leg warmers, who is

interested in absolutely everything and wants to not just tell you about it but show you, who will be wild when you want her to and will sit and watch *Arrested Development* when you're not up to going out. And who also really likes whisky. Best place on earth? Probably.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.

I felt safer in Edinburgh than even Seattle. I never used the school's health services or the NHS, but I know people who did and they only had positive things to say about them. The area is crawling with university kids, so keeping an eye out for hoards of drunk guys past midnight is a good idea. Other than that, it's just your basic moderately populated city precautions.

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?

I'm not really that much of an extracurricular activities person, but I had an easy enough time feeling comfortable very quickly. Get to know your flatmates. Go on Freshers' Week pub/café crawls, expeditions to the castle, bookstores, around town, everything. Friends of mine got to know people mostly through sports (try shinty: it's like Scottish field hockey. Really fun, really dangerous) or getting a job (American theme bars like Sportsters are more likely to hire you for your accent... but then you'll have to work at Sportsters). Pubs really are the height of socializing in Edinburgh, and there are some really fantastic ones: Brass Monkey, The Tron, Bow Bar, Three Sisters, the Royal Oak, the Jolly Judge, Dropkick Murphys, Brauhaus, Pear Tree, 56 North and anything on Grassmarket are good) and clubs if you're into that (the sometimes overly-hipster Cabaret Voltaire, the dingy Sneaky Pete's, the slightly classier (whatever that means for UK clubs) Opal). There are endless things to do, plays to see, concerts to go to, clubs to join, ceilidhs to embarrass yourself at. Really, anything you're into, there's a good chance someone else at UE has already created a club for it. Oh, and the International Student Center! They do trips and organize events that are usually pretty excellent.

b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them. (e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

The UK is very much like the US in many ways—especially socially. There are things that you notice in the beginning, none too unpleasant, but you get so used to them so quickly that they don't really cause a problem. Biscuits not cookies, toilet not bathroom, lift not elevator, a lot of extra 'u's and 's's instead of 'z's, and the constant misuse of the word "literally" are really the only things that stand out to me. I was called out for being American quite a few times, but hardly ever in a negative way (especially after the election!), and cultural differences were really only a point of interest. Oh also, don't rock the boat by sharing your opinion on Scottish independence unless you agree with the 'Scottish not British' flyers that you'll see everywhere. And most people hate Gordon Brown.

7. FINANCIAL:

a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?

Get a Scottish bank account! It's not a big deal at all. Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS, you'll see it everywhere) is the most prominent. You can transfer money from your American one pretty easily whenever you need to and do online banking too. Western Union is also good if you have someone at home who can access an account.

b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

Rent you generally figure out before you even get there, using the payment plan that works for you best. About 40-80 pounds a month on groceries. I walked everywhere. If you're in science at the King's Buildings there's a free bus there too, but if you do take the regular bus, it's 1 pound 20p per ride, though Edinburgh is entirely walkable.

b. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

Pubs, cafes and restaurants are all great in Edinburgh, so if you can, set aside maybe twenty pounds or so every couple weeks for that kind of thing, though you might end up doing even more than that.

Spur of the moment trips to Glasgow and other towns, or even around Europe, will probably (hopefully) happen, so be set for that too.

c. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any complications? If so, how did you address them?

I never had an issue with Financial Aid until I was notified, after my study abroad had ended, that I didn't have enough credits to get Financial Aid for the quarter after I returned from Scotland. This will, however, supposedly be rectified once you submit your Credit Evaluation form and get your credits transferred to UW credits.

8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:

a. If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?

IP&E was great. Everyone who I talked to was very helpful and friendly and put me at ease about what was coming. I could have used a little more information, though, about what to expect from UE. I did the orientation and that was basically it from UW. And since UE was very slow communicating things like housing and even getting me my acceptance letter and my course information, it would have been nice to at least know from UW that I had a long wait ahead. And if IP&E didn't know before: UE is slowww.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.

Academically, someone who is—I hate the phrase but—self-motivated and doesn't need a lot of little assignments with feedback to feel confident in their work. Or someone who doesn't want to do much work during the semester but is cool with studying a ton right before finals. English majors rejoice: Edinburgh loves literature more than almost anything, other than maybe whisky and greenery (though all three at once is preferable). An interest in Scotland is not necessary (because by the time you leave you'll have it, guaranteed) but if it's there, Edinburgh is the place to feed it. Socially, someone who is comfortable with pubs being the main source of entertainment, or could use some loosening up. Seriously, if you consider yourself high maintenance at all, you probably need Edinburgh.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

I went into this thing forcing myself to keep low expectations because I didn't want them to be deflated, which was silly, because there is nothing that could have prepared me for how positively life-changing this past year was. Anything I say here is going to sound cheesy, but that's just testament to how incredible it was. I met some of the best people I've ever known, learned things I didn't even realize I needed to know, and became not a different person but less uptight, more appreciative, more interested and god, I hope more *interesting*. You don't go in thinking that something like living in a country that's not even that different from yours for a year has the capacity to alter you so intensely and so permanently, but it does, and completely. It was worth every cent, every ounce of energy, and every second of my time. Yes, it's tough at times, but you'll look back even on those times and see that they were there for a reason, and you'll be glad of them. You want something you won't regret? This is it.

My year in Edinburgh was hands down the best year of my life, and even if it's not yours, it will absolutely change you for the better. I can't really say anything else except: do it. Do it NOW.

DA ✓
OCT 27 2008

University of Edinburgh Direct Exchange
Academic year 07-08

1. Arrival Overseas/ On-site Orientation
 - a. Recommended Accommodations: Upon arriving I went straight to my apartment, so did not require additional accommodation, however there are many hotels and bed and breakfasts near each housing area.
 - b. Program/exchange orientation: There was no orientation strictly for the exchange program, however during the week prior to the start of classes there are numerous University of Edinburgh organized orientations for new and international student. It is called freshers week and there are many opportunities to meet people and familiarize yourself with the University and the city. The only negative aspect of this orientation is that it seems to go on for a long time (9 days).
2. Academics
 - a. Comparison of academic instruction
 - i. Classroom structure: The class structure was similar to the University of Washington with lectures, quiz sections and lab for larger classes and about 40 in the smaller discussion based classes.
 - ii. Instruction: The classes did not meet very often for the amount of credit given, the semester is only 10 weeks. Additionally, there usually is not a class textbook with assigned reading, rather a bibliography that you can reference and study the sections you deem necessary. In that way the instruction can be viewed as more independent. This does not mean the classes were harder, it just required the student to be more resourceful and guide him/herself through studying.
 - iii. Teacher/student relations: This is about the same as the University of Washington, with professors holding office hours and being accessible to students needs.
 - iv. Grading/exams: All of the sciences classes I took had three components to the grade, a final, a research paper, and a lab examination. The non-science classes only had two components to the grade, a research paper and a final.
 - v. Administration: The administration seemed very disorganized and difficult to navigate, however if you have an issue, just be patient and it will be solved eventually.
 - vi. Library, computer and classroom facilities: One of the neat things about the university is how old it is, which is cool to look at and experience. However, some of the lecture theaters are uncomfortable to sit in for hours. Yet, the university is up to date with technology providing ample resources for students to use.

- b. Quality and content of instruction: How the education system is set up, each class tends to stand on its own and not require any prerequisites. This leads to one class covering everything from the basics to the advanced. As a result, the class seems slow at the beginning, but moves through the material quickly. Furthermore, for the sciences classes, multiple lecturers taught the class and there was not always cohesion between lecturers and at some times overlap. However the quality of individual instruction was good, just a bit disorganized when taken as a unit.
 - c. Recommended courses: For science classes I would recommend Molecular Genetics 3, it was well organized and the student learns a lot, however there is some overlap with Microm 411 and Genome 371. I would also recommend Art History: Sinners, Saints, and Seers Insular Art from 600-900. It was an interesting way to learn about Scottish history and interact with the artifacts that remain.
 - d. How did the coursework relate to UW study: The science classes were a good complement to my degree, however it did not transfer well (or at all) to credit towards my degree. The non-science classes worked well for general education requirements.
- 3. Housing:
 - a. Available options: There were numerous options available, everything from independent housing to university housing, both catered, and non-catered, in flats or in dorms.
 - b. My housing: I chose to live in the non-catered university flats. I chose this as it was an easy way to ensure housing, so I didn't have to look once I arrived. Additionally, I enjoy cooking for myself and the responsibility of living alone, so I chose the non-catered option.
 - c. Recommendation: I would recommend the non-catered flats, as my flatmates became my closest friends abroad. Plus it gave me a chance go grocery shopping and experience the various foodstuffs in Scotland.
- 4. Program/Exchange site: There wasn't really any real campus, rather the university buildings were scattered throughout the city. It was very easy to get around by walking, however sometimes the weather made for a cold walk. There is plenty to see and do within the city and there is good, economical transportation between cities. There is a portion of the university that is a small campus, called King's buildings where many of the science classes are held. The campus is small and outside of the city and more in a residential area.
- 5. Health and Safety: If you will be there for a while, it is good to register with a doctor, because it is a difficult procedure to receive treatment in an emergency without a registered doctor. However, as there is a medical school as part of the university, there are ample medical resources. The city itself isn't very dangerous, efforts have been made to quell shady areas. General precautions will suffice. There is a drinking issue in the city, however the people are mainly harmless and easy to avoid, like not walking through the pub areas when the pubs close.
- 6. Cultural aspects

- a. Integration into the community: To integrate myself into the Edinburgh community I joined clubs, met people through housing arrangements, classes, and also took a part time job (which I particularly enjoyed as I met people outside of the university community). The university provides many options to meet fellow students who are used to welcoming many international students.
 - b. Cultural Differences: The main difference I encountered was drinking. I myself do not drink much, but it is a large part of Scottish culture, with many a university event dealing with alcohol (multiple university buildings contain bars). Excessive drinking is easy to avoid, but makes meeting people a bit more difficult, as it is the social thing to do. Aside from that, there were some stereotypes to deal with, but they made for amusing conversation rather than conflict.
7. Financial:
 - a. Best way to transfer money: Capital One credit cards are useful, since they are a master card, so it is accepted most places. Additionally they do not charge a processing fee for transactions and the daily exchange rate is given. For financing, I brought over some money I had previously converted to pounds, and opened a bank account. I also got a job to help pay for expenses.
 - b. Monthly spending money: Rent was around £300 a month, however I paid for housing in one payment before arriving. For food and transportation and other expenses, about £100 a month.
 - c. Unexpected expenses: Larger expenses I encountered were just side trips I decided to take while abroad. Cheap flights can be found to numerous other countries, however the trip as a whole ends up costing a sum.
8. Program/ Exchange administration: Since this was a direct exchange, it seemed to have a very loose administration. After my interview to be accepted into the program I never talked to anyone. A little more guidance would be helpful, such as meeting the other people in the exchange. However it was more on the side of the University of Edinburgh where more information and guidance would be helpful, such as the housing options available and other planning prior to arrival, but everything worked out fine.
9. Program/student type: This program requires an independent, sociable student as it depends on the student's effort to get what he/she seeks out of the experience. In that respect it also requires a responsible patient student who doesn't mind dealing with confusing bureaucratic procedures.
10. Overall experience: As a whole the program was very enjoyable. It didn't quite meet my expectations academically as I was expecting the coursework to be more rigorous, not starting from the basics and working up in one class. I suppose since the courses were more independent I was expecting more to be expected of the students, however it was about the same as at UW. Furthermore, I found it really helpful having a job not associated with the University as it allowed me to meet more people and see more of the culture away from the University. This was meaningful to me as the university community was similar to the UW community, so it was nice to see what the "real" Scottish community was about.

DH ✓
JUL 20 2007

International Exchange Evaluation
7/19/07

Edinburgh

1) a. I stayed in university flats. I applied online over the summer and was able to move in the day I arrived. Hostels anywhere in the city center would be another cheap alternative.

b. The orientation included what was the purpose of a Director of Studies, how courses were organized and a welcome to the university. I did not find it particularly helpful content-wise, but it was a nice way to network with other international students at the university.

2) a. I took all fourth year courses, which were very small, 8-30 people. There were very few hours of class each week (3 per class maximum) and we were expected to do a lot of reading outside of class, which comprised the majority of what was learned in each course. Chemistry courses focused a lot on practical techniques and less on theory than I am used to. In history, courses included both lecture and discussion based on reading. Chemistry courses were purely lecture by roughly 5 different lecturers over a 10 week period plus one tutorial per lecturer which went over a single problem set that they sent out in advance. There were no graded assignments in chemistry and there was only a single 3000 word essay that was 25% of the course grade for the history courses. Some of my history courses also had students present an introduction to discussion topics, but these were not graded. All additional marks were decided based on a single 2-3 hour exam in late April to May, which we were given about 4 weeks to prepare for without classes. In general, teachers keep their distance from students, but not particularly more than in larger classes at the UW. Lecturers do tend to be very helpful if you make an appointment to meet with them. There are no scheduled office hours for students. Administrative material can be hard to come by. Most things are posted on walls in the department building rather than online and are rarely announced, so you must look regularly. You are assigned a Director of Studies who is essentially your advocate and can help you navigate any administrative issue. They are members of the teaching faculty, but have greater knowledge of requirements and procedures and are therefore a great asset. There are two main libraries that I used on campus, the Main Library for most books and the Darwin Library for science books. Both have stocks that are quite limited and there can be heavy demand for any book that is associated with course material, particularly since few people purchase books for class since there are so many to read. There are quite a few computers in the library and separate computer labs. There is also internet in all the university accommodations.

b. Most of the lecturers were quite good. Some were difficult to understand or failed to communicate what they wanted you to know effectively, but for the most part, most of the lecturers were good at conveying the necessary information and had selected good texts to compliment their lectures. There was a greater tendency to get more monotonous lecturers than is normal at the UW, but it was not enough to impair learning and ultimately just felt like a different learning environment.

c. I very much enjoyed my Medicinal Chemistry and Structural Chemistry courses. I also felt that Stana Nenadic in her Trade Plunder and Planters in Jamaica course was very engaging.

d. I took courses solely in the areas of my two majors, but I tried to take courses that were not offered at the UW so that they would compliment what I already had. The 4th year chemistry students are expected to have a stronger inorganic chemistry background than I had when I entered, but I did not find that an insurmountable obstacle.

3) a. There are typical university dorms, university flats and private flats around town.

b. I lived in Sciennes, a university run block of flats, which was relatively nice and convenient, although there was little shared space for socialization. Since I applied online in advance, I could move in as soon as I got there plus it had a kitchen and was between the two campuses of the university.

c. If going for one quarter, the more dorm style accommodations at Pollock Halls may be preferable because you will not need to buy cooking equipment, etc... The university is spread onto two campuses that are half an hours walk away from each other. Since I used both campuses for classes, Sciennes, which is between the two, had an ideal location. Private accommodations are not always easy to find or less expensive, but are in much nicer buildings and commonly have much better layouts. Students commonly live in Marchmont, along Nicolson Street and a few in New Town.

4) The campus is split into two pieces. One is the arts and humanities campus, George Square, which is integrated into the urban center of the city and the science and engineering campus, King's Buildings, which is in a residential suburb about a 30 minute walk from George Square has a much more defined campus. The university flanks the commercial/tourist core of the city on the north, which contains Edinburgh Castle on the core of an ancient volcano, and borders an upper middle class neighborhood of row houses to the south. Nearby to the east is a large park where a relatively large hill called Arthur's Seat projects above the city. It is a very nice part of town and most of the heart of the city is nearby and bus access is relatively good.

5) Medical care is fully covered by the British social health care system, the NHS. They are quite good, and it is pretty easy to register and make an appointment. Most of Edinburgh is very safe, although petty crimes like theft do happen. I have been consistently told to stay out of the park called the Meadows, which is just south of campus after dark, but have never heard of anyone having problems there or really anywhere else.

6) a. I had a difficult time meeting people both within the university and outside, but there were certainly places I had more success in than others. University organizations were very helpful. I joined the EUMS Orchestra, which was a fun way to keep up my cello playing plus meet other people in different fields. Many of the people I know met

people through the international office, although they were mostly people that were not from the UK. The weekly international pub night at Bannerman's was popular and quite fun. I also volunteered at an organization that supports HIV positive individuals, which was a very nice way to meet both from the university and from the surrounding community. I found it very difficult to meet people through classes since my classes were fourth year courses and most people already had very established groups of friends. I was disappointed by the level of interaction within my building of flats.

b. The majority of British culture is very similar to that of the US and most differences are quite well known. There is substantially more drinking throughout the week, including going out quite late on weeknights. I do not drink, so this presented a minor problem, but I never had a problem with people respecting my choice, even at pubs and nightclubs as long as I didn't make a big deal of it. The single most surprising cultural difference I encountered was that I very much felt that ambition was not well respected. I am familiar with plenty of students at the UW choosing not to put the maximum amount of effort into their career, but working hard for high goals is usually considered honorable. That was consistently not the attitude that I met throughout my time in Edinburgh. I understand this may sound strange, but I felt that there was a very different approach to how one builds a career and where a career fit into the larger structure of your life. Eventually I learned to keep the details of my career goals to myself. Another major issue was a general dislike of Americans that I encountered quite frequently. I believe this is far from exclusive to the UK or even Europe, but many individuals feel very passionately that the US is having a negative effect on the world. I found that just being myself and when directly confronted, letting people know that I agree, the US is far from perfect, but nevertheless, I do not believe it is a lost cause.

7) a. I simply used my debit card to withdraw money out of my US account. There were transaction fees, but overall they did not appear to be any more than if I had transferred all my money over in one large sum into a UK bank account. Many of the people I know did this and had far less trouble than those who tried to set up a UK account.

b. The cost of living in the UK is uniformly high across the country. Overall, I would recommend having at least \$1000 a month. This might include a minimum amount of travel and going out, but it would need careful budgeting.

c. I did not fully calculate in the cost of buying kitchen utensils, hairdryers, etc... before going. Also there are fees for joining societies, so if you intend to join a society, as I would recommend, then factor that into your budget as well.

d. I did not use financial aid to fund my trip.

8) a. I have had minimal communication with the IP&E office. I was, for the most part, unaware of any of the services that were available. More active involvement would have been appreciated.

b. N/A

9) This program is best suited for a student who is already quite independent in their studies and in their personal life as well. Otherwise, most people would be well prepared to study at the University of Edinburgh.

10) Academically, the courses were easier and the exams a bit harder than I expected. I also learned quite a lot, which was great. Personally, I expected to make friends and fit in much easier than I did. Ultimately, I ended up learning a lot more than I had planned, about my areas of study, European culture and myself, and overall enjoying it much less. I still believe it was a very useful experience.