

GLASGOW

SCOTLAND



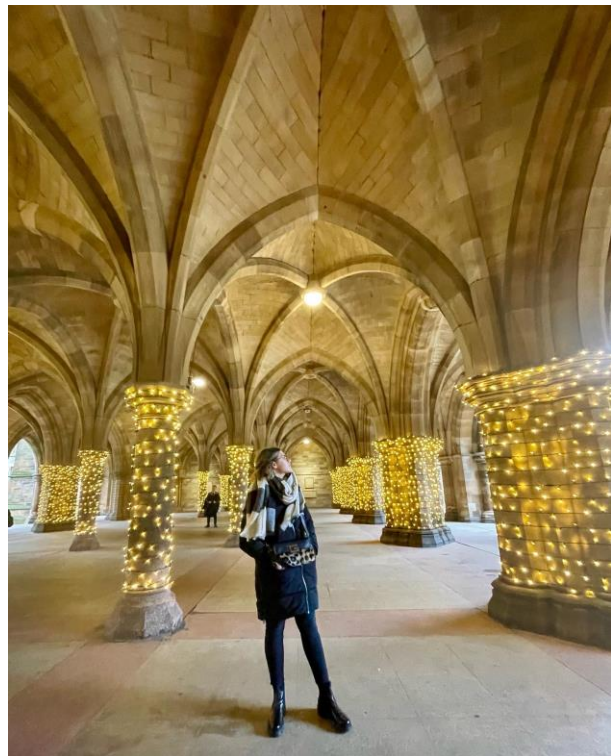
WINTER TERM 2022 (JAN 6TH – MAY 27TH)

WHY?

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

As a future English teacher, I feel like going abroad during your studies is a must, not just to improve your English skills, but to meet new people, to immerse yourself into a new culture, and to grow as a person (besides, teachers who have lots of stories to tell are the best ones anyways); and since ERASMUS merely offers a few English speaking countries, my choices were rather slim. I had the agony of choice between Ireland, Scotland, and England. Choosing Scotland over Ireland or England was purely opportunistic and strategic as the UK was leaving the ERASMUS program, and the King's College in London does not have any suitable courses for secondary education students.

Perusing the list of partner institutions, the most attractive city to study at (to me at least) was Glasgow. I have to admit that I did not choose University of Glasgow because of the fact that it has been ranked the 19th top university in the world, 1st in Scotland, and 3rd in the UK by Times Higher Education Impact Ranking, but mainly because it is the spitting image of Hogwarts. The image on the first page does not do it justice. Inside you will find beautiful cloisters and a



picturesque courtyard, which are some of the first images you will find on Google. Another amazing building is the newly opened James McCune Smith Learning Hub. This building actually made me want to go there and study (which of course I did), although

the view from the top level could be distracting sometimes – especially at sunset. You have everything you could possibly need in there: printers, power sockets, a food court (keep in mind, you can only pay with card in there), and tons of bookable study rooms.

The lecturers have always been nothing but kind to us and have answered all of our inquiries. What I found to be very confusing at first was that students and lecturers address each other on a first name basis. This is just one of my comparisons between Austrian and Scottish culture. The Scots are incredibly warm-hearted and kind people. It is not unusual to smile at strangers, to greet and thank the bus driver, or to start a small talk with the person next to you while waiting for your coffee.

Not for a single second did I regret choosing the University of Glasgow to study at.

Courses

The initial plan was to apply to a few English courses; however, the few courses I had as an option were either not available that term, not available to ERASMUS students, or I couldn't get any credits for them, which is why I chose two Biology courses instead.

Glasgow	Linz
Animal Biology, Evolution and Ecology 2	Ökosysteme und deren anthropogene Belastung Stammesgeschichte des Menschen Entwicklung des Lebens auf der Erde
Human Biological	Fortpflanzung und Entwicklung des

Sciences 2	Menschen Ernährung, Stoffwechsel, Bewegung Entwicklungsbiologie Biologische Signalisierung I Biologische Signalisierung II Freies Wahlfach
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These two courses seemed to be the best choice at first, but it turns out that I had to put in a lot more work than usual. Both courses were incredibly interesting, including the laboratory sessions I had to attend; however, the exam preparation was extremely stressful.

Your grade is composed of multiple assessments – including a lab report, a SAQ, and another small project – and the end of term exam. The end of term exam makes up 50% of your grade and is divided into two parts: 60 minutes for 60 MCQ, and 60 minutes (plus 30 minutes for upload) for 1 compulsory question and then a choice of 4 out of 5 questions – so a total of five questions to be answered in an essay style.

If you study well and keep up with your daily lectures, the exam questions should be doable, but do not underestimate the workload. This is why most courses end with the beginning of April – the Spring Vacation / Revision Period. You should use that time to study for your exams, I, however, allowed myself a trip to London and a few trips to the Highlands, which is why I ended up studying like a crazy person for a month straight.

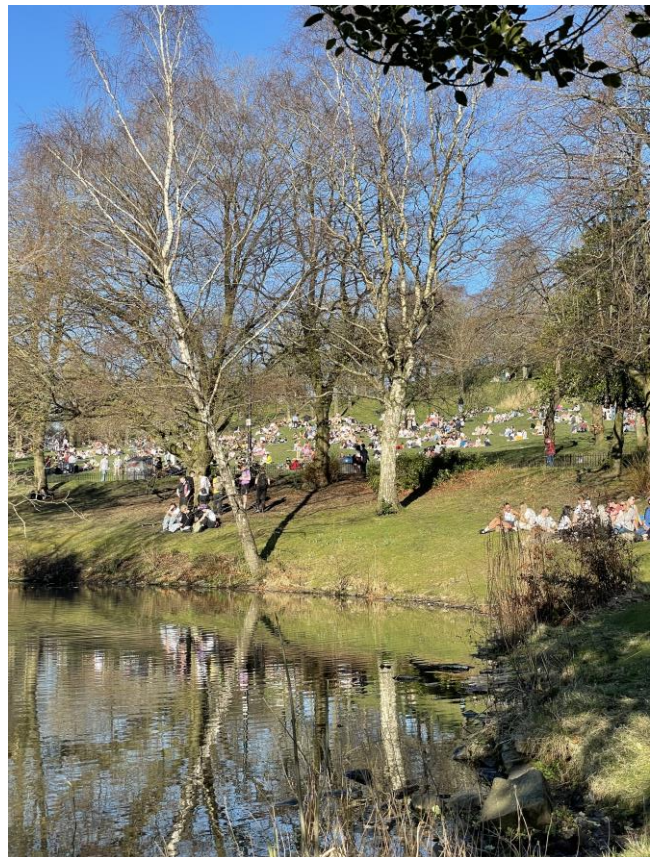
Living in Glasgow

I haven't mentioned yet that I didn't travel to Scotland all by myself, but was accompanied by two friends of mine who happen to study English and Biology, as well.

We had some troubles finding student accommodations as most of them don't offer a short term stay and we didn't feel like paying for an extra month. This is why we decided to book an Airbnb just outside the city. The apartment rent – split three ways – was more affordable than any other option we had found. Our ERASMUS fund covered pretty much our rent for five months.

It took us 10-15 minutes to get to the city centre by bus, which we only started using after about a month of living in Glasgow. Before that, we used to walk 50 minutes to the city centre and an hour to uni. We were lucky enough that they had just launched the Young Scot Card with which you can travel anywhere in Scotland by bus for free until you turn 22. That saved us a lot of money because a bus ticket costs between 1.80 and 2.50 pounds per trip. Beside the bus, there are two subways you can hop on, which are essentially just a smaller and a bigger circle going into opposite directions, meaning that getting lost is nearly impossible.

There are many events you can attend to meet new people: Ceilidh, painting classes, walking societies, pottery, speed friending, pub quiz,



the list is endless. You can usually find a listing of events on eventbrite. I highly recommend the International Student Tours Scotland for a trip to Isle of Skye and Glenfinnan Viaduct. If you are lucky enough, you'll have DJ Ola as your tour guide – she's the best!

(Do not go on any Viva Tours, they are really bad and just copyist!)

Around the university you'll find the Kelvingrove Park – a very popular spot for students in summer – and the Kelvingrove Art Gallery.



There are quite a few highlights in Glasgow and Edinburgh is just a 1h 20min bus ride away, waiting to be admired by newcomers.

For all food-lovers: Glasgow has a huge variety of different cuisines; our personal favourites being Wagamama, Five Guys, and most importantly: the little greek MacTassos foodtruck on Kelvin Way near Uni! They serve THE BEST gyros!!! If you are in the market for something more traditional, then Haggis and a fried Mars bar are the way to go – I recommend Maggie Dickson's in Edinburgh.

Besides Edinburgh, there are a few other places worth visiting while staying in Glasgow:

Falkirk, Aberdeen, Dundee, Rosslyn Chapel, Stirling, Alnwick, Inverness, St. Abbs, Loch Lomond, Loch Ness, and many more!

In a nutshell...

If anybody were to ask me what I miss most about Scotland, I would have to say – the people. (Even though the bookshops are very tempting).

Edinburgh is absolutely beautiful and I have lost count of how many times I've been there, but as expected, it is very touristy, and it doesn't feel like "this is the place where all the locals live".

Glasgow, in contrast, gives me that feeling, and it does give you a more authentic insight in how people live in Scotland. During that sort of short time that I've spent in Glasgow, I've started seeing myself as a local, seeing myself as a Glaswegian, as a Scot. From now on, no matter what, I will always feel part Scottish. That's how much I fell in love with Scotland.

The day before we left, I was sitting on a bench in the East Quadrangle at the main building, sipping my coffee, admiring the tower and cloisters, and simply replaying all the memories in my head. Of course, I was getting really emotional watching all the tourists coming from all over the world to see UoG, and I knew, next time I get here, I won't be coming back as a student, but as one of them – as if that was a bad thing – but it hurt knowing that my life as it was in that moment will never be the same again. While I was wallowing in my soap-opera-ready drama, and soaking up my main character moment watching the tourists and thinking, "well well, welcome to MY university, I hope you like it here", a middle aged woman and her travel group of 3 made a halt next to me, admiring the really deep hole in the ground



behind the bench I was sitting on. They made some comments about how deep it was and I didn't really listen to it because I wasn't expecting them to be directed at me. So, being the awkward conversationalist I am, I kept smiling and nodding, hoping they didn't ask anything. Assuming I am a chatty person, the woman took a seat beside me, asking: "For how long have you been studying here?". I had to chuckle, admitting I've only been there since January and that I'm leaving the next day. She was the most adorable stranger I have ever had a conversation with. The Californian lady told me her whole educational path and career story – turns out she's an English teacher, too – she explained their plans for driving around the west coast of Scotland, so I gave her some recommendations and showed her a bunch of photos from the places I've been to. She even remarked that my English is "absolutely delightful" and that my "students will be very lucky", which made me blush like a cherry tree in spring. After our little chat, I left happier than before because she proved me right – again – about what I've said about people in Scotland being extremely kind and open – even the visitors!

Now that I've finished this paragraph I've realised how much unnecessary information that just was, but I've spent too much time on it to delete it; so, anyways:

Rarely have I met this many welcoming people. Life is very slow paced and people seem to take their time for everything. There is no reason for hurry and stress; and this is what I love so much about Glaswegians – their way of life and their mentality is rubbing off on me, even the accent! This is something I want to bring back to Austria with me; and this is how I feel like I have grown as a person.