

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EAU CLAIRE

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Study Abroad



**UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN,
ABERDEEN, SCOTLAND
2020**

Program Guide

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Congratulations on being accepted by the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC) to the exchange/study abroad program in at the University of Aberdeen. Living and studying in a new culture is both an exciting and a challenging experience. Past participants of study abroad report that the many advantages of international study include:

Gaining new perspectives on a chosen academic field

Increasing understanding of different cultures

Enhancing personal development

Developing different perspectives on U.S. culture

Gaining self-confidence and independence

Learning skills for the future international job market

It is up to you to determine how you can best benefit from these possible advantages. This is your adventure!

Use this program-specific guide with the more general resources in your BlugoldsAbroad account. While this guide contains the information available at the time of publication, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. Your peer advisor will email information throughout the semester, and we encourage you to do your own research, also, using the web resources listed towards the end of this guide, as well as others that you find. Contact the Center for International Education (CIE) staff or your peer advisor with your specific questions.

Questions only you can answer include:

1) What are YOUR goals for this experience? Advancement in a future profession, desire to expand personal and academic horizons, need for a change, and wish to challenge yourself in a new environment?

2) Given the way the program is set up; how can you best prepare to meet your goals? For example, if one of your goals is truly being immersed in Scottish culture, yet you are living with other international and U.S. students, how are you going to get out and meet the locals?

The information in this guide was current at the time of publication, though changes may occur at any time.

ACADEMICS

Additional information on topics such as maintaining program eligibility, registration at UW-Eau Claire, class attendance, course equivalencies, grades, transcripts and service learning is in the [Academics section of your Study Abroad Handbook](#).

Pre-departure Planning

Please see the [UWEC Academics Page for Aberdeen](#) for details on how to plan your courses at Aberdeen.

Graduate Courses

Some students have expressed an interest in taking graduate courses abroad. Although your Aberdeen faculty advisor may not have a problem with you taking graduate courses, UW-Eau Claire does. **You will not be granted credit for graduate courses taken abroad unless Aberdeen allows the graduate course to count toward their home campus undergraduate degree.**

Credits and Course Load

The workload at **Aberdeen** will be measured in credit points. You must take a minimum of 50 Aberdeen credits and may take a maximum of 70.

Four Aberdeen credits equal 1 U.S. credit, so you will generally be taking the equivalent of 12.5-17.5 U.S. credits. There is no fixed number of courses you must take because courses may carry from 10-30 Aberdeen credit points or 2.5 to 7.5 U.S. credits.

Keep in mind:

- The credits you earn abroad are considered UW-Eau Claire resident credits.
- The classes you take abroad will count towards the total credits needed for graduation.

- Dropping below full-time status may result in loss of financial aid and/or insurance coverage and **must be approved in advance by the CIE and Aberdeen.**

Registration at Aberdeen

You indicate on your Aberdeen application form which classes you prefer to take, but **registration will not actually be confirmed until after you arrive in Scotland and go through orientation.**

Class Attendance

You are expected to attend all teaching sessions (e.g. lectures and tutorials), as material covered in these sessions forms the basis for your understanding of the subject.

Different departments/faculty may have specific attendance requirements and penalties over and above the general university guidelines. If you are in doubt about the attendance policy for your module/course, consult your lecturer.

Grades

The grade conversion scale for Aberdeen is different than what you are used to, but a conversion has been done. See below:

Aberdeen	UW-Eau Claire
A1, A2, A3, A4, A5	A
B1, B2	A-
B3	B+
C1	B
C2	B-
C3	C+
D1, D2	C
D3	C-
E1	D
E2, E3, F1, F2, F3, G1, G2	F

Note: UWEC students abroad are not allowed to take classes pass/fail. Grades from Aberdeen are figured into your UWEC GPA and posted to your UWEC transcript. No exceptions will be made.

Aberdeen & UWEC Transcripts

*Please see the Academics section of the Study Abroad Handbook for important information if you are **graduating, transferring or applying for a competitive major** such as Nursing or Education at the end of your term abroad.*

University of Aberdeen will send a transcript to UW-Eau Claire. **Transcripts are not available until two or three months after the end of the Aberdeen semester.** Due to this delay, you will initially receive a grade report with “NR” (not reported) for all courses. A revised report will be available after the grades have arrived.

UK Academic System

Expectation of independent learning:

Returned students most often describe academic life at the UK as “different.” They go on to explain that while they didn’t find classes there more or less difficult than classes at home, they did need to adjust to a new way of teaching and learning.

From a UK perspective, it is hard to understand methods used in U.S. higher education, with lots of direction from the professors, many small, graded assignments, and the general “checking up” to be certain that students are learning the assigned materials. **This is how UK students learn in high school.** Once they enter university, they are expected to take responsibility for their own education.

Class meetings and schedule: Most classes meet once per week for either a three-hour

lecture or two to three hours with a mixture of lecture and tutorial. For the lecture and tutorial, both sections are taught by the same professor (known as a lecturer in the UK system). Given that the course load is 3-5 courses per term, you may find yourself spending only 12-15 hours in class per week depending on your schedule.

Lectures: Like in the U.S., the lecture is a traditional method of teaching that allows lecturers to pass important information to a large number of students. However, lectures in the UK offer less opportunity for students to ask questions: questions and discussions are in the tutorial. Also, the lectures are not intended to tell you everything you need to know for the test or assignment. They provide an overview to allow you to place your course material or readings in context, or to focus on a difficult concept or theory.

To take the best advantage of lectures, you should keep up with course reading and come to lecture prepared. By being prepared for lecture, you will be able to engage and ask questions in the tutorials.

Tutorials/Seminars: Tutorials, or seminars as they are also called, are NOT mini lectures. They are active learning opportunities where the tutor and students meet to discuss the material covered in lecture and the reading that you are doing outside of class. For tutorials to be effective, they require active student participation. This means you:

- must have read the assigned work and suggested sources in advance,
- should be prepared to contribute to the discussion,

- made note of any difficult concepts or points from lecture or your readings that you do not understand, and
- should be willing to raise issues for discussion.

Tutorials are not optional. Attendance is kept, and absences are noted. Tutorials also allow for closer professor/student relationships than are typically found at the undergraduate level in the U.S.

Advance planning and independent learning:

With only 12-15 hours of class time per week, you may think your time in the UK will be an academic vacation. This is not the case. Much of the emphasis is placed on private study. In the British system, students do not say they are "studying" history, for example. **They say they are "reading" history. And that is precisely what students are expected to do: read!** As one student said, *"You will probably spend a lot less time in class than you are used to, but in exchange, you are expected to do a lot more independent work!"*

Upon beginning a class, you will likely be given a (very) long reading list. This is not a required reading list; it is a list of suggested readings that will expand your knowledge of the subject area. What you actually read from the list is mostly left up to you. **If you are told that "You may wish to look at these specific titles," take that as a strong hint to read those books.** You should also browse through several of the others and choose two or three to read carefully. These readings will form the basis of your contributions to tutorial discussions, as well as for the essays that serve as assessment for the module.

Differences in assignments and exams: In the UK, you will rarely find a lecturer who makes short, weekly assignments. During the semester, you may have to give a few **tutorial/seminar presentations**, typically a group assignment where you and two or three other students need to prepare a short presentation about the week's topic in order to facilitate discussion.

In some courses, you may not hand in any work until the last few weeks of the term. At this point, you will probably be asked to hand in essays or papers, which will range in length from 5-15 pages. You often receive the essay questions with your syllabus at the beginning of the semester. Start writing early!

The essays give you the opportunity to 1) show the lecturer that you have done some of the course reading, and 2) show the lecturer that you have critically thought about the material you have read. Generally speaking, you will be expected to present an original idea, or discuss opposing ideas, and *come to your own conclusion*. Demonstration of clear thought and argumentation are as critical as backing up your arguments with knowledgeable sources. You may also take a final exam in essay format.

In case you're worried, take this advice from a former peer advisor: *"Don't be afraid to email them or go to office hours! I often went to office hours to get input on essay outlines!"*

Participation points: Another difference is that there are no "participation points" in the UK. You may be penalized for not attending but you will not earn points just for coming to class or participating, as that is a basic expectation for all students.

Student services: Another difference to note is that **"student services" are a relatively newer concept** in Scottish universities than in the U.S. The university is there to provide access to academic resources. There are some student support units. However, universities do not have the mission, common to most U.S. institutions, of "student development."

University students are considered adults who will work their way through the system, asking questions when necessary. As a newcomer to the system and the culture, you may need to ask questions often!

In case you're worried, take this advice from a past participant: *"It all sounds a lot scarier than it really is. The keys are keeping up with reading, participating in class discussions, and explaining everything in papers/exams in detail, because you're not just telling the lecturers what they already know, you're trying to convince them of your viewpoint. If you are lost, by all means, talk to your instructors. They are very helpful to international students."*

Books: The main thing to remember is that there usually is not one specific text. Students are given reading lists and are free to choose any of them to prepare for class and/or to write the essay or exam. The only exceptions are literature classes. Students often share books with other students or check them out from the library. **Past students have suggested getting to the library early in the semester as many books on the list will be checked out from the library if you wait too long.**

Service-Learning

Given that you will most likely spend fewer hours in the classroom in Scotland than at UW-Eau Claire, you may find your term abroad a good time to complete some service-learning.

However, to have this option, you must do the following **before you leave the U.S.:**

- **Apply for A Tier IV Student Visa**
See the Learning Content "Visa Information: UK" in your BlugoldsAbroad account for details.
- **Have A Criminal Background Check**
Volunteer work with vulnerable populations (i.e. children, the elderly, people with disabilities, etc.) will require a criminal background check. Like U.S., the UK has experienced some tragic incidents where people with criminal backgrounds have victimized vulnerable people. The result: a required criminal background check of all volunteers. You can apply for a criminal background check through the State of Wisconsin Department of Justice (<http://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/cib/crime-information-bureau>). You must apply for and receive your background check before you depart for the UK. Once you receive your letter, put it in a safe place and bring it with you. You will ultimately share it with the volunteer site coordinator.

Once you are in Aberdeen, you will need to locate a suitable service-learning opportunity AND remember to submit your service-learning forms online before you begin your project! (<https://www.uwec.edu/service-learning/>)

MONEY MATTERS

UWEC information about making payments, when they are due, withdrawal and refund deadlines, financial aid, general scholarships, budgeting and ways to bring money abroad is in the [Money Matters section of your Study Abroad Handbook](#).

Cost Estimate

You can find the most current Cost Estimate for your program, in easily printable format, on the [CIE Aberdeen page](#). Be sure you are looking at the correct term. The cost estimate includes what you pay to UWEC, what you pay to Aberdeen, and what you pay directly to other vendors.

Fall Exchange Option

Occasionally, students in the fall will be going to Aberdeen as exchange students. This will be determined before the cost estimate is posted so please see that to know whether or not you are considered as an exchange student.

Exchange options are never guaranteed and are always more competitive as we have limited spaces. On a tuition only **exchange program**, each participant pays the costs they would normally pay at their home school – so Eau Claire students pay UWEC costs, and Aberdeen students cover tuition costs at their respective university, and they switch places. **You will pay Aberdeen directly for your housing.**

No money is exchanged between the schools, and there is no direct monetary correlation between what you pay in Eau Claire and what you receive in Scotland.

What is exchanged is not actual payment, but rather benefits. You should receive the same benefits a typical Aberdeen student receives, and the Aberdeen student receives the benefits a typical Eau Claire student receives. This type of arrangement allows students to participate in overseas programs at a cost similar to what they would pay to attend their home university

Spring Study Abroad Option

Those of you studying for the full academic year, and those studying for spring only, will be

study abroad students. All spring students will always be considered study abroad students as there are too many applicants and not enough exchange places. In this case, Aberdeen will bill UWEC for your tuition and fees, at a discounted non-resident tuition rate for partner institutions. You will pay that amount to UWEC, and we will transfer the fees for all UWEC study abroad students to Aberdeen. Spring is typically more expensive than the fall because you are paying Aberdeen non-resident tuition. **Again, you will pay Aberdeen directly for your housing.**

Housing Costs

All housing costs are paid directly to Aberdeen. The cost of accommodations will depend on where you select to live.

Currency Exchange

The currency of the United Kingdom is the pound, abbreviated GBP (Great Britain Pound) and symbolized “£.” Just like the dollar, the pound is divided into 100 units, called “pence,” abbreviated “p.” Coins come in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 pence, as well as 1 and 2 pounds. There are £5, £10, £20, and £50 bills.

Scottish banks print their own versions of the pound, commonly referred to as “Scottish notes.” Scottish notes can be used in all parts of the United Kingdom although a small number of students have reported trouble using Scottish notes in England. You can avoid this problem by simply withdrawing money after you arrive at your destination in England.

You can find current exchange rates at <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.

Cost of Living

For an idea of what everyday costs you may encounter, check out this website:

<https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Aberdeen>

Funds upon Arrival

Aberdeen recommends that you arrive in the UK with approximately £200-£250 in British currency, more if you are traveling by taxis and other public transport. Do not carry any more than this in case it gets lost. You are able to withdraw money from ATMs using your credit or debit card.

Bank Accounts

For year-long students, it may take up to three weeks to open a UK bank account so be prepared with cash, debit/credit cards, and/or traveler's checks until then. **Students studying in the UK for six months or less are not allowed to open an account.**

Credit Cards and ATMs

Credit cards are widely accepted in the UK. You will want to make sure you have either Visa or MasterCard as those are the most widely accepted. It is strongly recommended that all of your credit/debit cards have a chip in them. Most places in the UK have the chip reader technology and swiping your card is less common.

When withdrawing money from the ATM, always use caution. Make sure you notify your bank and credit card companies before your travel. They will want to know your travel itinerary to the best that you have it planned out. Also make a copy of all of your credit cards so that in the event they are lost, stolen, or eaten by an ATM, you have the contact information to call and cancel.

Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks are increasingly rare and difficult to use. They generally must be cashed at a major bank, although, in some countries, post offices also offer this service, and **you must have your passport with you**. Most banks charge a fee for cashing the checks; it can vary widely. Before cashing a check, ASK what the fee is.

BUTEX North American Scholarship Programme

The British Universities Transatlantic Exchange Association (BUTEX) has a North American Scholarship Programme open to all undergraduate students currently registered at an institution in the United States or Canada. To be eligible to apply, you must have been offered a study abroad or exchange place at a UK university with BUTEX membership for a minimum of one semester. The University of Aberdeen, Glasgow and Stirling are all members. For further details on how to apply, please see www.butex.ac.uk.

HEALTH & SAFETY

General information on these issues, as well as information on CISI insurance, is included in the [Health & Insurance](#) and [Safety Abroad](#) sections of your Study Abroad Handbook.

Centers for Disease Control

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has vaccination suggestions, how to stay healthy when abroad, and health information specific to the UK. Review the [CDC site for the United Kingdom](#).

Vaccinations

Due to an increasing measles and mumps cases in Europe, we strongly encourage all

students to check their vaccine history to see if they have had the MMR vaccine.

Also, our university partners in the UK have indicated that the National Health Service has a policy of immunizing for Meningitis “C” and recommend that students who have not been vaccinated plan to have this done before leaving home.

Medical & Mental Healthcare

Campus Medical & Mental Health Services:

If you have any medical or mental health concerns when in Scotland, you can reach out to [Aberdeen's Support and Wellbeing centre](#). They provide counseling and can assist you with medical concerns.

In addition, [this site](#) has information about staying healthy, resources for LGBTQ students, knowing your rights, etc.

Clinic Registration: Registering with a clinic is free and can be done the first time you visit the clinic. Aberdeen will give you more information on how to do this when you first arrive.

It is normal in the UK to wait four-six days for an appointment unless it is an emergency. That has nothing to do with you being registered in advance or not.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Aberdeen's [Disability Services](#) can provide assistance to study abroad students. The link provided gives more information on how to arrange support.

It is also important to look at the level of accessibility in Scotland. To find more

information on this topic, please see the [State Department Country Specific Information page](#).

If you have questions or concerns about this, please contact your UWEC study abroad coordinator.

Intro to the UK Health System

The National Health Service (i.e. the UK national healthcare system) sometimes does not have a very good reputation in the U.S. The system generally works fine; however, it operates under a different set of assumptions from the U.S. health system. U.S. students and their parents need to be aware of some of the major differences between the U.S. and UK health systems.

- 1) **The UK system is set up to favor those typically most in need of medical treatment:** infants/children, pregnant women, and the elderly. People in traditional university age range are expected to be low users of the system except in the case of accidents or serious illness.
- 2) Because of this, **there can be a long wait to set up treatment for pre-existing conditions.** If you have a condition that will need ongoing treatment while in the UK, contact your UW-Eau Claire study abroad coordinator right away!
- 3) In the UK, **medical professionals do not consider a common cold/sore throat to require medical attention.** Being sick with a cold for three or four days is considered normal and of no major concern in a person of college age. Students should visit a chemist (pharmacy) if they have cold symptoms.

- 4) **Antibiotics are rarely prescribed in the UK.** Doctors point to research that shows frequent use of antibiotics leads to mutation in germs, rendering the antibiotics useless. Antibiotics are therefore used to treat severe illness. If you use antibiotics regularly, you may wish to bring them with you.
- 5) **Allergy shots are generally not recommended** by physicians in the UK. It will be difficult to find anyone who will prescribe or administer them.

Safety in the U.K.

Information on crime, specific safety issues, road safety, drug penalties, and terrorist activity in the U.K. is included in the U.S. State Department's [United Kingdom Country Information website](#). Specific safety in and around Aberdeen will be discussed during orientation in Eau Claire and at Aberdeen.

One main thing to remember about safety in the UK is that they drive on the opposite side of the road, so **LOOK RIGHT!!** before crossing the street.

Hiking

Per the U.S. State Department, "Hiking in higher elevations can be treacherous. Several people die each year while hiking, particularly in Scotland, often due to sudden changes in weather. We encourage visitors, including experienced hikers, to discuss their intended routes with local residents familiar with the area and to adhere closely to recommendations."

Sexual Harassment and "Lad Culture" in the UK

"Lad culture" is a concern among British universities. In [recent research](#), it was defined

as a "group" or 'pack' mentality residing in activities such as sport and heavy alcohol consumption, and 'banter' which is often sexist, misogynist and homophobic." Although some respondents found it influenced their academic experience at the university, lad culture is seen as particularly influential in the social side of university life. Some commentators compare it to "bro culture" or frat culture here.

Many respondents, in the study, reported sexist jokes and rape banter in their friendship groups that made them feel uncomfortable or felt pressured to engage in sexual relationships. Sexual harassment was common, and there were accounts of sexual violence. Harassment ranged from verbal harassment and catcalling to physical harassment and sexual molestation. Some viewed groping in nightclubs as a part of a normal night out.

Excessive drinking is an often-cited contributing factor and the university drinking culture is seen as one of the biggest obstacles to eliminating lad culture. Some women were also found to participate in the heavy drinking and crude behavior associated with lad culture and have been dubbed "ladettes."

Undoubtedly, some UW-Eau Claire students have witnessed or been victim to this type of behavior in Eau Claire. However, it may be more difficult to speak up when you are in a new culture. You cannot change a culture in a visit, but you can make smart choices about how to manage your interactions and reactions to lad culture:

- Ask your British friends, both male and female, how they think lad culture impacts university social life.

- Remove yourself from situations where you do not feel comfortable. Listen to your instincts.
- Drink in moderation if you choose to drink. [UWEC student health services](#) has information about being smart while drinking.
- Be careful accepting drinks from people that you don't know. In particular, watch your drink when you are out at bars or clubs.

Emergency Contacts

General emergency procedures are described in the Safety Abroad section of the *Study Abroad Handbook*, and Aberdeen has a Study Abroad Adviser who is available for consultation if difficulties arise. You will receive an emergency contact card at Orientation 2; be sure to keep it in your wallet. The information is also on the [Contact Names & Addresses](#) page of this guide.

911 Equivalent in the UK

If you are in an emergency situation in the United Kingdom, you will need to know how to reach the local police, fire, or ambulance services. The local equivalent to the 911 emergency line **in the United Kingdom is 999; in Gibraltar, it is 112**. Save this number in your cell phone in case you need it to use it quickly.

The U.S. State Department also provides a list of [911 numbers abroad](#). Please note that in some countries there are different numbers for fire, police, and ambulance. Plan ahead and research numbers before you go.

Marijuana and other Illegal Drugs

Although marijuana may be relatively easy to obtain in the UK, **the possession and use of marijuana is illegal**. [Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in the U.K.](#) are

severe and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. U.S. citizenship offers no protection if you break a U.K. law. There is **NOTHING** the CIE, Aberdeen, or the U.S. government can do if you are found in violation of U.K. laws.

In addition to legal penalties, you are putting yourself at risk of robbery or assault, or you may get a much more dangerous combination of drugs than you thought you were buying.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Passport information is included in the [Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook](#).

If you are not a U.S. citizen, please contact the CIE for more information about the following topics.

Visa

A visa is official permission to temporarily reside in another country and is granted by the government of that country. U.S. citizens studying in the UK for less than six months may enter the UK under two categories: Short-Term Study Visa or Tier 4 (General) Student Visa.

Most semester UW-Eau Claire students enter under the Short-Term Study Visa category. Academic year students must apply for a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa.

See the "Visa Information: UK" in the Learning Content section of your UW-Eau Claire BlugoldsAbroad account for basic information about the visa options. This information will also be discussed briefly at study abroad orientation.

Note that **you cannot enter the UK for the first time via Ireland if you are using the short-term study visa option.** In addition, proof of onward journey, **usually in the form of a roundtrip plane ticket**, is required.

It is your responsibility to keep up-to-date about student visa requirements for the UK, and if required, to apply for and receive a visa from a UK consulate or embassy in a timely manner.

Why Can't I fly through Ireland?

When booking flights to the UK, it will be tempting to purchase a flight that has a layover in Ireland as they are often more affordable.

However, all UK partners advise that you CANNOT do this! Ireland is considered a part of the Common Travel Area (CTA) with the UK and it causes immigration to be very complicated. Traveling through Ireland, in route to the UK, means you won't ever go through the proper immigration that is needed for the student visa. **You are advised to travel directly from the US to England or Scotland.**

Visas for Travel to Other Countries

If you plan to travel outside of the UK while abroad, verify visa requirements for each country you will visit by contacting the nearest consulate for that country, or your travel agency. Most Western European nations do not require U.S. citizens to have a visa for tourist travel of less than three months, but you should always verify the requirement as entry requirements can change with little notice (and Europe has talked about changing this).

PACKING TIPS

There is general packing information in the [Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook](#), and you will get a suggested

packing list for Aberdeen at Orientation 2. In addition, you should know the following:

Weather

Aberdeen has short/cool summers and winters are long, cold and very windy. The warm season is from June-September and the cooler season is from late November until March. It will rain a lot when in Aberdeen. Being in Northern Scotland, you may experience snow and the highlands will for sure have snow.

Clothing

Past participants suggest bringing clothing that you can wear, or take off, in layers. Many of the buildings are not centrally heated so it can be very drafty.

Take clothing that is washable and does not wrinkle easily. Scottish students generally dress casually, but not as casually as U.S. students do. You will be hard pressed to find students wearing sweats to class. Bring a few "dress-up" clothes for going out to restaurants or clubs. Some nightclubs will not let you in wearing jeans or tennis shoes. In addition, having a good waterproof jacket is important. You should bring a light and heavy jacket as you'll experience a variety of seasons. And don't forget your umbrella!

What to Pack

Your peer advisor will provide a suggested packing list at Orientation 2.

Converters & Adapters

The standard electric current in the UK is 240 volts and in Europe is 220 volts. U.S. appliances such as hair dryers and razors run on 120 volts. If you plan to bring these appliances, you will need to buy **both a converter and a plug adapter**. You may also choose to buy the appliances abroad, but still

bring a plug adapter for traveling in other countries.

GETTING TO SCOTLAND

There is information on student-oriented travel agencies, instructions for booking a flight, and other travel information in the [Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook](#)

Travel Arrangements

It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements to Aberdeen.

Remember:

- **you should not book your flight until your acceptance has been confirmed and the exact beginning and ending dates of the program have been confirmed by the University of Aberdeen.**

However, this does not mean that you cannot look online and begin price comparisons.

- **You cannot enter the UK for the first time via Ireland if you are using the short-term study visa option.**
- Most visas require a **roundtrip** ticket. If you are planning to travel at the end of the program, that is fine. You do not need to leave the UK immediately at the end of the program, as long as you will not be there/in Europe as a tourist for more than a total of 90 days before/after the program

Immigration

If you are using the short-term study visa option to enter the UK, you will be asked to provide documents to the UK immigration official at the airport. Please see your BlugoldAbroads Learning Content “Visa Information: UK” for

details on what documents you need to have with you.

Upon verifying your documents, the immigration agent will stamp your passport with the short-term study visa.

IMPORTANT: You will be arrested if you bring pocket knives, blades, mace or pepper spray canisters, or any part of a gun into the United Kingdom. Please refer to the [US State Department Country Information page](#), which details the items visitors are prohibited from bringing into the United Kingdom.

Getting to Aberdeen

Flying directly to Aberdeen’s international airport is most convenient. It is served by a number of major carriers providing an extensive network of routes throughout the UK, direct to Europe, and worldwide through major hubs. The airport is located at Dyce, about seven miles from the center of Aberdeen.

University welcome staff will be located at Aberdeen airport during peak arrival times and will be available to assist you in making the short journey to your halls of residence. Please note that a taxi ride will cost you approximately £15.

Independent Arrival

If you fly into Edinburgh or Glasgow, or other UK cities, you can take a long-distance bus (coach) or train to Aberdeen. This option will require you to transport your bags and yourself from the airport to the nearest bus or train station. To learn more about bus and train service to Aberdeen, visit the U of Aberdeen's pre-departure information page:

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/international/pre-departure-information.php>.

If you arrive by bus or train, you will also need to take a taxi to campus. Cost will be ~ £7.

Whether you arrive by plane, train, or coach, you should direct the cab to drop you at Hillhead Hall main reception on the Aberdeen campus, which is where all international students live.

Early Arrivals

Since the University of Aberdeen cannot accommodate students prior to the arrival date, you will need to find alternative housing arrangements if you arrive early.

SETTLING IN

Orientation

You will have an orientation program upon arrival, including an introduction to the university, student life, support services, and the city and the surrounding area.

On-Site Support

As an international student at the University of Aberdeen, you will have access to campus resources. The international staff is there to support you should any questions or concerns arise. The international staff won't actively seek you out to make sure everything is going okay. Instead, should anything come up, you will need to reach out to them. As you may recall from earlier sections, the UK education system is much more hands off than the US education system, but the UK system can support you if you make staff aware.

Campus Activities/Organizations

The **University of Aberdeen** has a wide array of student organizations, known as "societies." Visit <http://www.ausa.org.uk/> to read about the current societies on campus. From sports to

arts to faith based, you are bound to find a society that you can join. There are also club sports team that you can join but those usually have a fee.

There is also a student union bar with activities every night. It is the social venue for you to visit when you want to get off campus. Take the number 20 bus that runs through Hillhead to Littlejohn Street, where you will be dropped off right in front.

Community Involvement

A great way to get involved in the community is to volunteer your time. Check with the study abroad office on your campus to see if any positions are available on campus or within your city. Otherwise, look into student groups that participate in volunteer activities. Past students who chose to do this gained a lot from the experience. Not only do you get to meet people, you get to make a difference. However, please see the "Service Learning" information in this guide as **volunteering in the UK will require a background check and Tier 4 Student Visa.**

HOUSING

Living Situation

Once you have received Offer Letter from Aberdeen and accepted it, you will be issued a student ID number and will be able to apply for housing. You will most likely stay in one of the Hillhead Halls, a group of seven different residences with a range of services provided, at a corresponding range of costs.

Hillhead is "self-catered," which means you have access to a kitchen and cook for yourself. Bedding, bed linens and towels are not provided. You can either bring your own or purchase a bedding pack (approx. £18) when

you apply for housing. Bedding and kitchen packs are also available from various retailers in Aberdeen City Center.

You will live with up to 9 students (co-ed). The number of roommates will vary on where you are placed; not all halls have the same number of roommates. Usually, the less roommates you have means your housing may be more expensive. When you apply, you will rank your top choices but those aren't guaranteed. You will have your private single room and share common areas such as bathroom, living room and kitchen.

Students with disabilities: Crombie-Johnston Hall is a catered hall that offers facilities for disabled residents. If you have any special needs, please contact the Scotland program coordinator, Jenna Krosch (kroschjm@uwec.edu).

Mature (non-traditional) student: Elphinstone Road flats are self-catered halls that are usually reserved for postgraduate/non-traditional students.

You can learn more about each hall and compare costs/amenities at the [U of Aberdeen Accommodation website](#).

Each hall also has a Facebook page. You are encouraged to join the Facebook page for Accommodation and your hall of residence. Learn more by visiting ["Your Facebook Pages"](#).

What's Provided?

Each room has a desk, bed, bookshelf closet or wardrobe and Wifi is also included. Each hall may have additional items provided so be sure to check out each place on [Aberdeen's website](#).

Meals & Snacks

Almost all students select "self-catered" halls at U of Aberdeen, meaning they cook their own food. In self-catered housing you will have access to a kitchen to store food and cook meals. There is a small grocery near the residences, and there are cafeterias on campus if you prefer not to cook every day. No cooking utensils or tableware are provided; however, you can purchase a "kitchen pack" from a number of retailers in Aberdeen city center.

Past peer advisor tip: *"In Aberdeen I always went to the Tesco Local or to Morrisons. Both are on King Street and are easy to get to from Hillhead. The Tesco is just across the road from campus and most students stop by on their way back to halls to grab what they need!"*

If you choose to live in catered housing, be sure to read more information on what that all entails as catered options in Scotland are different than in the US. [Click here](#) for more information.

Cultural differences in food. Because tea is a more common drink than coffee, you'll find water kettles rather than coffee pots in most kitchens. When you go shopping, you'll find that eggs are not refrigerated. You'll find less beef and chicken, and more pork and lamb. Ketchup, peanut butter, and ranch dressing are hard to find and have a slightly different flavor. If you eat out, you'll find more Indian food and less Mexican food.

Common Scottish and English meals

- **Haggis:** a traditional Scottish savory dish containing sheep's organs (heart, liver and lungs) minced with onion, oatmeal, suet, spices, and salt; mixed with stock; and traditionally encased in the animal's stomach and simmered for approximately

three hours. Most modern commercial haggis is prepared in a sausage casing rather than an actual stomach. For those of you who are not fans of organ meat, there is also vegetarian haggis.

- **Black Pudding:** a type of sausage made by cooking blood or dried blood with a filler until it is thick enough to congeal when cooled; often served at the traditional Scottish breakfast.
- **Square Sausage:** Lorne sausage known for its shape is often served with breakfast or on a roll.
- **Tablet:** basically, sugar and butter; it is amazing.
- **Cloutie Dumpling:** a traditional dessert pudding made with flour, breadcrumbs, dried fruit, sugar, spice, and milk.
- **Stovies:** A Scottish dish based on potatoes; recipes vary widely but the dish always contains potatoes and variously onions, carrots, other vegetables, roast beef, corned beef or other meat.
- **Fish and Chips:** fried fish served with fries. Depending on where in Scotland you are they will ask if you would like vinegar or salt or both. You will also find a variety of toppings people put on just chips such as doner or curry.
- **Shepherd's Pie:** lamb pie cooked in a casserole with a layer of toasted mashed potatoes.
- **Bangers and Mash:** sausages and mashed potatoes.
- **Yorkshire Pudding:** popover served alongside roast beef with gravy on top.
- **Cadbury Chocolate:** an absolute must.
- **Doner:** found at the kebab shops; similar to a Gyro.
- **Fried Milky Way/Mars Bars:** almost anything can be found fried; just check out

the menu at the nearest fish and chips shop.

Laundry

Hillhead Halls do have laundry on site. When you are looking through housing options, they list if laundry is on site or not. You will have to pay an additional fee for using the laundry machines.

COMMUNICATION

Information on accessing/forwarding your UW-Eau Claire email address and on computer app-based phone services (SKYPE, What's App, Facetime, etc) is in the [Contacts & Communication section of your Study Abroad Handbook](#).

Time Difference

Scotland is six hours ahead of Eau Claire. For example, when it is 1:00 P.M. on Thursday in Eau Claire, it is 7:00 P.M. on Thursday at Aberdeen. To see the current time at in Scotland, visit:

<https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/uk>

Email/Internet Access

The University provides email and WiFi access, or you can access a web-based email account via the Internet. If you bring a laptop, there will be places to use it on campus and in your housing arrangement. There are also various computer labs on campus. You will need to purchase a UK adapter for your computer if you bring one. Make sure that if you have a three-prong computer plug that you purchase a two-prong converter (to plug into your adapter) that turns into a three prong so that you can charge your computer.

Video Chatting/Online Apps

Most international students communicate with family and friends back in the U.S. by using and online video chat service such as Skype, Facetime, or WhatsApp. Past students recommend that you set up a regular time (for example, Sundays at 10 PM, Scottish time) so both sides are online at the same time.

Calling from the U.S.

From the U.S. to Scotland. You must first dial 011, which is the international dialing code. Next, you must dial 44 to get Scotland, and then the rest of the number to reach a specific city and location.

Snail Mail

International airmail takes 7-10 days to cross the Atlantic in either direction. Make sure you don't send anything valuable as the package is likely to be opened when going through customs.

TRAVEL WHILE ABROAD

See additional information in the [Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook.](#)

Independent Travel

If you plan to travel in England, Scotland or Wales, transportation by train, ferry, bus (coach) and plane are all possible. When deciding whether to travel by train or air, remember this: they are often comparable in price, but train travel is considerably longer. For example, a train from Glasgow to London takes four hours versus a forty-minute flight. On the other hand, traveling by train allows you to see much of the countryside that you would miss if you fly. Also, train stations are usually closer to

the city centers, while a taxi or bus ride might be needed if you fly.

Train

A 16-25 RailCard gives you 1/3 off regular fare tickets. It pays for itself after three to four trips. Check out this Web site for more information: <http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>. There is also a special rail pass just for southwest England (which includes London and Oxford) that gives you a discount on train tickets. When you buy a ticket to London using the pass, the ticket may also be used as a subway pass around London for the entire day.

Bus

Scotland has a great bus system that can take you to many Scottish cities inexpensively. At www.megabus.co.uk, you can get a roundtrip bus ticket from Glasgow to Edinburgh for 3-4 pounds (roughly \$7-9). If you're going further, a National Express Student Coach Card entitles you to one-third off all regular fare coach tickets.

Ferry

If you have time, you can also take a ferry from Scotland to various cities in Ireland/Wales/England. Past participants have said they really enjoyed the ferry experiences. See <https://www.aferry.co.uk/> for more information.

Air

Aberdeen does have an airport so that will make it easier to fly other places. Many past students have recommended Ryan Air as a helpful site with low-budget flights all around Europe: <http://www.ryanair.com/en>. Typically, Ryan Air flies into airports that are further outside the city, so you may need to spend

more on taxis, buses, or trains to get into town. Keep in mind that airlines like RyanAir and other budget airlines, charge for the littlest things like printing your boarding pass at the airport and their weight/bag restrictions are very strict. Do your research to know what you can bring. If you don't you will end up paying a lot of money!

CULTURAL NOTES

Where am I going? UK, England, or Great Britain?

You are actually going to all three simultaneously. "The United Kingdom is a country that consists of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In fact, the official name of the country is 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.'

Great Britain is the name of the island northwest of France and east of Ireland that consists of three somewhat autonomous countries: England, Wales and Scotland. Therefore, Scotland is part of Great Britain, which is part of the United Kingdom. The UK includes England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland." From:
<http://geography.about.com/library/faq/blqzuk.htm>

The Government

The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy, with a queen and a parliament that has two houses: The House of Lords and the House of Commons. Supreme legislative power is vested in parliament, which sits for five years unless dissolved sooner. The House of Lords was stripped of most of its power in 1911, and now its main function is to revise legislation.

The current monarch and prime minister are:
Sovereign: Queen Elizabeth II (since 1952)
Prime Minister: Boris Johnson (since 2019)

England has existed as a unified entity since the 10th century; the union between England and Wales, began in 1284 with the Statute of Rhuddlan, which was not formalized until 1536 with an Act of Union. In another Act of Union in 1707, England and Scotland agreed to permanently join as Great Britain. The legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland was implemented in 1801, with the adoption of the name the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921 formalized a partition of Ireland; six northern Irish counties remained part of the United Kingdom as Northern Ireland and the current name of the country, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was adopted in 1927.

From:

<http://www.infoplease.com/country/united-kingdom.html>

CONTACT INFORMATION

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King's College
Aberdeen AB24 3TU
Scotland, UK

British Consulate in the U.S.

625 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite
2200
Chicago, IL 60611
Tel: (312) 970-3800
Fax: (312) 970-3852
<https://www.gov.uk/government/world/usa>

Scroll down to the heading "British
Consulate-General Chicago".

**Please be aware that British
Consulate in Chicago no longer
offers visa processing services.
The New York Consulate is the
only location that process visa
applications in the USA.**

U.S. Consulate in Edinburgh

3 Regent Terrace
Edinburgh EH7 5BW
Phone: 0131-556-8315 (in
country)
Fax: 0131-557-6023 (in country)
After-hours Emergency for
American Citizens:
Phone: 020 7499 9000 (in-
country)
Email: edinburgh-info@state.gov
Web:
<https://uk.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/edinburgh/>

UW-Eau Claire

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After Hours Emergency University Policy

(715)577-9045
Remember that in most cases,
local contacts are best in local
emergency situations.

If you have an after-hours
emergency that can be helped on
the U.S. side, please call University
Police at the number above. Calls
can be made to this number 24
hours a day. You may get an
answering machine; however, an
officer is alerted as soon as you
have left your message. Be sure to
give the officer the phone number
you can be reached at, as well as
what type of assistance you
require.

WEB INFORMATION: ABERDEEN

City

City of Aberdeen: <http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/home/home.asp>

Aberdeen Today: <http://www.aberdeentoday.co.uk/>

Visit Scotland: Aberdeen: <https://www.visitscotland.com/destinations-maps/aberdeen-city-shire/>

Culture

The Telegraph: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/scotland/>

Scottish Culture: <https://www.scotland.org/about-scotland/culture>

Scottish Traditions: <https://www.scotland.org/about-scotland/culture/scottish-traditions>

Country

Visit Scotland: <https://www.visitscotland.com>

Lonely Planet: <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/scotland>

British Council: Scotland: <https://scotland.britishcouncil.org>

When past participants of the Aberdeen program were asked to sum up their experience, here is what they said:

This was an incredible experience overall. The courses were very interesting, and there were a wide variety from which to choose. The university is very welcoming and organizes many activities and opportunities for meeting people from around the world. Finally, Scotland is a beautiful country with countless opportunities for exploring, and it is easy to travel to other countries from Aberdeen as well.

It takes quite a while to adjust to cars driving on the left. Also, crosswalks don't really exist.

I felt very connected to the Scottish history and culture. The country now holds a special place in my heart. The culture was not all that different from that in Wisconsin.

Scottish universities are not big on providing information. If you need to know something, you must ask for it directly rather than expecting all the information you need.

Learning how to budget and sticking to that budget, which is very important if you plan on travelling while abroad.

I had a great experience with this program. The academics are challenging with the different system, but overall worth it if you want a relaxing, small-city vibe.



Updated: December 2019 jmk