

University of St Andrews, Scotland, UK

2018-2019

Report 1

Please use Tab to go to the next (text) box.

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Research Master History

destination city & country	St Andrews, Scotland
name university abroad	University of St Andrews
start date	10 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 12 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The application process was quite clear and straightforward. The International Office in Utrecht gave clear instructions and when you keep to the deadlines, there is nothing to worry about.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	The International Office did a good job regarding the practical side of the exchange. They took the time for me and helped me when I asked for it.
academic preparation	Since I am in my Master's, I chose the university abroad first and foremost for an academic reason: multiple scholars there are the best in my field. Dr Jochen Hung, the Erasmus coordinator of History and Art History (UU), gave me advice on finding those scholars and orientating on the available options when going abroad. This was very helpful and I can recommend everyone to discuss your plans with an academic advisor.
language preparation	Since the main language of my Master's programme here in Utrecht is English, my language preparation was already sufficient. As a result of my time in Scotland, I was able to improve my language skills – another great consequence of studying abroad!
finances	Scotland is expensive. Please bear this in mind before going. With the Erasmus-grant, however, I was sufficiently equipped.

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STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
I went for my studies and I definitively did learn a lot. I chose modules in Intellectual History and in Spatial History, which are both highly interesting subdisciplines in the field of History. Utrecht did not offer anything similar. I experienced that Intellectual History was taught in a very British manner – a lot of focus on John Locke and Thomas Hobbes, for example, as well as on the Cambridge School. Even though I was not familiar with that beforehand, that was not much of a problem. I could add insights 'from the Continent' to our seminars.
academic quality of education activities
St Andrews is one of the best universities in the UK and they are proud of that. After all, the university motto is 'Ever to excel', and this is exactly what is demanded of you as a student. However, the quality of the seminars was not that different from Utrecht. We had to read much more beforehand, but the way the literature was discussed was similar to the UU. However, it struck me that all of my fellow students did a lot of reading around the given subject and more than the required literature. This lifted the level of the meetings up, although sometimes it seemed that they just wanted to show off their knowledge.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
That was fine. Especially in the first week there were a lot of activities for freshers and for new international students, which were quite useful. Furthermore, there were all kinds of helpdesks and the more if you needed it. On the academic level, I found a lot of support in two of my professors, who were very open and took the time to discuss ideas for essays or for further research.
transfer of credits
That did not yet happen, but I am quite sure that will run smoothly.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
The first week, the orientation week, was very useful. I got to know a lot of people and we had good fun. Each day, there were dozens of activities to choose from.
accommodation
Since St Andrews is only a small town – almost a village compared to Glasgow and Edinburgh, not to mention a metropolis like London – housing is quite an issue. Little supply and a lot of demand drive the prices up. Therefore, it is quite hard to find accommodation and to find it for a reasonable price. I ended up in university accommodation, which was brand new and very nice, although insanely expensive. But it was worth it and the private accommodations I found were not much cheaper.
leisure & culture
Since St Andrews is fairly small, the culture on offer is rather limited. However, being there is a treat in itself. Beautifully located on the Scottish coast, with the ruins of an ancient cathedral and a castle, there are two beaches almost next to uni. Moreover, the Students' Union offers all kinds of activities, as well as sports. I can highly recommend to attend the Freshers' Fayre in the introduction week. There you can join societies ranging from running and bouldering to reading and quidditch. I was very glad that I joined the Hiking Society, so I got to see quite a bit of Scotland and to hike as well.
suggestions/tips
I can recommend to engage in as many ways as possible, because this is a great way to meet new people and to broaden your scope. There is also a buddy programme to which you can apply as an international. Another tip:

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buy or rent a bike! This is really practical and makes you way more flexible around town. Transition, a kind of Green Office from the university, has a service providing bikes to rent for a semester.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes, I can certainly recommend St Andrews to anyone. The academic level is high and you are expected to perform, but you get a lot in return. Furthermore, it is a great location. Sometimes the competitive atmosphere could be a bit intense or the town may seem a bit (too) small, but you are there one semester only, after all. Enjoy it and do your best. And please travel around in Scotland, because it is beautiful.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you have any questions or need any help, please send me an email. I am always willing to help.

Report 2

Please use Tab to go to the next (text) box.

faculty/college	Faculty of Humanities/Department of History & Art History
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Research Master 'History'

destination city & country	St Andrews, United Kingdom
name university abroad	University of St Andrews
start date	10 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 12 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The process to apply and register was easy but took a while in the end, especially because the UU prioritises students from the RMA Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Yet with some (extra) effort and enough time it was manageable. As a RMA History student I had to write an extra motivation letter for St Andrews on my research interests.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

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The support from the UU's International Office and from the lecturers in the RMA programme was superb. Every question I had was answered in a coherent, clear, and timely fashion. NB all the paperwork that has to be filled in can be somewhat stressful. So I would recommend anyone to write/do everything as soon as possible.

academic preparation

No specific academic preparations were necessary, since I only could choose the modules I wanted to take the week before classes started. Hence specific preparation was basically impossible.

language preparation

In the end, there were no particular language preparations necessary either. One of the main reasons for me to go study abroad (in the UK) was to improve both my day-to-day and academic English. The University of St Andrews initially required me to do an expensive language test to 'prove' my English was C1-level. This was somewhat nonsensical, as the RMA in Utrecht was also fully taught in English. So with the help of a couple of emails from the UU IO and the RMA-coordinator to the StA IO, taking that test was no longer mandatory.

finances

Having saved money from my part-time job, I funded my semester abroad myself. Combined with the Erasmus Grant I saved enough to account for all necessary expenses.

In general, the UK is a very expensive country to live in. For the private-let accommodation where I lived, I paid around €750,- a month rent only. The university-managed accommodations are even more expensive. So I would recommend anyone going to the UK (and perhaps especially St Andrews, as a relatively small and even more expensive town) to take the high costs into consideration.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Initially, content-wise, there were two main reasons for me to go to St Andrews: first, to work with a specific professor on 19th century monarchical dynasties, and secondly, to broaden my horizon in the field of International Relations (the IR department at St Andrews is deemed excellent). Both goals turned out to be impossible because, when I arrived, the professor had just been elected as Dean of the Faculty; and as a History student, I was not allowed to take a module in the IR department. Hence, contrary to the information on the UU and StA study abroad websites, I could not take a module outside the department I was enrolled in.

In the end, however, I managed nevertheless to enroll in two courses that I greatly enjoyed and which provided me with the opportunity to work with other, likewise fascinating, professors and topics. I took one course in the political-cultural history of English-Scottish relations from 1707-2000 (20 erts) and another course as a one-on-one tutorial with a professor on the role of intellectuals in the Cold War (10 erts).

One point of 'criticism' I have is the minimal amount of contact hours, for I only had 2hrs (sometimes 3) lectures per week. Luckily the History Department organises all kinds of extra meetings, lectures, workshops etc. for those who want some additional intellectual activities.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality at St Andrews is very high, which I already expected beforehand, as it is one of the best universities in the UK. Lectures are given in small groups of about seven students (max.) in the office of the professor; so no impersonal, big lecture rooms! That was really nice. All my professors had a high-standing reputation in their scholarly fields; they had vast amounts of expertise; and were also very approachable.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The Study Abroad Office at St Andrews is very helpful, and quick and kind to answer your questions. That is even more admirable given the fact that the Office seems to be quite under-staffed, seemingly having only three employees on a student population of about 10.000.

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transfer of credits

St Andrews uses the SCOTCAT-credit system, which relate to ECTS in a 2:1 fashion. I, for instance, took a module of 40 SCOTCAT credits, which translates into 20 ECTS. St Andrews also uses a grading scale of 20-points, instead of 10.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The first Semester week is 'Fresher's Week' in which all kinds of introductory activities, 'borrels', meetings, and the like are organised. This was very helpful (and, more importantly, fun!) to get to know the university facilities, procedures; the town, and fellow students. In the first week, all Societies of the university organise events (more than 150 exist: from a 'Harry Potter Society' to political-, food-, culture- related ones). The uni has a special 'Orientation' smartphone app, which provide convenient schedules/timetables for all events.

accommodation

Finding accommodation in St Andrews can be a daunting task. The medieval town (16.000 inhabitants; of which about 10.000 are students) is small; competition over housing is high. I luckily managed to find a nice apartment with a large bedroom, which was comparatively affordable (at €750 per month still ridiculously expensive though...) and very close near town centre (5min. walk) via Gumtree.com. Most landlords or letting agents would prefer to let property to students who rent the place for the whole year, so keep that in mind if you are only there for one semester.

A lot of people I met during my stay in St Andrews lived in university halls which were more expensive and a 25min. walk from town, but might still be a viable option if finding private-let housing proves to be impossible.

leisure & culture

Despite its small size, St Andrews has a theatre, cinema, and over thirty pubs and restaurants. Every week, the theatre organised lunch concerts and other (classical) music events. These were excellent, and also very cheap (about 4 pounds per concert). The medieval town has a lovely atmosphere; walking on the beach or in the woods is amazing. If you prefer going to larger cities, you can take the bus to Dundee (20min) or Edinburgh (2hr). This is surprisingly cheap. To summarise, there's something to do in or near St Andrews for anyone.

suggestions/tips

I would definitely recommend anyone going to St Andrews to apply for a university-managed apartment (just in case) and try to find cheaper/centrally-located housing via Gumtree, Facebook pages or other housing websites. Although it can be very difficult, with enough (a lot...) perseverance, I hope/think finding appropriate accommodation is definitely possible. It took me about twenty replies to ads, but I found something eventually.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes! In my opinion, St Andrews is one of the most fascinating, lovely places I've been to in general. I immediately fell in love with its charm, people, and environment. If you are someone who loves small, 'gezellige' towns more than big, impersonal and anonymous cities, then St Andrews is the place for you. The academic quality of the university is outstanding. Moreover, the weather is not as bad as you might think, for the climate is quite mild and less rainy than elsewhere in Scotland/the UK.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

With Brexit, sadly, around the corner (or not?) keep in mind that the possibility exist that studying in, and exchange programmes with, the UK might be different, or difficult, to organise after March 2019.

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2016-2017

Report 1

faculty/college	Faculty of Humanities
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Studies

destination city & country	St Andrews, UK
name university abroad	University of St Andrews
start date	23 / 01 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	31 / 05 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The application proces at the University of St Andrews took some time and effort, but nothing too complicated.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	All the paperwork is quite stressful, but the International Office at Utrecht is always very helpful.
academic preparation	It was quite unclear beforehand what modules were available in St Andrews and how to apply for them. Apart from that, no academic preparation was needed.
language preparation	No specific language preparation was needed, as English is the main language in my masters programme in Utrecht. St Andrews did require a language test to prove that my English was sufficient, but when I explained that my own masters programme is also taught in English, the test was no longer required.
finances	The UK is quite expensive in general, and St Andrews is no exception. However, with a good financial plan, it shouldn't be a problem.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	

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My modules were only decided at the last minute, the week before classes started. That was quite chaotic, but in the end I could do the modules I wanted and there was a lot of freedom in choosing the modules.
academic quality of education activities
I mostly did tutorials in St Andrews in classes with just one other student, so I had a lot of freedom in choosing the subjects I wanted to work on. This gave me the opportunity to specialize in some specific topics and challenge myself.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The International Office at St Andrews is always happy to help, as are the secretaries of the department. They knew the answer to literally every question I asked.
transfer of credits
St Andrews works with a 20-point grade system, but the website of the university offers conversion tables.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
Because I went to St Andrews the second semester, the orientation programme was very brief. In the first semester, there is a more extensive programme, although mostly focussed on freshmen or first year students.
accommodation
St Andrews is very small and expensive. The university offers accommodation to students, but the prices are quite high. Private renting is also difficult, because most want renters for more than just a few months. I managed to find a flat in the centre of St Andrews at the last minute, which was a perfect place to live these few months.
leisure & culture
There is a very rich student life in St Andrews, as the town is so small and the university is such an important part of the town. I also travelled a lot in Fife, which is a great county with a beautiful coast, lovely towns and villages, castles, etc. Also, Dundee and Edinburgh are very close and are very nice cities for day trips.
suggestions/tips
Escape the bubble once in a while! St Andrews is lovely, but very small, so it is always nice to go somewhere else and see a bit of Scotland. Fife is lovely, Edinburgh and Glasgow are relatively close, and it is definitely worth it to travel to the islands on the west coast, or to climb some munros in the highlands.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would definitely recommend the University of St Andrews to other students, as the academic standard is really high, the town is lovely (although there are too many golf courses...), and the student life is very nice.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Enjoy Scotland!

Report 2

faculty/college	Department of Humanities
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University of St Andrews, Scotland, UK

level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Research Master 'Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Studies'

destination city & country	St Andrews, Scotland - UK
name university abroad	University of St Andrews
start date	23 / 01 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	31 / 05 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The application proces is easy to follow, just go to the wesite and follow the correct steps. A lot of paperwork, but not difficult.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
I could always go to my teachers for guidance
academic preparation
Going abroad is highly recommended in my Master and the Master itself prepares you for it.
language preparation
I had for a previous stay in an English speaking country taken a TOEFL test, plus I am doing an English taught Master, so other than that I did not take any extra preparatory steps.
finances
I funded my stay abroad myself, having saved up the money from work.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
I really wanted to work with/learn from two professors at the receiving university. That took some organising, but it worked out well and I learned a lot.
academic quality of education activities
The academic quality of the education activities was as expected, of a high standard.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Because I wanted to do something that was not in the standard curriculum of the receiving university, a few things needed to be organised and the university was very helpful in that respect.
transfer of credits
The receiving university works with a different grading system, but they will be transferred to the UU-system.

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STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
The receiving university had organised a two day welcome and orientation programme, which included the matriculation process and a guided tour through town and the university library.
accommodation
I searched and found accommodation through a university website.
leisure & culture
Scotland is a beautiful country, plenty to see and do. St Andrews has a cinema and a theatre and Edinburgh is not too far away
suggestions/tips
Walk the Fife Coastal Path and visit the Island of May, if possible.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes, it is very nice university with great educational opportunities and St Andrews is a nice place to live
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Try to see as much of Scotland as possible. Leave the 'bubble', that St Andrews is, once in a while.

Report 3

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Studies

destination city & country	St Andrews, United Kingdom
name university abroad	University of St Andrews
start date	05 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	18 / 12 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION
exchange application process

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Clear and easy. Once I knew where I wanted to go, it was a matter of filling in a couple of forms and clicking a few buttons. I did not have to do much myself, the collaboration between Utrecht and St Andrews is great.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
I did not require any special support or counselling. International office was always quick to respond to questions and signing forms.
academic preparation
I went to study with a professor that I already met when she visited Utrecht to present a paper. I had direct contact with said professor about academic matters.
language preparation
Officially, St Andrews requires non-native speakers of English to take a preliminary language course. I was exempted because my Master's programme is in English.
finances
My financial situation was just fine. I would recommend anyone going to study in St Andrews to look for accomodation further afield. I lived in Dundee (ca. 20km from St Andrews and 30 min by high-frequency bus). This can save you up to 50% on accomodation costs. Money that is much better spent exploring the country. Other towns in the area that I would recommend to look for housing are Cupar, Crail, and Anstruther.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
A few things about the course modules weren't clear beforehand (courses officially taking a full year, for example). However, this was nothing that couldn't be solved quickly and to satisfaction.
academic quality of education activities
St Andrews is one of the most renowned universities of the United Kingdom. Academic quality is high and everyone is doing their best to live up to expectations. I did not experience much trouble to fit in.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Academic staff was always very helpful and resourceful. The staff of the international office are easy to reach in person and respond quickly to emails.
transfer of credits
St Andrews uses, like most other Scottish universities, SCOTCAT credits. These relate to ECTS in a 2:1 fashion. (e.g. 20 SCOTCAT credits equal 10 ECTS)

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
St Andrews has a lot of orientation and welcoming (drinks everywhere!) going on. Because of the small size of the town, university life effectively rules the entire community. One does not need to be bored.
accommodation
Accommodation in St Andrews can be very expensive. See 'finances' above. Consider commuting if you want to save money.
leisure & culture
'Leisure' and 'culture' are the other two keywords that describe St Andrews next to 'university'. The town itself is a medieval burgh that was little affected by the age industrialisation and is therefore still small. A lot of old

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buildings are still standing, which effectively makes the town a small museum in itself. St Andrews is located next to the sea and most of its territory is covered by golf courses.

suggestions/tips

If you do decide to live in St Andrews, do not forget to get out of town. The town is called 'the bubble' for a reason. The outside world does not seem to exist in this rural coastal town. Edinburgh, however, is only an hour by bus away. Also, do not forget to visit the western highlands.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I definitely would. My experience with the university was very good. I was able to learn a lot here. It is a great opportunity to experience university education, and especially life, abroad. Scotland is a very welcoming country.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Bring not one, but two umbrellas.