

A young man and woman are sitting on a stone ledge in front of a building with classical columns. The man is standing, wearing a dark sweater and a scarf, with his hands in his pockets. The woman is sitting, wearing a grey cardigan and blue jeans, smiling. The background shows a row of stone columns and arches.

**UWS** UNIVERSITY OF THE  
WEST *of* SCOTLAND

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# STUDY IN SCOTLAND

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Guide to University of the  
West of Scotland  
2009/2010

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[www.uws.ac.uk](http://www.uws.ac.uk)

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to University of the West of Scotland - Scotland's biggest modern University, offering a wide range of excellent, career focused, undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

We have around 20,000 students studying across our four campuses in the west of Scotland and I am delighted that you have decided to join us for a period of study through one of our exchange agreements. Our international students play an important role in the University community, adding to the breadth and diversity of our student population, and we welcome you not only to the University but to Scotland also. Enjoy your time with us!

You join us during an ambitious phase of our development. In recognition of our growing international, national and regional role we renamed as University of the West of Scotland in November 2007. Since then we have set out an ambitious strategy to further strengthen our position as an internationally-recognised University, providing distinctive higher education, through inspirational teaching and learning, and excellent research and knowledge transfer.

We are committed to engaging in meaningful partnerships with stakeholders at home and overseas, including major employing organisations, in order to make a strong contribution to building a knowledge-based economy for Scotland. The University has recently established a specialist Employability Centre to act as a conduit between our students and potential employers.

We provide a distinctive educational experience across our four campuses in Ayr, Dumfries, Hamilton and Paisley, through a range of vocationally related courses, supported by our strong applied research and knowledge transfer activities.

Good facilities, both academic and social, are needed to support your learning experience with us and that is why we have invested over £14 million on these in recent years - and we have very ambitious development plans, that will involve capital expenditure of more than £160 million across our 4 campuses over the next 5 to 10 years, including the complete redevelopment of our campus in Ayr.

My colleagues and I are very proud of our University and of our students. The dedication shown by students during the time spent in the University and the successes enjoyed on graduation give us all an enormous sense of satisfaction and pleasure. As you study with us, I hope that you will also develop a sense of pride in your University and play your part in continuing to enhance the University's reputation for equipping students with the qualifications, skills and personal attributes needed to successfully compete in the employment market.

Colleagues across the University are dedicated to supporting you through your studies and associated student life - so please do make the most of the expertise of academic colleagues, support services and the facilities as we collectively seek to ensure your success at University of the West of Scotland and beyond.

I wish you every success.

*Professor Seamus McDaid  
Principal and Vice Chancellor*



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## CHAPTER 1

### STUDYING ABROAD SOUNDS INTERESTING - BUT WHY SCOTLAND AND UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND?

If studying abroad sounds like something you would like to do, then where to go in the world is the next, obvious question. Scotland, and the 4 campuses of University of the West of Scotland - in the towns of Paisley, Hamilton, Ayr and Dumfries - have a lot to offer and many of these aspects are highlighted below.

#### SCOTLAND

Scotland provides visitors with a wealth of cultural attractions, beautiful scenery and cosmopolitan urban centres. For lovers of the city and countryside alike, Scotland caters for all tastes. The varied landscape offers sports enthusiasts land and water-based sporting challenges including golf, cycling, walking, climbing, sailing, skiing and wildlife-spotting. For the more adventurous, extreme sports such as snowboarding, quad biking, whitewater rafting, canoeing and microlighting are on offer.

The Scots are renowned for their friendliness and hospitality and Scotland has a rich diversity of history and culture, which makes it attractive to visitors all year round. Scotland has a highly-skilled workforce and holds an enviable reputation in the fields of engineering and business, and in the development of innovative technologies. Famous Scots include:

John Logie Baird	- invented television
Alexander Graham Bell	- invented the telephone
John Boyd Dunlop	- devised the first air-filled tyres
Alexander Fleming	- discovered penicillin
David Hume	- philosopher and historian
John Hunter	- pioneer of scientific surgery
John Macadam	- discovered the means of waterproofing road surfaces
Charles Mackintosh	- invented the first waterproof
Kirkpatrick MacMillan	- devised the first bicycle
John Napier	- mathematician, who invented logarithms

Scotland is known worldwide for the high standards of its education system. A qualification from a Scottish university is globally recognised. The Scottish Parliament has stated its commitment to education and giving people, at all levels of society, the opportunity to increase their knowledge, earning potential and status. This approach to education is at the very centre of University of the West of Scotland's philosophy.

#### THE TOWN OF PAISLEY

Paisley, where most of the University's international student community is located, is a friendly and welcoming town. It is situated seven miles west of Glasgow, Scotland's main city, only 15 minutes away by train or car. As the largest town in

Scotland, with a population of around 75,000, Paisley has a wealth of lively cafes, restaurants, bars and nightclubs for students who like to socialise. Home to several leisure centres and a cinema complex, activities such as golf, cycling, hillwalking, ice-skating and swimming can also be enjoyed nearby.

Located in the heart of Paisley's town centre, and set on a 20-acre site, the University's Paisley Campus is close to Gilmour Street train station and Glasgow International Airport ([www.glasgowairport.com](http://www.glasgowairport.com)). The University's student accommodation and sports centre are also located within the town.

For shopping, Paisley and the surrounding area offer a wide range of shops, and Glasgow is considered the UK's best shopping destination after London.

The Arts Centre in Paisley offers a varied arts programme covering music, dance and theatre. On the social side, the Centre's café and bar provide a popular meeting point for Paisley's diverse cultural and artistic community and host a year round events programme. Paisley Museum and Art Gallery - situated opposite the University - has an internationally recognised collection of paintings and ceramics, as well as the world's largest archive of Paisley patterns.

Inward investment to the town has been encouraged through the launch of festival events spanning music, comedy and the arts. These festivals make the town a lively place to be and are complemented by the annual Beer Festival and a fortnightly market, voted top in Scotland and one of the best in the UK, where fresh foods and produce from local farms is sold.

#### THE TOWN OF AYR

With an ever-growing student population, Ayr has developed to become a University town, offering excellent student amenities, shops and entertainment. Within easy travelling distance of Glasgow and adjacent to Glasgow Prestwick International Airport, the coastal town is set amongst some of Scotland's most impressive scenery and boasts a rich history and arts tradition. Ayr provides a rare combination of relaxation and liveliness, an excellent environment in which students thrive. The town centre incorporates major retailers and specialist shops, as well as an interesting mix of cafes, bars, restaurants and clubs.

#### THE TOWN OF DUMFRIES

With a population of 38,000, Dumfries is big enough to offer a wide range of facilities, yet remains small enough to retain a friendly ambience. There are plenty of restaurants, pubs and clubs, and recreational facilities include sports and health clubs, cinemas, and department stores and independent shops. Culturally, the area boasts stunning castles, the Artists' Town of Kirkcudbright and Scotland's national book town, Wigtown.

#### THE TOWN OF HAMILTON

Hamilton, Scotland's 5th largest town, is close to some of the most scenic parts of Scotland and offers a wealth of activities to choose from, sites of historical interest and superb scenery.

Burns Country, Loch Lomond, the Trossachs as well as the cultural cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Stirling are all within easy reach.

Hamilton offers lots to see and do – including a number of country parks and nature reserves such as Strathclyde Park; and first-class sporting and leisure activities, including football, rugby, golf, tennis, ten-pin bowling, swimming and horse riding. The recently-regenerated town centre offers plenty of shopping options as well as a new 9-screen cinema, theatre and a host of diverse pubs, nightclubs and restaurants.

Lanarkshire offers an ideal combination of town and country living, with good access to the cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Stirling.

## UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND

The institution, today called University of the West of Scotland, was originally founded in 1897 and achieved its university status in 1992. The University educates to PhD level in the areas of: Business; Computing; Education; Engineering and Science; Health, Nursing and Midwifery; Media, Language and Music; and Social Sciences. The University is committed to continuing to develop its reputation for innovation and excellence by focusing on a number of key areas including:

- > **INNOVATIVE COURSE DESIGN** - The University is a leading provider of vocational education and its courses are designed in collaboration with commerce and industry.
- > **RESEARCH AND COMMERCIALISATION** - The University engages with industry in knowledge and technology transfer activities, ranging from research to consultancy and training. Research activity is encouraged across a wide range of disciplines.
- > **ON-LINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT** - The University's use of Blackboard, an online electronic learning and support tool, enables students to access tutorial and course notes, message boards and learning support at a time and place to suit their own requirements.

University of the West of Scotland provides a range of student accommodation, ideal if you're living away from home for the first time. Moving into student accommodation is a great way to make friends, build self-confidence and gain independence. The University also provides listings of non-university accommodation including flats, bedsits, bed & breakfast and full board accommodation around the 4 campuses.

Full details of the campuses and facilities can be found in the University prospectuses and on the website at [www.uws.ac.uk](http://www.uws.ac.uk)

## CHAPTER 2

### I AM VERY INTERESTED IN STUDYING IN SCOTLAND - WHAT NOW?

You are convinced that the idea of studying in Scotland is worthwhile and you want to apply to University of the West of Scotland. There are various things to organise, but don't

worry - help is available each step of the way! One of the great aspects of the exchange programme is that staff at many partner institutions (see below) have built up strong personal relationships that help to ensure that a high level of support is given to students who are preparing to study abroad. However, you must also be proactive to ensure that you are satisfied that all the arrangements are in place to make your study abroad period worthwhile.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MY INSTITUTION AND THE UNIVERSITY?

University of the West of Scotland is likely to be a partner to your home institution. Many students proposing to study abroad are supported by the European Union's Erasmus Programme of which the University is an active participant. Erasmus, or the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, was launched in 1987 and around 1,400,000 students have participated in it. Around 120,000 students from all over Europe will participate this year by undertaking a period of study at another institution somewhere in Europe. In Scotland, participating institutions, such as University of the West of Scotland, will welcome many students from other parts of Europe. For the purposes of Erasmus, Europe is defined as the 27 member states of the European Union (EU) and the 3 countries of the European Economic Area (EEA), who are Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. In addition, Turkey is also part of the programme.

### HOW DOES THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME WORK?

Basically, an institution, such as University of the West of Scotland, applies to become an active participant in Erasmus by applying to the EU for an extended Erasmus University Charter. The grant of this Charter allows the University to participate in Erasmus along with all the other institutions across Europe who have, similarly, been successful in obtaining their Charter. University of the West of Scotland is then approached by, or approaches, other institutions across Europe to establish suitable partnerships. If both institutions feel that they can work together as partners then they enter into an Erasmus Bilateral Agreement. These agreements specify:

- > The number of students that can be exchanged between each institution in one academic year
- > The academic subject area that these students must come from
- > The number of staff that can be exchanged in one academic year

### HOW MANY PARTNERS DOES UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND HAVE?

University of the West of Scotland has around 75 partners across Europe. Most academic subject disciplines are covered. For a full list please refer to:

[www.uws.ac.uk/courses/studyabroad/links.asp](http://www.uws.ac.uk/courses/studyabroad/links.asp)

## WHAT IS IN IT FOR UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND?

University of West of Scotland is delighted to be involved in Erasmus. Each year, the University welcomes around 150 Erasmus students from partner institutions who are a valuable addition to the student body at the University. Likewise, students from this University travel to study with partners across Europe, seen by staff here as a very valuable academic and social experience. As well as exchanging students, the University exchanges staff with partner institutions, again a very valuable academic experience. These partnerships lead to other spin-offs such as joint research projects and joint degree programmes. In essence, the Erasmus institutional network offers many benefits to participating universities.

## WHAT IS IN IT FOR ME?

The most important question! A recent version of the UK Socrates-Erasmus Guide perhaps summed up the benefits of undertaking a period of study abroad best by the following.

- Employability** - Erasmus students have the skills employers are looking for.
- Recognition** - Erasmus is fully recognised and respected across the EU.
- Adventure** - Try something different! Stand out from the crowd!
- Student life** - Live the life of a student in another country.
- Maturity** - The challenge of studying abroad brings maturity and confidence.
- Understanding** - Don't be a tourist! Live the life in another country.
- Satisfaction** - Studying abroad brings many rewards.

## AM I AN ERASMUS STUDENT?

This question must be directed to your home institution. Every year each institution will choose students to study abroad under Erasmus. The number of Erasmus students coming to an institution such as University of the West of Scotland is determined by the Bilateral Agreement. Your institution will have its own criteria for choosing the students that will be sent as Erasmus students to University of the West of Scotland.

## WHAT IF I AM NOT CHOSEN, BUT STILL WANT TO STUDY AT UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND?

You can still study at University of the West of Scotland as there are alternative ways to fund a period in Scotland. This is discussed further below. However, it is critical that you discuss your intentions with staff at your home institution first.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF MY HOME INSTITUTION AND UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND ARE NOT ERASMUS PARTNERS?

There are a number of institutions that this University has worked with on an informal basis over the years and it is likely that your home institution will be one of them. You can

still apply to University of the West of Scotland so read on! This University also welcomes a number of European students from institutions that they have no formal or informal links with - again, this is not a problem.

## IT SOUNDS AS IF I AM ABLE TO APPLY TO UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND?

Yes, is the short answer! University of the West of Scotland does invite you to apply and, subject to you meeting the criteria for entry, would be delighted to welcome you to Scotland.

## CHAPTER 3

### HOW DO I APPLY TO UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND?

Congratulations! You have now made a definite decision to study abroad and have spoken to family, friends and your home institution, and they are supportive. There is no substitute for living and studying in another country and you will find the experience very rewarding. It will give you a new and broader perspective on world affairs, will allow you to develop new inter-personal skills and competencies, and enhance your employment prospects on graduation. In short, it will be a great adventure! Applying to University of the West of Scotland is the next key stage in the process. It is not a difficult process but you must understand what category of student you are, in order to determine how you apply. For the purposes of this handbook, University of the West of Scotland receives applications from 6 types of students from countries across the European continent.

In this chapter, consideration will be given to each of the 6 categories of students and the application process that must be adopted.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### I WANT TO APPLY - HOW DO I DO IT?

The table below indicates what process undergraduate applicants must use to apply to University of the West of Scotland.

Type of student	Method of application
Students who are proposing to study for <b>one academic year</b> , are being funded by Erasmus and <b>are applying to more than one institution in the UK.</b>	UCAS
Students who are applying to study for <b>one academic year</b> , are privately funded or are receiving funding from their home country and <b>are applying to more than one institution in the UK.</b>	UCAS
Students who are applying to study for <b>one academic year</b> , are applying to the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) and <b>are applying to more than one institution in the UK.</b>	UCAS
Students who are applying to study for <b>one academic year</b> , are privately funded or are receiving funding from their home country OR are being funded by Erasmus OR are applying to the Students Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) AND are only applying to University of the West of Scotland.	Direct
Students who are proposing to study for <b>one trimester</b> and are being funded by Erasmus.	Direct
Students who are applying to study for <b>one trimester</b> and are privately funded or are receiving funding from their home country.	Direct

NB University of the West of Scotland UCAS code for 2009/2010 is P20.

Subject Area	Erasmus Coordinator
Business	Norman MacMillan
Computing	Tom Duff
Education	TBC
Engineering & Science	Joe Heffernan (Engineering) Richard Thacker (Science)
Health, Nursing & Midwifery	Robert Cowan
Media, Languages & Music	Sharon MacDonald
Social Sciences	Kevin Adamson

### WHAT IS THE UCAS PROCESS OF APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND?

Universities & Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) is the central organisation that processes applications for full-time undergraduate courses at UK universities and colleges. The UCAS website at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) is a particularly useful resource.

Basically, students who are studying at University of the West of Scotland for at least one academic year and are planning to graduate with a degree award from the University must apply through UCAS. There are a number of key stages and deadlines in the UCAS cycle and this University's processes for applications from European undergraduate students.

- 1. When to apply.** UCAS' usual date for receipt of applications for September entry is the 15 January of the same year. They then send the form onto this University for a decision. It will greatly assist this University if you complete and send your form by this date. If UCAS receive applications after this date, but before the 30 June, then they will accept them and send them onto us. However, the University strongly recommends that you complete and send your form to UCAS by 30 April at the latest, given the demand for places.
- 2. How to apply.** You should apply online through 'APPLY' at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). It is essential that you refer to "How to Apply - 2009" as this is an essential guide to completing the application.
- 3. What happens then?** Once you have sent your application form to UCAS, they will send it on to this University. You will be sent a letter of acknowledgement that the form has been received. The University Admissions Officer for the course you are applying for should be able to make a decision on the contents of the form depending on the information you have provided. However, it is possible that you will be contacted to provide further information and, if so, you must respond immediately. You will then be informed by UCAS on the decision of this University. You will also receive a letter direct from the University Admissions Office. However, any conditions which apply will only be notified via UCAS.

- 4. What sort of a decision can I expect?** The main decisions that you can expect are:

- > **Unconditional offer.** This means that you are definitely being offered a place at University of the West of Scotland. Congratulations!
- > **Conditional offer.** Basically, this means that you must satisfy certain conditions before you will be definitely offered a place e.g. the condition may be that you successfully complete your existing year of study before you can proceed to your next year at University of the West of Scotland. You must satisfy any conditions as soon as you are able to do so and you must provide documentary evidence of this to the Admissions Office. Only then will the offer be amended to an unconditional (see above). See also point 3 in the following section.

- > **Unsuccessful.** University of the West of Scotland is unable to offer you a place e.g. it may be as a result of you having insufficient qualifications.

If you receive an offer (unconditional or conditional) you will need to respond to it as follows:

UCAS applicants will be asked to respond to offers after decisions have been received for all choices made. At that point you will be sent a 'Replying to offers' letter and leaflet. You must follow the instructions in the leaflet and respond by using the online Track service at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). You must adhere to the response date given to you by UCAS otherwise your offers will be declined by default. You will be allowed to hold up to 2 offers, one as a firm acceptance and one as an insurance acceptance. However, if you firmly accept an unconditional offer then this is the only offer you can accept. Any other offers must be declined.

## IF I AM ELIGIBLE TO APPLY DIRECT TO UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND, WHAT PROCESS SHOULD I FOLLOW?

As shown by the table above, certain categories of European applicant can apply directly to the University and not go through UCAS.

- 1. When to apply.** Direct entrants should complete the University's EU Exchange application form and send it to the University by 30 May for trimester 1 [September] entry, and by 31 October for entry in trimester 2 [February].
- 2. How to apply.** If you fall into this category then you are able to download a University of the West of Scotland application form at: [www.uws.ac.uk/apply/international-apply.asp](http://www.uws.ac.uk/apply/international-apply.asp).
- 3. What do I need to send?** You must complete the application form and send it along with 1 academic reference, an English translation (certified by your institution as a translation done by yourself will not be accepted) of your prior academic credit and proof of your English language ability. If you do not have proof then one of your academic referees must comment on your suitability for studying in English at this University.
- 4. What happens then?** Once you have sent your application form to this University you will be sent a letter of acknowledgement that the form has been received. The relevant University Admissions Officer should be able to make a decision on the contents of the form but it is possible that you will be contacted to provide further information and, if so, you must respond immediately.
- 5. What sort of a decision can I expect?** The main decisions that you could expect are:
  - > **Unconditional offer.** This means that you are definitely being offered a place at University of the West of Scotland. Congratulations!
  - > **Conditional offer.** Basically, this means that you must satisfy certain conditions before you will be definitely offered a place, e.g. the condition may be that you successfully complete your existing year of study before you can proceed to your next year at University of the

West of Scotland. You must satisfy any conditions as soon as you are able to do so.

- > **Unsuccessful.** University of the West of Scotland is unable to offer you a place e.g. it may be as a result of you having insufficient qualifications.

If you receive an offer (unconditional or conditional) you will need to respond to it as follows:

Direct applicants to the University will be asked to respond within 14 days of receipt of the offer. The response slip will be enclosed with the offer letter and must be completed and returned directly to the Admissions Office at University of the West of Scotland. There is no limit to the number of conditional offers that can be accepted. However, if you accept an unconditional offer then you must decline any other offers.

## I WISH TO APPLY TO THE STUDENT AWARDS AGENCY FOR SCOTLAND [SAAS] TO HAVE MY TUITION FEES PAID - WHAT DO I DO?

Visit the SAAS website at [www.saas.gov.uk](http://www.saas.gov.uk) to apply. SAAS prefer you, wherever possible, to apply online, then print out a copy of your form (a shortened version of the form will automatically print out), sign it and post it to SAAS.

The SAAS forms are quite straightforward to complete. You do not need to complete all of the form - follow the guidance notes carefully on which sections (A to L) you need to fill in. You do not need to send any documents with your application. However, you could send a covering letter if there are special circumstances that you need to explain to SAAS.

## CHAPTER 4

### I AM GOING TO UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND - WHAT NOW?

By now, you have applied and received an unconditional offer, either by having satisfied the entry requirements, or by satisfying the conditions of the conditional offer. There are a number of other issues that you should be thinking about.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### I WANT TO APPLY FOR ACCOMMODATION - WHAT DO I DO?

As mentioned previously, the University provides a range of student accommodation, including halls of residence in Paisley, Hamilton and Ayr, and student flats in Paisley. It is critical that you apply for accommodation as soon as you are able to do so. Basically, along with your offer you will be sent an Application for Accommodation form. You must complete this form and return it to the University immediately. This allows us to add your name to the database of students requiring residential accommodation.

#### WHAT WILL I STUDY WHEN I GET TO SCOTLAND?

The academic year at this University is split into 3 trimesters. Each trimester lasts for 15 weeks. There are 12 teaching weeks, 1 week of private study and 2 weeks of examinations. As a full-time

student of the University, you will study 3 modules per trimester. Each module usually comprises 4/5 hours of class contact time per week and it is expected that you also undertake at least 4 hours of weekly private study per module. Each module will be assessed either during, or at the end of, the trimester. Some of the modules will be entirely assessed by an end of trimester examination while others, such as project modules, will be continually assessed throughout the trimester. However, most modules are assessed by a combination of coursework and an end of trimester examination.

## HOW IS ECTS IMPLEMENTED AND WHAT IS THE GRADING STRUCTURE?

European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS) provides a common method of measuring and comparing learning achievements and transferring them from one institution to another across Europe. At this University you will find that most modules account for 10 ECTS on successful completion. As you do 3 modules per trimester then you can obtain 30 ECTS, or 60 for an academic year. Your home institution should recognise the ECTS gained as a measure of your academic achievement at University of the West of Scotland.

## WHAT ABOUT THE ACADEMIC CONTENT OF EACH MODULE?

University of the West of Scotland has a descriptor for each module that you will study. Most of the module descriptors are on the web page ([www.uws.ac.uk](http://www.uws.ac.uk)) of the subject area that offers them. This will allow you to consider what you are going to study at the University before you arrive. Please contact the Study Abroad Coordinator if they are not. Alternatively, you may wish to wait until you arrive before choosing your modules. You are given time during the induction week to choose your modules and academic staff are available to help you. In fact, you can change your modules once you have started classes if you feel that you have made the wrong choice. There is one very important point that you must remember when choosing your modules. If you study and successfully complete one academic year (60 ECTS) at University of the West of Scotland, and you have sufficient prior credit from previous studies, then you can graduate with a degree award. Many students take advantage of this as it adds considerable value to their CV. However, the important issue is that you must choose the right combination of modules in order to satisfy the academic requirements of University of the West of Scotland. For this reason, therefore, it can be beneficial to wait until you arrive at University for induction before choosing your modules. This will allow you to choose modules that satisfy you (most importantly), your home institution and this University.

A number of students arrive at this University with the intention of studying for one trimester and subsequently decide to stay for a second trimester. This can allow them to graduate in the manner outlined above. However, it is important that they seek the guidance of academic staff at this University to ensure that the combination of modules is appropriate to lead to a degree award from University of the West of Scotland.

## MY ENGLISH IS GOOD BUT NOT THAT GOOD - IS THERE ANY HELP AVAILABLE?

Staff at the University continually comment on how good the English language abilities of the European students are and there is no doubt that their English improves during their stay in Scotland. The University does offer English language support throughout the year. There are 3 forms that this support takes.

1. Students can enrol on a pre-sessional English language summer school at the University. The summer school usually takes place around August and is advertised on the University's website in spring and early summer.
2. Students can take a module such as Advanced Business English (10 ECTS). Such modules can be incorporated into a student's study programme and may count towards a degree award. Alternatively many students take English as a 7th module free of charge.
3. The University offers English language drop-in sessions during the year. Students can go along to these sessions and receive support.

New students are given further information about the English language provision once they arrive.

## HOW DO I GET TO UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND?

The University is very well served by public transport. [If you are studying at Dumfries, please contact the Study Abroad Coordinator for travel details.]

### TRAVEL BY AIR

If you are travelling to Scotland by plane please be aware that there are two airports in the area around the University campuses. These are Glasgow International Airport (GLA) and Glasgow Prestwick International Airport (PIK).

#### Glasgow International Airport

Glasgow International Airport is situated about 10 minutes by taxi from the University's Underwood Residence, Paisley (cost is approximately £6) and about 15 minutes by taxi from the Thornly Park Residence, Paisley (cost is approximately £10).

If you are travelling to Ayr and arriving at Glasgow International, take a taxi to Paisley Gilmour Street station followed by a train to Ayr (they run every 30 minutes). On arrival at Ayr station take a taxi to your residence (cost approximately £4).

To travel to Hamilton Campus from Glasgow International Airport, you can take the Arriva's Glasgow Flyer (bus service number 500) from the Airport to Glasgow Central railway station. The bus leaves from bus stop 1, which is located in front of the main airport terminal building. A single journey will cost around £4 and will take around 25 minutes.

From Glasgow Central railway station you may take a train to Hamilton West. The train will leave from the Lower Level platforms in Glasgow Central. A single journey will cost approximately £3.

Hamilton Residence is on Campus and a 5 minute walk from Hamilton West railway station.

## Glasgow Prestwick International Airport

There is a direct railway link between the airport and Paisley and the journey takes about 40 minutes. If you present proof of your air travel you will receive a discount on the train fare.

You should take the Glasgow-bound train and on arrival at Paisley Gilmour Street station, you should then take a taxi directly to your residence. The taxi rank is outside the station, in County Square. Underwood Residence is about 5 minutes' taxi journey (cost approximately £4) from the station; Thornly Park Residence about 10 minutes from the station (cost approximately £6).

Important: **Do not** take a taxi from Glasgow Prestwick Airport to Paisley as this will cost about £35-£40.

If you are studying at the campus in Ayr and arriving at Glasgow Prestwick, take the railway link to Ayr and then a taxi to your residence (cost approximately £4).

If you are studying in Hamilton, take a train from Glasgow Prestwick International Airport to Glasgow Central railway station where you must change trains. From Glasgow you may take a train to Hamilton West station.

## TRAVEL BY CAR OR TRAIN

Information on travel by car and train can be found on our website: [www.uws.ac.uk/international/travel.asp](http://www.uws.ac.uk/international/travel.asp).

## TRAVEL BY BUS

If you travel by bus to Scotland, you will probably arrive at Buchanan Bus Station in Glasgow. For the Paisley campus we recommend that, from there, you take the Scottish Citylink express bus to Glasgow International Airport (a 15-20 minute onward journey) and then take a taxi from the Airport to your residence in Paisley.

For students studying at the Hamilton campus a similar service is available to Hamilton Bus station where a taxi can be taken to the residence on campus.

## WHAT CAN I EXPECT ONCE I ARRIVE?

The University runs an induction period immediately prior to the first week of trimester. This is an extremely important period for new students as it helps them familiarise themselves with the University and, generally, living in Scotland. By the end of the induction period students from Europe should have:

- > **Attended the inaugural meeting with key University staff.** On the first day of induction, the Department of Corporate Marketing organises a meeting for all new European students. New students at the Ayr and Hamilton campuses will also be welcomed by key staff there. At these meetings you are given further information about living and studying in Scotland from staff in the University and from relevant organisations outwith the University. This additional information complements the content of this handbook and you are also given a welcome pack that, again, provides information that will prepare you for living in Scotland.
- > **Enrolled as a student of University of the West of Scotland.** This is critical as enrolment allows you access to all the

University facilities including e-mail, computing hardware and software, the library, sports centre etc. Do not worry, you will be guided through the enrolment process.

- > **Meet key staff in your subject area.** Each new student is allocated to one of the 7 subject areas at the University. You will find that each subject area will have formal meetings that you must attend but there will also be informal sessions for you to meet staff and other students on a social basis.
- > **Chosen your modules.** You may have already chosen your modules before you arrived at University of the West of Scotland but it is, nevertheless, important that you discuss your choice with academic staff here in order to ascertain that you have made an appropriate choice. If you have not chosen your modules before you arrive then the induction period is when you will be given guidance.
- > **Familiarised yourself with your new town and the University.** Induction is also a good opportunity to get to know your surroundings and also meet staff within the University.
- > **Take part in social activities.** You will find that there are various social activities taking place during the induction period. These activities are a good opportunity to relax and meet fellow students.

## CHAPTER 5

### ADDITIONAL USEFUL INFORMATION

It will take you some time to settle in, especially if this is your first visit to the UK, and you will probably experience some aspects of 'culture shock' - the impact of moving from a familiar culture into an unfamiliar one. The UKCOSA guidance notes 'International students and culture shock' on the website: [www.ukcosa.org.uk](http://www.ukcosa.org.uk) gives detailed information on what culture shock is and how to cope with it. Please be reassured that culture shock is completely normal and you are not alone in experiencing it. The following information will help you prepare for studying in Scotland.

### BANKS AND BUILDING SOCIETIES

Various banks and building societies are located within walking distance of the Paisley Campus in the High Street and at Paisley Cross. The four main banks are the Royal Bank of Scotland, the Bank of Scotland, Lloyds TSB and the Clydesdale Bank. There are also branches of these banks in Hamilton, Ayr and Dumfries, located in the town centre. Opening hours are generally Monday to Friday between 9am or 10am and 4pm or 5pm. On the Paisley Campus, there is a cash point machine in A-Block. You can withdraw cash from this machine with most bank debit cards. Check the symbols on the machine to find out which cards it accepts.

### PLACES OF WORSHIP

There are many Christian churches in Paisley, Hamilton, Ayr and Dumfries. Further details on other places of religious worship such as the Buddhist Centre, Jewish Synagogues, Muslim Mosques, and Hindu and Sikh Temples are available on arrival at the University or in your welcome pack.

## CURRENCY

Pound sterling, written as £1. £1=100 pence. In addition to English currency, Scottish banks can print their own banknotes. Both English and Scottish notes are acceptable throughout the United Kingdom. Bank notes are in denominations of £100, £50, £20, £10 and £5. Scottish £1 banknotes are also still in circulation. Coins used are £2, £1, 50p, 10p, 5p, 2p and 1p.

## CREDIT CARDS

Major credit cards - Visa, MasterCard and American Express - are accepted throughout Scotland. Look for the signs displayed at the entrance to the shop etc. or near the pay-point.

## ELECTRICAL VOLTAGE

240V 50Hz. Adapters for appliances such as hairdryers and shavers are available from electrical shops and other stores. Please ensure that they conform to UK regulations.

## E-MAIL

The University provides free e-mail accounts to all students and there are many computing labs where e-mail can be accessed. For information on how to set up your e-mail account, you should attend the induction tour of the computing labs on arrival.

## EMERGENCIES

The emergency telephone number in the UK is **999**. The call is free from any public telephone and is for immediate help only. The operator will ask you which service you need - police, ambulance or fire brigade. Stay calm, describe the emergency and give the exact address. It is essential that you report all accidents which occur in the University. It could be an accident where someone is injured or where University property or personal belongings have been damaged. You will be given a leaflet entitled "*Essential Information for your Health & Safety as a Student of University of the West of Scotland*" in your welcome pack on arrival. Please read the contents carefully as it also provides information on fire procedures and the smoking policy of the University.

## EMPLOYMENT

Information about international students and permission to work while studying in the UK can be found in the government leaflet '*International students working in the UK - what you need to know*' in your welcome pack. Also visit the UKCOSA website on [www.ukcosa.org.uk](http://www.ukcosa.org.uk) - you can download the Guidance Notes for students on '*Working in the UK during your studies*'.

## FIRST AID

The University has approximately 70 First Aid trained personnel. If you have an accident on campus and need first aid urgently, call 2222 or 3168 from any internal phone or one of the yellow emergency wallphones located around the campus. For first aid at the University residences, check the local arrangements for your residence.

## HOSPITALS

In Paisley, for emergency treatment only go to the Accident and Emergency Department at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley. Tel: 0141 887 9111.

For Ayr, go to Ayr Hospital, Dalmellington Road, Ayr. Tel: 01292 610555.

In Hamilton, go to Hairmyres Hospital, Eaglesham Road, East Kilbride G75 8RG. Tel: 01355 585000

In Dumfries, the contact is Dumfries & Galloway Royal Infirmary, Bankend Road, Dumfries. Tel: 01387 246246

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WELFARE

If you have any problems during your stay here or are worried about something, there are many sources of help within the University. In Student Services, the International Student Adviser can help you with general welfare issues as well as visas, immigration, and work and funding queries. Student Services also offer all students help with careers, counselling, special needs, and nursery facilities; there is also a chaplaincy service. You can also speak to your personal tutor, staff at the Students' Association, and the wardens in the University accommodation, or to your doctor.

## MEDICAL SERVICES

For non-emergency medical help and advice contact your local doctor (known as a 'GP' or 'General Practitioner'). It is important that you register with a local doctor on arrival here. See the leaflet '*Register with a GP*' in your welcome pack.

The University's Health & Safety Services also require you to complete a form (contained in your welcome pack). Completion of this form is mandatory in order to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff and students. You will be given further information on this during the induction period.

## PASSPORTS/ID CARDS

Please keep your passport or other form of identity card issued in your home country in a safe place. It is useful to take a photocopy of the personal information in your documentation.

## PASSPORT PHOTOGRAPHS

If you need passport-type photographs for student ID cards etc. there are 'Photo Me' photograph machines located in places such as main train stations and shopping centres. The cost is around £3.50 for four photographs - you need the exact change.

## PHONING HOME

Phone calls from private and public phones are normally cheaper between 6pm and 8am and at weekends. International calls can be very expensive. Check in the phone book for the international operator number. They will be able to tell you how much your call will cost you before you call. The international operator can also help you to make the call. Public phones will accept coins, pre-paid phone cards (which you can buy from many shops) and credit cards. If you are using a mobile phone to call overseas, check first how much it will cost as charges vary between companies.

## POLICE STATIONS

The local police station is on Mill Street, Paisley. Tel: 0141 532 5900. For students studying at Ayr Campus, the local contact number is 01292 664000 for the police station at King Street, Ayr. In Dumfries, contact 01387 252112. Hamilton Police office is in Campbell Street and can be contacted on 01698 483300.

## POST BOXES

Post boxes in the UK are bright red - you can't miss them! You will find details of the collection times on the box. Stamps can be bought from the post office and many shops. Within the UK you can use first or second class stamps.

## POST OFFICES

In Scotland, every large town such as Ayr or Paisley has a main post office situated in the centre and smaller sub offices throughout the town. The main one in Paisley is at 34/36 Central Way in the Piazza Shopping Centre and in Ayr, at Burns Statue Square. They are open from 9am until 5.30pm Monday to Saturday. For all post office information, including prices of sending mail overseas, visit the website [www.postoffice.co.uk](http://www.postoffice.co.uk)

## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

There are 11 official public holidays in Scotland. On these days, banks and public buildings will close and transport services such as trains and buses operate reduced services. There are local differences in some public holiday dates e.g. dates vary between Glasgow, Paisley, Hamilton and Ayr, and also national differences in dates between Scotland and England/Wales. Check before travelling.

## SHOPPING

Paisley, Hamilton and Ayr are well equipped with shops, supermarkets and shopping centres. In addition, Glasgow is easily accessible from all towns and it provides one of the most dynamic shopping environments in the United Kingdom. Dumfries also offers a wide range of shops and stores.

Food shopping: For general food shopping, the main supermarkets in Scotland are *Morrisons*, *Tescos*, *Sainsburys* and *Asda*. Other stores such as *Lidl*, *Aldi*, *Iceland* and *Farmfoods* also offer very good value. *Marks and Spencer* also sell good quality food, but expect to pay higher prices here. You will find that many of the above retailers are represented in Paisley, Hamilton, Ayr and Dumfries. In addition, you will find many smaller specialist retailers such as butchers, greengrocers, fishmongers and health food shops in both town centres. You may have to travel to Glasgow for more specialist foods.

## SPORT

The Students' Association runs a wide variety of sporting clubs open to all students. Take the opportunity to try something different or continue a sport you have enjoyed at home. Many international students have found joining in sporting events a good way of meeting other students

and making friends. The Robertson Sports Centre at Thornly Park offers free membership to all students of University of the West of Scotland. A small charge is made for use of the facilities, which include a gym, courts for basketball, netball, volleyball, badminton and tennis, martial arts clubs, five-a-side football/hockey pitches, and turf pitches for rugby and football. Squash and tennis courts are also available at a nearby location.

Tel: 0141 884 7785.

Located on the Hamilton campus is the recently refurbished Sports & Leisure Centre, featuring a well-equipped multi-gym area, games hall and sauna suite – open seven days a week with discounted membership to students.

Tel: 01698 894420.

Within the towns of Paisley, Ayr, Hamilton and Dumfries there are also a wide range of sporting facilities that are open to the public. Most interests are catered for including football, rugby, swimming, martial arts and volleyball.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

Take time out to visit the rest of Scotland while you are here. There are some truly unique places, both on the mainland and the many islands off the coast, suitable for day trips, a weekend or longer. The Island of Arran, for example, is less than two hours from Paisley, Hamilton or Ayr by train and boat - perfect for a day out and some fresh sea air. For ideas on what to do and see in Scotland, visit the Tourist Information website on [www.visitscotland.com](http://www.visitscotland.com)

Tourist Information offices are located in:

### Paisley

9a Gilmour Street, Paisley PA1 1DD. Tel: 0141 889 0711

### Ayr

22 Sandgate, Ayr KA7 1BW. Tel: 01292 290300

### Glasgow city centre

11 George Square, Glasgow G2 1DY. Tel: 0141 204 4400

### Dumfries

64 Whitesands, Dumfries, DG1 2RS. Tel: 01387 253862

## TRAVEL

For further information on travel see the A-Z Guide in your information pack.

### Local buses:

There are two main bus companies: *First Direct* and *Arriva*. Pay the driver on entry to the bus. For *First Direct* buses use the exact fare only; *Arriva* buses give change if you don't have the right money. A variety of bus passes are available which can save you money e.g. daily, weekly and monthly tickets. Off-peak travel begins after 9.30am.

### Local trains:

There are frequent trains from Hamilton, Ayr and Paisley to Glasgow Central. You should buy your ticket from the ticket offices before you catch the train, if the office is open. You can buy tickets on the train but you could pay more for some tickets e.g. a return ticket. Trains before 9.30am are more expensive.

For timetable information on buses and trains in Scotland call  
Travel Line

Tel: 0870 6082608

For fare information on buses and trains in Scotland call  
Strathclyde Passenger Transport

Tel: 0141 332 6811

For coach services within Scotland call Scottish Citylink

Tel: 08705 505050

For national bus enquiries call National Express

Tel: 08705 808080

or visit their website [www.gobycoach.com](http://www.gobycoach.com)

For train services within Scotland call Scotrail

Tel: 08457 550033

or visit their website [www.scotrail.co.uk](http://www.scotrail.co.uk)

For all train enquiries call National Rail Enquiries

Tel: 08457 484950

or visit their website [www.thetrainline.com](http://www.thetrainline.com)

There are many travel agents located in Ayr, Dumfries,  
Hamilton and Paisley. For the best deals in air travel, use the  
internet sites (details in the A-Z Guide).

#### **Travellers' cheques**

Travellers' cheques can be exchanged for cash (pounds  
sterling) at any Bureau de Change or bank.

## NOTES



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WEST *of* SCOTLAND

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