

# Experience Report: University of St Andrews

(Fall 2024), [REDACTED], 4th semester

[REDACTED]



**Courses: Computational Economics, Public Economics, International Business**

### **Arriving in St Andrews**

I arrived in Scotland on the 5th of September and spent two days in Edinburgh, exploring the city and its historic landmarks. On the official Move-In Day, September 7th, I made my way to St Andrews. Since St Andrews does not have its own train station, I took a train from Edinburgh to Leuchars, the nearest station, and then continued by taxi to the town. The journey was straightforward, with a taxi ride costing approximately £15.

Move-In Day is one of the busiest days in St Andrews, as many students arrive on the same day, making the town feel lively and full of energy. I had already met a few fellow students at the airport and on the train, which made the journey even more exciting and set the tone for the welcoming atmosphere I would experience throughout my time in St Andrews.



### **Housing in St Andrews**

Most exchange students and first-year students live in halls of residence, which are either catered or self-catered. I stayed in University Hall, one of the more social halls, known for its weekly events like free bars and other gatherings. Living in halls was a great way to meet people and feel part of the student community. The atmosphere was friendly, and there was always something going on to bring people together.

In the first week of the semester, known as Freshers' Week, there are numerous activities organized both by the university and within the halls themselves. These hall-based events are a great way to meet your flatmates and other residents, making it easier to settle in and form connections. Additionally, all student clubs and societies offer "Give It a Go" sessions, where new students can try out different activities and explore various interests. This provides a good opportunity to meet people and get a sense of the vibrant student life at St Andrews.

One of the most rewarding aspects of living in halls and joining clubs is the opportunity to meet local students. Through these interactions, I ended up forming friendships primarily with local students, which made my experience abroad even more authentic.

### **Everyday Life**

Life in St Andrews is unique due to its small-town charm. The entire town is walkable, and it's common to bump into familiar faces on every trip to the supermarket or coffee shop. This sense of community was one of the highlights of my stay.

When it comes to nightlife, St Andrews doesn't have any proper clubs. The closest options, such as the Union and The Vic, have dance floors but can't be compared to traditional clubs. Instead, the nightlife revolves around the many pubs in town, which are always packed with students. Popular spots include Molly Malones, Aikman's Bar, and The Central, all offering a cozy and lively atmosphere. Aikman's Bar, in particular, is known for its relaxed vibe and great selection of drinks. The vibrant pub culture creates a social and welcoming environment that more than makes up for the lack of clubbing options.

While St Andrews offers a lot of charm and activities, its proximity to Edinburgh makes it easy to explore Scotland's capital. Regular trains and buses connect St Andrews (via Leuchars) to Edinburgh, making day trips convenient and affordable. I visited Edinburgh several times, enjoying its vibrant Christmas market, world-class museums like the National Museum of Scotland, and the city's historic landmarks. These trips added variety to my experience and provided a refreshing change from the quiet life in St Andrews.

### **Academic Experience**

At St Andrews, students typically take three courses per semester. I chose Computational Economics, Public Economics, and International Business. All three courses were honours-level modules, designed for students in their third or fourth year, which made the content more advanced and engaging.

- **Computational Economics:** This course was both challenging and rewarding. We worked on two coding projects and completed in-class tests, gaining valuable hands-on experience in applying programming skills to economic and mathematical problems. We primarily used Mathematica to develop algorithms that addressed these problems, which provided a solid foundation in computational techniques.
- **Public Economics:** This course stood out for its problem-solving approach, which differed significantly from my experience in Cologne. It focused on understanding and analyzing key economic issues through practical applications. The course included weekly online quizzes, one class test, and a final exam, all designed to deepen our understanding of the material.

- **International Business:** The workload for this course was manageable yet insightful. I had to write two essays, one of which was a case study on a specific topic in international business. The course provided practical perspectives on global business strategies, making it both relevant and engaging.

The teaching style at St Andrews is highly interactive, with small class sizes and tutorials led by professors rather than teaching assistants. Attendance is mandatory for most tutorials, encouraging active participation and consistent engagement throughout the semester.

### **Unique Aspects of St Andrews**

St Andrews is a place like no other, steeped in tradition and history. One of the most memorable experiences was Raison Weekend, where students participate in fun activities organized by their "academic families." The sense of tradition extends to events like the Pier Walk, where students in red gowns walk along the pier on Sundays, and the numerous formal balls throughout the semester.

The town is also renowned as the "Home of Golf," attracting players from around the world. During the warmer months, it's not uncommon to spot celebrities on the Old Course—I even had the chance to meet Charles Leclerc during one of his visits.

Joining student societies was a great way to enhance my experience. I became a member of the German Society, which provided opportunities to connect with other German-speaking students, and the Motorsport Society, which hosted weekly Formula 1 watch parties. These societies made it easy to meet like-minded people and stay engaged outside of academic life.

### **Final Thoughts**

My semester at St Andrews was an unforgettable experience that combined academic growth with cultural immersion. The close-knit community, rich traditions, and beautiful surroundings made my time there truly special. I would highly recommend St Andrews to anyone looking for a unique and enriching study abroad experience.