

Re-booting student life after two years of pandemic

How a song and dance helped Hanna connect with the University community after studying remotely.

I came to the University of Edinburgh in September 2020 so was in the first cohort to experience what it is like to start my studies under Covid conditions. Unlike many of my peers, I was lucky to have comparatively many in-person classes. Academically, things went well and I felt sufficiently supported – there was just nothing to do except for studying. But when stricter measurements forced me to study entirely online from my home in Germany in spring 2021, I felt very much detached from the student community.



So, going into my second year I was excited for all the opportunities that would come with being in Edinburgh again but jumping back (or rather, for the first time) into student life in Edinburgh was harder than I expected. After all, I had just spent a year and a half either being chained to my desk studying, or to my bed watching Netflix. Although not consciously, I still had the mentality of staying inside and

looking for activities that didn't involve too many other people.

I made sure to join as many societies as my schedule allowed, joined the committee of a society and assumed a job as student ambassador at the University to get fully involved, but something was still missing – I still didn't quite feel at home and part of this great student community. That changed when I attended the first showcase organised by one of my societies at the end of last semester. Being at a place where it's mostly students and seeing something solely student-led come to life was truly exhilarating. I finally felt part of something bigger – something I've recognised again at our second showcase and at two theatre performances by other societies.



Sure, going to pubs, bars and flat parties is a great way to meet more people but I have found that they couldn't give me what being part of or seeing student showcases and performances did. I suppose there is a huge accumulation of sheer talent at Edinburgh University, but that's not to say you have to have the talent yourself or be part of such societies – I for one could never participate in a theatre performance or a dance competition. And regarding theatre and such, we are of course fortunate. Edinburgh, as the venue for

the Fringe Festival, is the perfect place for student productions. However, I think it's the experience of what can happen when we all pull in the same direction and what we accomplish as a student community apart from the academics that really made me feel 'welcome'.

Now that restrictions are looser again and that people start to feel safe in a room with many others, it's time to revive real student life. Let's do that by going to performances by people you might not know but are connected to through University. Apart from honouring their/our hard work by going to these, nothing feels more inclusive. Plus, it is a great way to enjoy culture without breaking the bank.

It's all Greek (and Turkish) to me! Studying in Edinburgh when English is not your native language

Over 10,000 overseas students matriculated with the University of Edinburgh in the 2021-2022 academic year, but what is like to study here? Georgia-Taygeti – originally from Greece – shares her experience.



My favorite class throughout the first two years of my History degree was not an actual history class. Instead, I looked forward the most to my Turkish class which gathered in the Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies building four times a week. It's not that I didn't enjoy my history classes, or policy and politics courses I took as electives. I did! But there was something really special about our little group of students from across the disciplines and our shared frustration over Turkish grammar. I ended up taking the course for four semesters and the class size ranged from nine to two, for our final semester before honors. I really enjoyed how regularly we met, the close-knit feeling of the group, and the Turkish treats our professor would bring us. I grew up watching Turkish soap operas, which I highly recommend as a genre of television, so I was really excited to be in a classroom learning Turkish. Mostly, I loved Turkish because in the classroom, all of us were trying to learn a language together. There was no one that was further ahead or further behind. In my history classes, there are always a couple of us that did not grow up speaking English and, still, it can still feel scary to have to participate in discussions with native speakers.

I started learning English when I was in primary school, as a foreign language. Now, I live my entire life in it, which feels insane. I write my academic essays, make friends, and work in it. Learning a second language opened a lot of paths for me, but also was a humbling experience, very much in the

same way learning Turkish was. For me, learning a language is about making a lot (a LOT) of mistakes, until you start making sense. It also allows us to challenge our own sense of reality, both personally and as students. For history specifically, the range of sources I have been able to access through the languages I speak is significantly larger than if I only spoke English. If you only read English, it is easy to assume that all academic knowledge is produced in the Anglophone world. It is not. Really good historians produce work in other languages, and learning a new language can help us all access their work, instead of relying on the translation of their thought into English.

By virtue of the many language degrees Edinburgh offers anyone can take a language as a pre-honours elective. If that does not work for you, the Centre for Open Learning also runs ten week courses for many, many languages! One of my favorite recent fiction reads, 'The Idiot' by Elif Batuman, largely revolves around the protagonist and the relationships she develops with her classmates in her Russian language learning class. So if I can't convince you to learn a language at university, maybe Batuman can!

Centre for Open Learning

The word on Societies

Retrospect Journal.

One of the tried and tested ways of finding your feet at University is by joining a Society. Tristan – 3rd year MA (Hons) Ancient and Medieval History – started with a journal

and ended up in Crete.

Undoubtedly one of my biggest anxieties about enrolling at the University was whether I would fit in. This was certainly heightened by the fact that I'm a somewhat more mature student, but it is a worry shared by many, regardless of age. Despite my fears, I was determined to find my place and make the most of my time here – something I realised through my involvement with 'Retrospect Journal', a student-led History, Classics and Archaeology publication.

'Retrospect', one of more than 290 societies available to join at the University of Edinburgh, centres on the online and print publication of articles written by a team of columnists and proofed by copy editors. Uploaded weekly, they cover all disciplines relating to History, Classics and Archaeology in the form of academic writing, historical fiction, and reviews, to name just a few. It also publishes several thematic print editions throughout the year. In 2020, they included 'Prejudice and Pandemics', 'Histories of Hope' and 'Race in Retrospective' (in collaboration with RACE.ED), whilst 2021's first offering will be 'Development and Deterioration'. If it wasn't already apparent, we also enjoy alliteration.



The Minoan Palace of Knossos, a day trip whilst in Crete.

Whilst the publication of our journal is the crux of the society, it is also a place where I've had the opportunity to get to know and socialise with those involved. Our common interests and working together to produce engaging literature completely mitigated my worries about fitting in. It has made my student experience one which extends beyond the classroom – although the experience of writing for publication has certainly helped that. Of course, it isn't the only society with links to the School of History, Classics and Archaeology. There are those named for the respective disciplines, all of which offer a huge variety of social and academic events. In February 2020, as part of Flexible Learning Week, I travelled to Crete with the Classics Society; not only a fantastic opportunity for an Ancient History student but through which I've formed close friendships.

If I could give one piece of advice to a prospective student, it would be not to let anxieties hold you back. Through getting involved with societies, whether those affiliated with the School or the University more broadly, you'll not only

have a much more valuable experience, but you'll get to know your peers, many of whom may have a background similar to yourself, in a welcoming environment.

The unexpected perks of bus travel in Edinburgh

Moving to another city can be stressful and frustrating but there can also be unexpected benefits, as Hanna (Classical Studies MA Hons) found.



When I first came to Edinburgh, everyone assured me that there was an “amazing” public transport system here. However, coming from a big city in Germany with a close-knit system of trams, undergrounds and buses, I was rather disappointed. I thought Edinburgh was a capital city but all it has is a tram with a

single line and buses. Since Edinburgh is exceptionally walkable and most of my weekday appointments are a 30-minute walk or less, this didn't bother me too much. Besides, especially in the city centre, walking is just as fast or even faster than taking the bus. However, as my radius slowly expanded as the semester progressed, 45-minute walks in the rain down to the Peffermill Playing Fields, the University's sports complex, or tiring walks back from the supermarket with full bags of my weekly groceries became more and more tiresome. So, I began to cautiously familiarise myself with the bus system.

Contrary to people's assurances, I felt the buses are not always that reliable. Most of the buses don't tell you the names of the stops, which makes the journey very stressful if you're not yet very familiar with the city. And due to roadworks buses can be delayed or need take a different route than the one your phone shows. This always makes me panic and get off at the next possible stop! But there are some benefits to the buses in Edinburgh.

The infamously changeable Scottish weather sometimes made me take the bus anyway, and then the bus is a warm shelter from the wind and rain. And the exceptional friendliness of the bus drivers is just as warm! Coming from a place where no one speaks to the public transport drivers and they never interact with you, the bus drivers in Edinburgh are a wonder to me. They are – I am not exaggerating – the friendliest, most polite, and helpful people. I once took a bus from the airport to my flat and asked the bus driver for directions. He didn't just tell me the stop. No, he stopped at a bus stop, turned off the engine, got out, helped me with my luggage and showed me the next stop I needed to get to and explained in detail which buses I could take.

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de free in Scotland for people under 22 (for many students, this means the entire duration of their degree), I have decided to officially make my peace with buses. Plus, what I have acknowledge only now, buses are one of the best ways to get to know Edinburgh. The architecture of the city is magnificent but you don't really notice it until you look up – and that's often not an option due to the aforementioned changeable weather. But if you sit in the front at the double-decker's big window, you can see the impressive architecture and all the monuments of Edinburgh from a prime perspective. A truly worthwhile experience.

What's more, buses are free not only in Edinburgh, but all over Scotland. This means you can travel to St Andrews, North Berwick or Glasgow for free in no more than two hours. Unfortunatly night buses are not included in the free bus ride which can be annoying when your feet hurt from a night-out at a ceilidh but that doesn't interfere with my

reconciliation with bus travel in Edinburgh. The next time it's pouring rain, my shoulders hurt from grocery bags, and I have the prospect of reading my book on a warm bus, I'll be all appeased again. Buses are now one of the things that make Edinburgh even better for me, and as long as I am not 22 yet, I will definitely make the most of my free bus travel pass.

Lothian Buses cover Edinburgh and the Lothians

Plan your journey with the Lothian Bus journey planner

Applying for Young Persons' (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel

Home is where...

To say the Covid years were tough is, of course, a gross understatement. But what if you're a new international student finding your feet in a foreign country? Olivia is a second year History (MA Hons) student, and this is her story.



View of Edinburgh from Calton Hill at sunset.

I had never been to Scotland before August of 2020 when I moved here for the first time. I honestly don't think I was scared then, but looking back with a year and a half of separation, I don't know how I wasn't terrified. I was definitely anxious about concrete ideas like making new friends, adjusting to learning at a university level, and what if I didn't understand Scottish accents, but as for the physical act of hopping on an airplane and moving to a different country, I wasn't overly concerned about it. It wasn't really until my first week out of isolation that I realised I was in a totally new place living with totally new people, and I had no idea what I was doing. I still don't really have any idea what I'm doing.

I spent my first couple weeks in the city going to the same grocery stores, the same tutorials, the same coffee shop, the same and the same and the same. My world here – whilst bigger than I ever could have imagined in rural Texas – was still incomprehensibly small compared to the Edinburgh I live in now. And for the most part, I didn't think about home. As the semester went on my flatmates and I started to get more comfortable with each other, and the same and the same and the same started to get less familiar. My flatmates and I would stay up late in the kitchen singing ABBA or trying to figure out ceilidh steps or talking about whatever and whatever else. We'd take day trips, go for long walks to nowhere, explore the wynds and closes of Old Town and get completely lost. And

before I knew it, I had finished my first semester of university.

I went home for Christmas, discovered that it was infinitely harder to be the one who leaves than the one who stays, and when I came back, Edinburgh was a different city. The lockdown meant that even the same and the same and the same that I had experienced in the first semester was limited. My flatmates either went home or didn't come back, so I moved to the West End of the city and basically didn't leave my room for the rest of the semester. The concept of making a home here had splintered.



Olivia and her friend, Nikki.

But that semester ended too and I got to go home. I spent most of my summer recovering from living through a global catastrophe functionally alone, so when I came back to Edinburgh this year I didn't know what to expect. I was scared that it was going to be as isolating as it was the previous semester, and I was scared that I would be starting over with friends again. But I didn't have anything to worry about and this past semester has been incredible! The same and the same and the same of my first semester is a distant memory. Edinburgh – which I thought I had a decent grasp on – has gotten so much bigger and I can't possibly imagine that I'll see the whole city before I graduate.

I think that the biggest hurdle to overcome, being both an international student and a pandemic student, is realising that the concept of 'home' takes time. Recently, I went on a trip to St Andrews with one of my very dear friends, and for the first time coming back into the city felt like coming home. After a year and a half, I've made a home and I didn't even know it. My home here is impermanent, but it is beautiful.

A day in the life... Scarlett

Scarlett is a 4th year History and Politics student and she's going to take you through a typical day in her life to give you a taste of what it might be like to study at the University of Edinburgh!

It's Wednesday, February 2nd...

8.00am – Typically when I wake up and the first thing to do is grab a cup of tea and breakfast. I can't say that I'm always waking up this time or getting up right when my alarm goes off at 8.00 but I do have some mid-semester deadlines coming up so it's up and at 'em for me!

9.30am – I have arrived at the School's Student Research Rooms, a study space reserved for History, Classics and Archaeology (HCA) students. After last year in the midst of a full lockdown it feels amazing to be able to come back on campus and enjoy these beautiful study spaces once again. I'd say we're pretty lucky in HCA to have a study space just for us that is so atmospheric. There's a huge glass ceiling over

the space letting the sun shine through and I see so many familiar faces studying in the space as well. For the next few hours I'll be working on one of my chapters of my dissertation in Medieval history.



The Student Research Rooms.

12.00pm – My friend and I head out to one of our favourite coffee shops next to campus, Thomas J Walls, for some lunch. There are so many great food and coffee spots right on or next to our campus but today I was really feeling their avocado toast (they do it particularly well). As it's so close to our building we run into several members of staff including the head of History and have a quick conversation. One thing I've always loved about the school is how welcoming and positive members of staff are. I feel that over the years I've really been able to cultivate positive relationships and found that they have been so supportive when I reach out for help!



Thomas J Walls hot chocolate
– how good does that look?!

1.00pm – And we're are back in the Research Room! For the next few hours I'll just be doing some readings for my special subject course 'Early Medieval Sexualities c.500-1000'. Our next seminar is discussing Monastic purity and clerical celibacy in about the ninth century in Western Europe. We'll be going over sexual sin in male monasteries and why sexual purity was so important in the cloister. One thing I really appreciate about the structure of the History Degree is the fact that in our final year the classes we take are a year-long. It really allows us to delve into the subject at more length and really niche down on our interests!

4.30pm – In need of a snack break. My friend and I head over to Teviot, the student union, for some hot chocolate. I also really love the cookies that they sell at all of the student union venues so I make sure to grab one.



Me and friends all dressed up at our last History Society Ball.

5.00pm – I have a committee meeting with Edinburgh University History Society. I have been a part of the society since my first year and this year I'm the President! Being involved in the society has been a great way to be able to meet people in my course and stay active in the student community. Now out of the lockdown we're able to resume some of our traditional events from pre-COVID! Last semester we held our annual ceilidh and we are currently in the works for planning our International Trip in the Reading Week (going to Krakow!) and our Annual Ball. This has been a really essential part of my student experience and I recommend everyone get involved in some way.

6.00pm – Look at me heading to the gym (a New Years Resolution). I wouldn't necessarily consider myself an avid gym goer but Pleasance gym is great and has so many free classes for members. You can watch Netflix on the cardio machines and there's a sauna in the locker rooms (I must admit this is my main motivation to go).

7.00pm – I head home and have some leftovers for my dinner before getting ready to go out to drinks with some of my friends. There are so many cool places to explore around Edinburgh and it is such a great city to be in as a student. Tonight, we're headed to the New Town a little bit away from campus. I've genuinely really enjoyed my time here and am so happy with my choice to study here four years ago!

Tips for disabled students at the University of Edinburgh – Part 2

In their previous post, Seth gave some advice on what to do before you start university, so this next blog will touch on what to do AFTER you start your studies, and help you get the most out of them.

When meeting your Cohort Lead talk about your disability and how it might impact your studies (if you are comfortable doing so)

Your Cohort Lead will be your point of contact for any questions you have that is not related to a specific course, as such it would be a good idea to let them know about your disability or health condition so that they can help you to

the best of their abilities.

After matriculation, set a meeting with the Student Disability Service ASAP to activate your schedule of adjustments

The Student Disability Service (SDS) needs you to be fully matriculated to be able to make your schedule of adjustments live and share it with the appropriate staff. The beginning of the year is always busy, so be prepared to not be able to have an appointment for at least a couple of weeks, so the earlier you are able to book an appointment, the better.

If you aren't provided one from the get-go, ask your PT to put you in touch with someone from your School's Student Support Office

Your School's Student Support Office (SSO) is there to help as the intermediary between you and others if you need anything specifically linked to the school. For example, room access or adjustments that are only approved at the discretion of a course organiser.

Fill a 'Group Change Request Form' with the Timetabling team as soon as possible if your assigned tutorial isn't going to work for you

The form is the only way to request a change in tutorial groups for all students. If the time you were assigned doesn't fit for any reason due to your disability or health condition, you should make sure to request a change ASAP.

If the rooms assigned to your lectures and or tutorials aren't fully accessible for you, get in touch with your School's SSO

Your contact within the School's SSO will be able to contact the Timetabling team with your accessibility requirements to have your tutorial group or lecture slot changed to a more

accessible room. Make sure to be clear about what your needs are. You can find more information on accessible areas within the University on the AccessAble website.

Make sure you have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan set up as soon as possible if you have a physical disability that might affect your ability to use the usual emergency plan

Once your rooms are set, get in touch with your School's SSO to get a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) set up. It makes sure that in case of emergencies you can be evacuated quickly and securely. This should be done at the start of each semester.

If your circumstances change, let your PT, SSO and the SDS know ASAP

Though we always hope they don't, sometimes our conditions worsen or something else comes up. If this happens let everyone know as soon as possible, especially if you need new adjustments set up.

Your course tutors are the people you'll have the most contact with – talk to them

You don't have to mention your disability or health condition if you don't want to, but it might be a good idea to at least make them aware, especially if it affects your ability to come to tutorials or need a bit more support from them.

Don't let FOMO push you to the point of exhaustion

You don't have to make lots of friends, become a member of five societies or go out every other night. Being limited due to a disability or health condition is never fun, but you shouldn't push yourself to the detriment of your health just because you want to be like any other student.

I hope you find this and my previous blog useful and that it will encourage you to give University a go with confidence.

Tips for disabled students at the University of Edinburgh – Part 1

Starting university is usually cause for anxiety in and of itself. It can be even more so when you have a disability, health condition or learning difference to consider. Student Ambassador Seth offers some advice on what to do before you start your studies which will, hopefully, make the process less stressful for you.

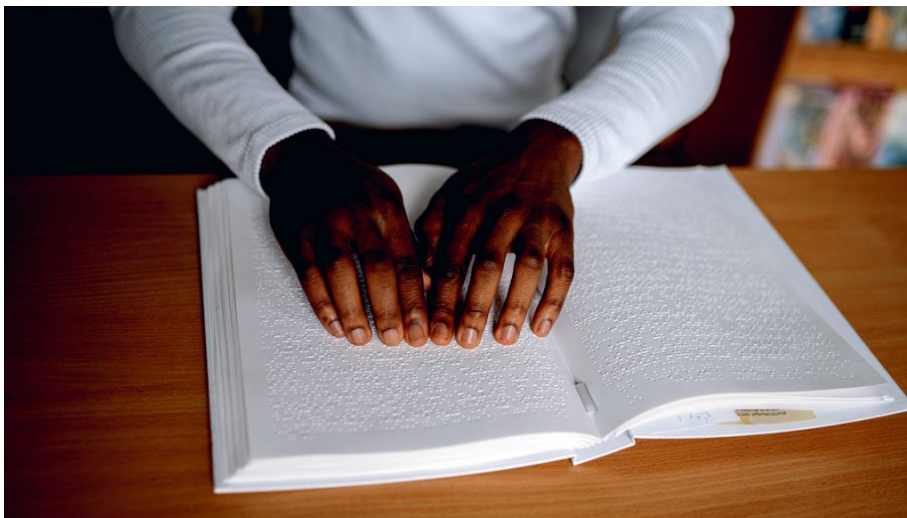
Get in touch with the university's Student Disability Service (SDS) ASAP

It should come as no surprise that this is my first tip. Whether or not you've mentioned your disability in your UCAS application, get in touch with the SDS once you've accepted your offer. Don't wait until the start of the semester, as that is always a busy time and there might not be available appointments until the end of October when classes have already started. The sooner you contact them, the sooner they can work with you to create a schedule of adjustment, get a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) form filled and sent if you need financial support for some of it. It also means that the appointment you'll need to have once you've matriculated will be only to double check that nothing was forgotten or has changed before the schedule agreed on earlier can be

'activated'.

University of Edinburgh Student Disability Service

Get in touch with them even if you haven't been formally diagnosed yet



They will be able to let you know what can be done and possibly offer screening appointments or advice on how to get a diagnosis once you've arrived if that's needed. They'll also let you know what type of documents are needed as proof for them to be able to provide adequate support.

Provide your supporting documents as soon as possible

The SDS website has a page explaining what type of documents are needed depending on what the issue is, read it carefully and when in doubt ask them. Usually, it might be a letter from your doctor confirming diagnosis or the completion of a form by your doctor explaining how the disability or health condition impacts your day-to-day life and as such your studies. This means it might take some time for your doctor to get back to you with these documents, so take that into consideration. The sooner you get the documents back to the SDS, the sooner they can put help in place for you.

When offered help, even if you think you might not use it, take it

It's easier to have help in place, just in case, and not having to use it, instead of having to wait for it to be put in place later when you need it. And if you think something might help, but it wasn't mentioned, say so. They might not be able to put it in place straight away or at all, but they will do their best to at least find a work around to make it work for you.

If using university accommodations, get in touch with them ASAP

If you are going to be in student accommodations and have specific needs due to your disability or health condition, say so as soon as possible. I don't have personal experience with this as I live in a privately rented accommodation, but the university's accommodation team should be able to help.

More from the accommodation service

If from outside Scotland, be prepared for some 'transition' hiccups

What I mean by that is that even if you come from the rest of the UK, things might not be as streamlined as we'd want them to be regarding continuing your current medical treatments, etc. Have letters from your GP and/or specialist explaining your condition and any treatment you need to give to your term-time GP. And if you take medication, have a big enough supply that if there is a hiccup you don't find yourself short.

Hopefully the above tips will help make things go smoothly before you arrive to study in Edinburgh. Stay tuned for part 2 which will deal with tips and tricks for once you've started

your studies.

Give a little, get a lot

Fitting in, finding friends, 'the student experience'. There is no one way to be a student, but 4th year History (MA Hons) student Georgia-Taygeti shares her experience and how volunteering made the difference for her.

In my first year I didn't really feel like I was doing the student thing right. I made my closest friends during a Film Soc screening but they were not studying History and so when I would attend lectures and tutorials, I felt pretty lonely. Every afternoon, I would head off to my part-time job so couldn't attend most Society events. And while it was a great first year, I wanted to make an effort to feel more at home within the School of History, Classics and Archaeology (HCA).



When I came back for my 2nd year I joined the Peer Support Group for History and Classics as a volunteer. I hoped that by supporting 1st year students with their own transition into university life, I would find ways to also feel more integrated into the HCA community. And it worked! I still had a part-time job but most of our meetings were during lunch at the Rosalind Mitchison Room, the undergraduate 'common room', so this was finally something I could attend! I got to know the other volunteers – mostly 3rd and 4th years – most of whom I wouldn't have had the chance to meet if I hadn't joined the

group and I was able to learn from their own experiences within HCA. So, in a way, I was the one being peer-supported without realising it but I also made close friends who then made me feel more at home within HCA.

I continued volunteering with Peer Support in my 3rd and 4th year. Now, I get to work with mentees from the years below me, but also spend time with other 4th years that I don't necessarily share seminars with. When I look back on my 1st year, I remember how uncertain I was about the choices I was making, how overwhelming it felt at times to have to balance work, study, adjusting to a new city, making new friends, cooking for myself. When I decided to join Peer Support in my second year I felt that maybe it was 'too late'. It was definitely not. We all come here with different expectations and different responsibilities. I was only able to join Peer Support because it is so flexible in the times we met and I was only able to stay because I was surrounded by people who understood that sometimes I couldn't be there for our events or meetings because I had to be at work.

I'm not at the end of my student experience in Edinburgh and it did not look like what I thought it would when I was a teenager applying to University! I have loved my time here, though, but did it look like a coming-of-age film filled with wild nights out, heartbreak, and fancy balls? Not as much as I expected it to. My university experience has been more about potlucks, Sunday visits to the Stockbridge market, trying to figure out how to budget and pay for gas and electricity, and always missing the family Skype calls (and then getting yelled at by my mum for missing the family skype calls!), but because I volunteer for Peer Support, I feel like I belong to HCA. I recognize faces when I walk to class, I have people to chat to before the seminar starts. I didn't expect this to be such a big part of my student experience in Edinburgh, but it has! And I am really, really glad I joined up.

Find out more about peer support within the School of History,

“What’s so great about living in Edinburgh?”

Good question. Luckily, Tristan [MA (Hons) Ancient and Medieval History] can help answer that.



The fortress on top of Castle Rock includes the 12th c. St Margaret’s Chapel – the oldest building in the city.

In the 18th Century Edinburgh designated itself the ‘Athens of the North’, and wandering through the city centre it’s not hard to see why. Okay, after twenty-something years in the Scottish capital I’m admittedly a little biased. But what isn’t to love about studying a history degree in a city with a

beautiful medieval Old Town, gardens set in an old loch and a castle built upon an extinct volcano?

A city that blends its rich history with its position as home of the largest arts festival in the world (yes, the world!) is something quite unique – there's nothing like wandering down the Royal Mile during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August. In fact, Edinburgh hosts a huge programme of events throughout the year: from the Book, Jazz and Blues, and Science Festivals, to the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. If live arts aren't your thing – although there's plenty to indulge in across the city's many theatre venues – you'll certainly find something to pique your interest.

One of my favourite aspects of the city is its fantastic selection of museums and galleries, the largest of which is the National Museum of Scotland located just minutes from the School of History, Classics and Archaeology. Its collections include the recently opened Ancient Egyptian and East Asian galleries as well as an extensive wing dedicated to Scotland's past. However, because the city itself is so rich with history, just wandering down the Royal Mile is an adventure in itself. Each 'close' – the Scots word for an alleyway – tells a story, of its former occupants or use, the most infamous being the underground Mary King's Close (**definitely** worth a visit!). A former lecturer once told me to always look up at buildings when wandering through the Old Town as you'll be amazed at what you learn from inscriptions and plaques.



Even in the middle of the city centre, there are lots of places for a quieter walk, including along the Water of Leith in picturesque Dean Village.

What I particularly love about the city is the amount of green space. The public Princes Street gardens, situated between the New and Old towns, are always bustling, as are the gorgeous Royal Botanical Gardens. However, you'll find some more secluded spaces if you know where to look, including a hidden gem at the bottom of Dunbar's Close – I'll let you discover that one for yourself! You're also never too far from the countryside and there are lots of scenic walks a short bus or train journey away.

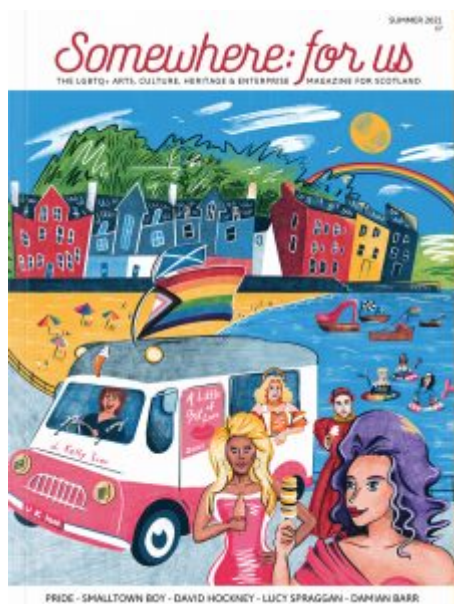
Between its incredible art and literary festivals, heritage sites and beautiful parks – and that's before we discuss everything that the university itself has to offer – Edinburgh is a pretty fantastic city. To be a history student here is something really special, and whilst it might not boast the monumental buildings of the Athenian acropolis, the 'Athens of

the North' isn't short of wonder.

Find more walks around Edinburgh at the Visit Scotland site.

You can see a map of green spaces within Edinburgh on the Edinburgh Outdoors website.

Life as an LGBTQ+ student in Edinburgh



As part of Pride Month, Tristan (Ancient and Medieval History, MA Hons) shares his experience as an LGBTQ+ student at the University of Edinburgh.

Navigating your first year at university can feel both intimidating and exciting as you get to grips with higher education, exploring a new city and meeting new people. This experience can seem even more daunting as an LGBTQ+ student, particularly when tolerance can vary so widely between countries. Fortunately, Scotland has strong governmental policy supporting the rights of LGBTQ+ people and the United Kingdom as a whole has consistently ranked highly on the Rainbow Europe Index. But what does this mean for LGBTQ+ students at Edinburgh, and what is life in this city really

like for those of us who identify as such?

LGBTQ+ Life on Campus

As an openly transgender and queer man, I did have some anxieties about adjusting to student life and whether I would find my place in Edinburgh. Despite being an Edinburgh native, beginning undergraduate studies is a big step for anyone. Thankfully, my time here has



been overwhelming positive and I've had the opportunity to engage in a number of LGBTQ+ centred events. I currently sit on the School of History, Classics and Archaeology's Equality and Diversity Committee and, as part of that, helped organise an LGBTQ+ History Month event in February 2021. Despite being forced online by the COVID-19 pandemic, this meant we were able to invite a speaker from the US to discuss their work with Queer Britain. EUSA, the University of Edinburgh's Student Association, also run events to commemorate this month, so you're sure to find lots to get involved with.

Likewise, there is both a student-led PrideSoc, which you can join, and the Staff Pride Network who hosts events and networking opportunities. LGBTQ+ support is very visible on campus, and I've felt confident being open about my sexuality and gender identity.

Finding Support

As well as the groups on campus, there are various charities and community organisations which can support you as an LGBTQ+ person. LGBT Health and Wellbeing, based in Edinburgh, host a variety of services, including several social groups, so you needn't feel worried about being isolated during your time here. You can also find support through the likes of the Scottish Trans Alliance, LGBT Youth Scotland and Stonewall

Scotland.

In 2020, *Somewhere: For Us*, a magazine celebrating LGBTQ+ people in Scotland, was launched here in Edinburgh which is not only a fantastic resource but highlights the importance of visibility in the city.



Bars, Cafes and Eateries

Edinburgh also boasts several venues either owned by or active allies towards LGBTQ+ folk, including sober spaces such as the Greenwood Cafe, and bars and clubs like Cafe Habana and CC Blooms. There is also a fantastic queer-friendly venue opposite the central campus, Paradise Palms, if you want to grab some food (all of which is vegetarian/vegan) or a drink after your studies. Whether you're looking for somewhere to eat or want to experience the night life, there are lots of options within the city.

Edinburgh as a city is vibrant and beautiful, and LGBTQ+ life here is no exception. If I can offer any advice to you as a prospective student, it's OK to be yourself and don't hesitate to reach out for support.

Navigating undergraduate academia as a mature student

Much of university recruitment is aimed at school-leavers, but what if you are older or have been out of education for some time? Tristan – MA (Hons) Ancient and Medieval History – told us his story.

In 2018, the University of Edinburgh launched its Access Programme as part of its Widening Participating Initiative. As a 26-year-old who had been out of education for four consecutive years, having previously studied Acting and Performance, and later Art and Design, I was eligible to apply. My previous study had ignited a fervent interest in History of Art, and it was with the intention of undertaking undergraduate study in this discipline that I enrolled on the Access course. What it revealed to me, through exploring a wide range of subjects within Humanities and the Social Sciences, was that it was history – particularly of the ancient world – that really engaged me and so, the following year, I began my MA (Hons) in Ancient and Medieval History.

By now a 27-year-old student, it would be fair to say that I was incredibly anxious as to what my experience would be like. Would I find my place in an institution filled primarily with students ten years younger than myself? Would I get as much out of the ‘university experience’ than I would have done had I enrolled immediately after high school? Now, coming to the end of the second year of my degree, I’m confident to answer with a resounding yes to both questions, and I feel that my experience has been testament to the need to engage adult learners.

I write all of this as a 29-year-old, well aware of the fact that there are students in my cohort who have been outside of institutional education for far longer, but I think any significant gap in study can fill one with a great deal of self-doubt. There's an expectation upon young learners that those who are capable go on to higher education immediately after education, and the six years I spent at high school felt as though I was expected to follow that trajectory. I chose a different path and whilst I have absolutely no regrets for studying the performing and visual arts, I realised that neither really engaged in the way that study ought to. Had I not followed those routes, however, I don't think I would be where I am today (cliché notwithstanding).

On 6 April 2021, I was invited to participate in the Classical Association Annual Conference on a panel entitled, *'Inclusive Classics and pedagogy: teachers, academics and students in conversation'*. What the discussion revealed is the dichotomy between 'the institution' and the individuals within it. Classics has been thrown into the spotlight recently, both in academic terms for the 'dead white men' narrative that pervades it, as well as in news stories surrounding the appropriation of ancient iconography by alt-right groups. Much discussion has been had as to how Classics as a discipline can survive when it seemingly perpetrates elitist ideology, owing to the fact that very few high school students have the opportunity to study it. In fact, I had no idea what 'Classics' even meant until enrolling on the Access Programme in 2018. But I don't feel that has disadvantaged me in any way, nor has my status as a 'mature student'; rather, I feel that it has allowed me to approach the discipline with eyes that seek interdisciplinary



study, that see the Graeco-Roman world as one aspect of a rich and diverse ancient world, and that appreciate the diversity of the student experience.

Recently, I launched an article series, 'Classics in Conversation', through my work with *Retrospect Journal* (for those of you who don't know, *Retrospect* is the School of History, Classics and Archaeology's student-led journal). This series poses questions to students both to encourage critical thinking and to provide a space to consider some of the most pertinent issues in the discipline today. I'm delighted with the response we've had thus far, and I feel as though it has highlighted the need to engage students in wider issues through a platform that elevates their voices. Ultimately, it's my hope that Classics continues to thrive as a discipline, and it is also my hope that more students like myself will feel confident to pursue their ambition.

Read 'Classics in Conversation' on the Retrospect website

Find out more about the University of Edinburgh's Access Programme

The website of the Classical Association

Find your niche on a 4-year course

The 'Scottish 4-year degree' can seem confusing and a waste of a year, but History and Politics (MA Hons) student Jack argues that it's the ideal way to explore and, finally, focus on what

really interests you.

There is no doubt about it, starting university can be a bit daunting – a new lifestyle, new accommodation, new friends, new classes and, for many, a new city.



Not the kind of niche Jack means

Upon starting their courses, something which can often weigh heavy on first years' minds is this notion of "finding your niche". At university, you are often presented with many different course options from the get-go, and there is often a kind of pressure to know exactly what you want to do straight away. In reality, however, it shouldn't feel that way at all. Of course, some people will know that they want to do early medieval Scottish history or modern Islamic studies or whatever their heart is set on. But actually, there is no real need to have any clue about how you want to 'specialise' so early on in your university career.

One of the real advantages about studying a four-year degree is that there is plenty of time to try out and experiment with different time periods, different regional histories and even different teaching styles and assessment types. In first and second year (especially while your grades don't count towards

your final honours degree classification!), take the opportunity to try a course which you always thought about trying out but never quite wanted to risk it.

Moreover, not having studied a certain subject in pre-honours does not necessarily exclude you from picking it up at honours (as long as you meet the necessary pre-requisites, of course). That being said, I think I speak for a lot of my peers when I say that third year (moving into honours) is a solid step up. You definitely feel the gears changing. This is only to be expected, of course, and I found myself well-equipped academically by the teaching staff to deal with this change. The point is, however, that it is a good feeling to be taking courses with which you are completely comfortable. In third year and beyond, it is reassuring to be doing subjects with which you are familiar, and you know you enjoy. So using your pre-honours years as a kind of science laboratory of courses to produce your favourite combination of classes is the way to go.

Overall, then, 'finding your niche' doesn't have to be scary. There is plenty of time and opportunity to try things out and even when you get to fourth year, you don't really have to focus on one specific 'niche' one hundred percent of your time. In pre-honours, enjoy the breadth of options and try to combat this expectation that everyone should know their niche within a minute of setting foot through the university doors.

Do the knight thing, or why you should join a Society

Will I find those "friends for life"? Will I be able to

balance my studies with a healthy social life? Will there be societies I want to join? Jack – History and Politics (MA Hons) – answers these very questions.

Some of the biggest worries that Freshers tend to have about coming to university are around becoming part of the student community. It can be daunting at Freshers' Fairs or Open Days (virtual or otherwise) or even just walking around campus. Everyone seems to have their own passions, niches, groups and extra-curricular goals.

I remember thinking how important it was that I “put myself out there”. Yet, in my experience, it's never as hard as it seems. At Edinburgh, the sheer variety of opportunities means there really is something for everyone. At the end of the day, once you do put yourself out there once or twice, there's no looking back. For every interest, hobby, sport or passion, you will find an open, enthusiastic community of students ready to welcome any new members. Be it academic, sporty, musical, campaigning, fundraising – finding your niche, your own wee community, doesn't have to be the scary task it first appears to be



Student Societies
within SHCA.

The School of History, Classics and Archaeology has a thriving student community (made up of various societies and student groups) which continues to organise a diverse array of events and activities. For me, I have benefited immensely from being a member of and now officeholder in the History Society. We are a tight-knit student family of history-lovers. We engage in serious academic discussions and respond in historical ways to important current affairs issues, whilst also having fun and organising exciting socials and trips.

In the past, we have had fascinating academic discussions and speaker events, from "A Journey through Ancient Egypt" to the history of Edinburgh's HIV/AIDS outbreak to disability history to the slave trade in Scotland. We have hosted incredible speakers, from Professor Sir Geoff Palmer, Scotland's first black professor, to Holocaust survivor, Tomi Komoly. Our programme has also included high-octane ceilidhs and balls at prestigious Edinburgh venues. We have organised trips to our favourite historical sites, as well as city breaks abroad during our (always productive) reading weeks. Our most recent trip was to Prague, where we visited the famous Castle and Cathedral, went on a Communism tour and even dressed up as kings, queens and knights (see the fabulous photo, above). We also have karaoke nights and walking tours, pub quizzes and movie screenings. And to think we are just one of many, many societies!

Undoubtedly, at the time of writing, things are different. Covid has massively changed the student experience. Involvement in societies is no exception. Yet, groups across the university are adapting. Whether it's baking or Persian or netball or Harry Potter appreciation, societies are refusing to let Covid ruin the fun, the discussions and the memory-making. The History Society is still running plenty of events online and has been a platform for first years to get to know fellow history-lovers, as well as meet older students to get advice and guidance.

I personally have met some of my best friends through the History Society. Sharing a love for a subject and having a laugh at the same time is the perfect way to enhance your university experience. Getting involved in societies also affords you the chance to stand for election as a committee member. I cannot recommend this enough: it has been an opportunity for me to get involved in student representation at university and to really connect with faculty members. It also gives you the chance to organise your own society events and represent your society at official occasions. We even got to meet the Chancellor, HRH The Princess Royal, last year!

Moving up to university can be worrying at the best of times and Covid has been a huge challenge. Yet getting involved in our societies and becoming part of our HCA community is a fantastic way to break down those barriers. My advice? Don't hold back! Reap the benefits of an active campus life and explore the diverse range of student groups and societies waiting to welcome you.

Essays – everything you ever wanted to know but were afraid to ask

Student Ambassador Tess (studying Classics and English Literature, MA Hons) takes a deep dive into how to approach writing essays.

I think writing essays and academic papers are probably one of the more daunting tasks you'll have to take on as a university student. I've spent the last three years trying to figure out a formula that works for both aspects of my degree, and

honestly, sometimes I still am not sure if I've cracked it. That being said, I do have two tricks of the trade to keep in mind when writing an essay:

Break your question down into its essential parts

Once you write a few essays, you start to realise that all essay questions have a similar structure. There are only so many ways the examiners can ask you 'To what extent' and once you recognise certain buzzwords, it becomes much easier to formulate a plan of attack. Here are some examples:



'To what extent...', 'How far...', 'What...' and 'Evaluate ...' often signify questions that ask you to discuss whether you agree with a certain point of view on a debated topic within the subject. The best way to approach these questions is to

pick a stance and then find opposing arguments that you can dismantle to show a bit more academic sophistication.

In comparison, 'Describe...', 'Illustrate...', 'How...' and 'Explain...' are usually questions that require a more holistic approach to a topic, in which you have to discuss as many facets of the topics as possible in relation to the question (word limit permitting).

Another aspect of the question to look out for are certain key phrases you can use throughout your essay to signal-post to the reader throughout your essay that you are still addressing the question. Constantly linking your essay back to the question in your essay also helps you to stay on topic as a writer.

Here's an example of a question and how you can break it down:

'What is depicted on the Parthenon Frieze?'

This question seems relatively simple, but it is one of the most debated topics within Classical Greek archaeology. The use of 'What' indicates that you have to pick an academic stance and justify why you think this is the most likely hypothesis using both primary and secondary sources. You should then pick one or two opposing perspective to evaluate, in order to demonstrate why your chosen interpretation is still the best. Additionally, you should always round a point off with a: 'therefore, as (evidence) demonstrates, (point) is what is depicted on the Parthenon frieze.' That way you are able to double check as you are editing if your points are properly explained to allow such a statement at the end and your examiner will also be able to pick up quickly if you are doing so because you have used words from the question itself, such as 'depicted.'

Reference well from the start

Referencing is simultaneously the easiest way to secure and lose marks in an essay. I had so many instances in first year where I lost a significant number of points for poor referencing that had me kicking myself, mainly because it would have potentially pushed me up a grade boundary. The one thing I cannot stand when reading feedback is finding out that I didn't get full marks on a section that is so clearly set out by the subject area. The School uses a variation of the Harvard system and every citation form is listed out in the Essay Guidelines. There is literally *no* reason besides carelessness for someone to not score fully on this section (I promise I speak from experience).



The best way to ensure you follow the guidelines to a tee is to reference properly from the start. Even when I am reading and taking notes on my computer, I will reference quotes and points in the correct format from the beginning. This ensures that when I write my essay and use said quotes from my notes, I can rest assured that the referencing is already done and dusted. Additionally, if you start building your bibliography at the start, it means that you have one less thing to worry about in your editing stage of your essay. It's so much easier to remove any additional sources you ended up not using than scrambling to find a source you forgot to note down during your research stage.

Easy. Right? Don't worry, there's lots of help both in the School and the University with writing essays and other assignments. Look out for Peer Support Groups – SHCA has ArchPals and UoE HCA Peer Support – and Societies running sessions on writing and studying, and the Institute for Academic Development offers workshops and online resources on all aspects of learning.

Institute for Academic Development

SHCA Peer Support

The write stuff

Former History (MA Hons) student and now MSc History student, Ruby, takes a look at student journalism and creative writing opportunities at the University of Edinburgh.

Undertaking a degree in the School of History, Classics, and

Archaeology means you won't be short of chances to hone your writing skills. Whether they take the form of a blogpost, an essay, or a translation, most of your assessments will be written work – plus, you've got your dissertation at the end of the four years! But if you fancy yourself as an art critic, investigative journalist, or political commentator, there are plenty of opportunities at the University of Edinburgh to take part in extracurricular writing. Below are just a few of the Societies you can get involved in – keep your eyes peeled for their events during Welcome Week.

“The Student” (studentnewspaper.org)



Perhaps the most obvious outlet for student writing is the University of Edinburgh's fortnightly newspaper, "The Student". It was founded in 1887 by Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson ("Treasure Island", etc.), which makes it Europe's oldest student newspaper. As you might have guessed from its name, "The Student" is entirely produced by students. Whilst the paper is registered as a Student Society, with the Edinburgh University Student's Association (EUSA), it is totally independent from the University – meaning the stories they publish don't pull any punches!

"The Student" covers breaking news, but also has sections dedicated to features, opinion pieces, reviews, sports, science, and lifestyle. Whether you've got opinions about events at the Scottish Parliament, the latest film releases, or the price of curly fries at Teviot Row House there's likely to be a space for you.

All articles written for "The Student" are published online and some make their way into print with physical copies being

available for free across campus. Perfect for proudly sticking up on the fridge, or for posting home to your family.

Because The Student is not just a paper, but also society, they run plenty of social events alongside their writer's meetings. You can write two articles before you need to buy membership, but why wait and miss out on all the fun?

“Retrospect” (retrospectjournal.com)



“Retrospect Journal” is a student-led journal for the School of History, Classics, and Archaeology. Originally founded in 2006, as the journal of the Edinburgh University History

Society, it became an independent EUSA society in 2012, and now accepts submissions from across the three disciplines.

It's the perfect place to submit that essay you're really proud of, but they also accept everything from interviews, to reviews, to even short historical fiction pieces. Submissions are accepted throughout the semester for its website, alongside publishing a themed print edition twice a year. Copies of the journal – complete with beautiful illustrations – can be found in the Undergraduate Common Room or ordered online.

Much like “The Student”, “Retrospect” is a great way to meet other students, especially those within the School. Members can often be found at school-wide events, such as the William Robertson Cup (an annual staff versus students competition), alongside the History Society, Classics Society, and Archaeology Society.

You do need to buy a membership before you can be published in Retrospect , but all membership fees go right back into funding the journal – either maintaining the website or

covering print costs.

“The Rattlecap” (therattlecap.com)



Founded in 2018, “The Rattlecap” describes itself as an “intersectional forum for discussion and change”, and a “thought-provoking, kind, and empowering space.” Their self-confessed “monthly-ish” issues are always centred on a theme, with previous editions including: “Connection”, “Isolation”, and “Recovery.”

Each month’s theme is always open to individual interpretation and submissions can take the form of current affairs reporting, opinion pieces, or creative writing and poetry. It also has a dedicated “History, Philosophy, & Education” section, if you’re interested in turning an essay or seminar presentation into a more concise, journalistic article. Articles are published online and always accompanied by a unique illustration.

Whilst your first submission is free, in order to have more than one article published you will need to pay for membership. Paying for membership also allows you attend its social events, which include everything from a book club, to film screenings, to cooking and crafting sessions.

There are hundreds of societies at the University of Edinburgh, with new ones being founded each year. As a result, this blogpost has only managed to scratch the surface of all student-run publications available to take your submissions. Rest assured, whatever you write, it’s likely you’ll be able to find a home for it – even if it means taking a leaf out of

Robert Louis Stevenson's book and founding your own paper!

Darwin Leighton and the Raiders of the Lost Plaque

When History and Archaeology student Tom's outreach project fell foul of Covid, he looked closer to home for inspiration and Footnotes was born.

One day in December I was trawling through reports written by the commercial archaeology firm Oxford Archaeology North about the archaeology that they had found in my local area. Commercial archaeologists survey archaeological remains on behalf of companies and governments, usually to help them make decisions about heritage preservation or building projects. Commercial archaeologists are made to work much quicker than academics, navigating strict deadlines and small budgets. Consequently, their reports are often dry lists of facts with few attempts to make them relevant or exciting to a wider audience. They are often referred to as "grey" literature. Not so that day!

Almost by accident I stumbled onto a description of a plaque dedicated to someone called Darwin Leighton. Intrigued by – if nothing else – his name, I looked him up online. It turned out he lived and died in Bleak House, Kendal. It was then that my obsession began. Why? Because Bleak House is less than 100 metres from where I live, where I am sitting right now. In fact, because my house was a bakery during Darwin's lifetime, it's possible he once stood in the very room I am writing in.

I just had to find the plaque. This would be an ideal story to share for the same reasons it appealed so much to me. It was local and personal, highlighting how archaeology can allow us to explore the lives of humans who lived in the same places we do and – in many ways – lived quite similar lives to us. The problem



was no map was included in the original report, instead just a cryptic reference to another report. The black and white photo of a wall next to some trees was also, to put it mildly, less than illuminating. But I was on the scent and, like Lara Croft or Indiana Jones, I couldn't be stopped. Admittedly – rather than hired guns, intricate booby traps and (sigh) dinosaur infested Aztec ruins – the challenges facing me were local bureaucracy, rain and overgrown bushes. I eventually found the second report and even a vague grid reference for the plaque. Armed with a paper printout, I strode into the woods convinced that determination, guile and grit would find the plaque. They didn't. Hours later, I was stood on the roadside, trying to read my crude map by the light of the setting sun. Then, it struck me and all at once I understood the meaning of the map. The plaque was metres away from me. There were two paths I could take, a long route following footpaths or a much shorter route through some bushes. Seconds later, I had found it! "Archaeologists are a peculiar bunch" I thought to myself, pulling twigs out my hair.



Why was I doing all of this? I was enrolled in the course Geoscience Outreach and Engagement, where each student organises their own outreach project in order to share something about our university course with the public. My original plan, a tour of Edinburgh's archaeology, had been scuppered by the second wave of coronavirus in the UK,

forcing me to return home to Kendal, Cumbria. Instead, I decided to make a series of short videos highlighting the unsung archaeology of my local area to, firstly, teach the people around me about the archaeology of my home town, and to tell stories that are deeply personal about the people who lived here in the past, many of whom were just like me. But I realised that, especially at the moment, not many of the people who watch will be able to visit Kendal so I also strive to teach broader lessons about what archaeology can teach us and how people can make their own discoveries.

Four videos are now on YouTube on the Footnotes channel covering lime kilns, time guns and ridges and furrows. And Darwin Leighton, of course.

You can watch all Tom's videos on the Footnotes channel on YouTube.

Being an international student in Edinburgh

Leaving home to go to University is daunting enough, but what's it like if you're travelling across the world to do it? Scarlett is from the US so she can tell you.

At times as an international student, it can be difficult to be so far away from home. But trust me when I say it's worth it! Now, as a third-year student I can say I've found a home in Edinburgh.



Members of the History Society in Prague.

When I first started university, I didn't experience too much homesickness. The first few weeks are packed with classes and social activities. I was so busy meeting new people and going to class I barely even noticed how far away I was! My accommodation was really social, and a few of us would go to the Welcome Week stalls and then go to society events in the evenings. When classes started, my tutorial group would grab coffee or drinks afterward. It was also so much fun to learn more about Scottish culture and history. Although I struggled

to adjust to the accent, Scots are so welcoming, and I loved exploring the city.

It wasn't until around late November and Thanksgiving was coming up that I started to feel homesick. Most of my friends from home were on break from their own universities and hanging out with each other. It was also my first time missing out on the holiday and the longest I had spent away from my family. It's not easy to be so far away from home especially since my friends around me could do weekend trips to see their families.

Coming back from the winter break, I felt rejuvenated but still fearful that the feeling would return. Thankfully, by then I had built up a solid group of friends and I started attending more society events, getting closely involved with the History Society. With them, I attended social events like the Annual Winter Ball and Burns Night as well as going on a trip to Prague in the February Reading week. This gave me a group of people to turn to if I was ever missing home, and last year my friends and I put on our own Thanksgiving meal together.

I still get homesick, but it's so much less frequent now and I absolutely love being an international student in Edinburgh. The city offers so much to do from outdoor climbs up Arthur's seat or a fun spooky tour of Mary King's Close to just popping into different restaurants and pubs in the New Town. I'm so happy I made the choice to study abroad!

LGBT+ History Month

The University of Edinburgh Staff Pride Network supports LGBT+ colleagues and allies, one of whom is HCA staff member Emma. We asked her about her role as Ally Representative.

Hi there! I'm Emma, the School of History, Classics and Archaeology's Modern Apprentice who has recently been appointed as Ally Representative in the University of Edinburgh Staff Pride Network (SPN). As it's LGBT+ History Month, I thought I'd let you know how my role works and what you can do to support the community at the University.

Ally reps show constant support to the LGBT+ community in many ways. They familiarise themselves with the language to use when talking with LGBT+ people such as preferred pronouns, they organise and become involved in events, they educate themselves on the history of the movement – LGBT+ History Month is an annual month-long observance of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history, and the history of the gay rights and related civil rights movements, founded in 1994, and a great source of information – and last but not least they stand up for what they believe in! As well as an Ally Rep I am also the Meeting Secretary for the Network, and am part of the events team in the committee whilst creating and curating the SPN Instagram account.

I've supported the LGBT+ community fully throughout my life so am determined to put my organising skills to work to create some fun and engaging events and make sure LGBT+ voices are being heard and respected across the School and the wider University with my other fellow ally rep, Tara Spires-Jones. We'll do everything we can to make the UoE a more inclusive place and to encourage other allies to speak out and show their support for the community.

If you are interested in becoming more educated and involved

in the Staff Pride Network, join our lovely group of people in the network to keep making supporting the LGBT+ community possible! If you're at the University and have any questions, or if you have event ideas or important issues regarding LGBT+ staff or students at the UoE for myself and my other ally rep to follow up on, contact me at the School and I'll get back to you!

Further information:

Find out more about University of Edinburgh Staff Pride Network

Network events for LGBT+ History Month

LGBT+ Allies

University of Edinburgh staff – join the Network



Dr Molly Merryman

LGBT+ History Month Event

As part of LGBT+ History Month Dr Molly Merryman gave a lecture, 'Queer Voices from the Pandemic' on 9 February, 2021. You can view a recording of the lecture at [this link](#).