Exchange report – Scotland, Spring 2016, Timothy Lewis

Basic information
The University of Edinburgh in Edinburgh, Scotland, during the Spring 2016 semester. I studied different courses in the physics programme.

Edinburgh
The city was beautiful, rich in history and culture but also surrounded with plenty of parks and open spaces. Edinburgh is big enough that there is always plenty to do and see but small enough that you can get a feeling of the city. There was always a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in the city and I made many friends for life during my time there.

The University of Edinburgh
The university had an open and accepting atmosphere. However, the university is spread out over a large area and incorporating into the city so you don’t have the quite the same ‘student’ feel as Lund university. The science campus is also located around 2 miles away from the central campus on the edge of the city which made travelling from lecture to lecture difficult. (Although there is a free bus service)

Arrival
The arrival was smooth there were a couple of introduction events that helped us settle into Edinburgh and the information was well presented. Personally I believe a few welcome social events would have been beneficial at the start to get to know the various people in the accommodation and in the physics department.

Courses
The study system is comparable to Lund, there are a similar amount of lectures and the credit conversion is 2 UK credits to 1 European credit. Full time is 50 – 60 credits per semester, unlike Lund 4 courses are studied at the same time for the entire semester.

Biological physics – Simon Titmuss
A good course a mathematical and physical description of biological concepts. A physics understanding of biological concepts. The assessments were a presentation and exam.

Introductory Astrophysics – Catherine Heymans
A low level course about astrophysics but it seemed more at the high school level than university. Lectures focused on being entertaining instead of educational. Assessments were coursework and an exam

Philosophy of Science - Alasdair Richmond
A very good course on the principles of science and its place in history as a tool for learning. Assessments were coursework and an exam.

Nuclear Astrophysics - Marialuisa Aliotta
An interesting course that explained a wide range of nuclear concepts in astronomy. However far too much content for a single semester course, poor exam preparation and a poor explanations for the level of content provided. Assessment was a single exam.
**Accommodation**
The accommodation was very stressful and the worst aspect of my Edinburgh experience. Firstly, the accommodation was no guaranteed although I was ensured that there would be space available through the university. I waited for a reply on the university accommodation website but nothing was communicated to me until a few days before I was due to move it. I had to ring up the accommodation hotline myself and explain to them the situation I was in. Only then was my accommodation confirmed. Once I had my accommodation it was smaller, in worse condition and more expensive compared to Lund.

**Leisure/spare time**
Lots of great music, open parks and green areas to hang out with people. The surrounding area is beautiful with countless hills, bridges and castles to go visit. A great, range of cheap and easily accessible sports in a semester, I tried: golf, rock climbing archery, football, ultimate frisbee and many more. There are lots and lots of places with deep historical and cultural importance.

**Costs**
The accommodation was very expensive and I think worse than that in Lund. The food in the supermarkets is slightly cheaper but not by as much as I thought. The cost of going out to bars, restaurants and events was more expensive. Transport was very expensive and poorly organised. In general, there seemed to be less ‘discounts’ for students and young people.

**Other**
Eat some haggis, climb Arthur’s seat and start listening to Scottish people speak, you will need the practice.

Email address: tim.c.lewis93@gmail.com