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Study program: Tourism

Exchange: University of Stirling, Scotland, Freemover, February – June 2010

I wanted to spend the 4th semester of my course in an

English speaking country. However, none of HTW's partner Universities seemed to catch my eye for I wanted to go to Scotland. I applied to the University of Stirling as a freemover, or as they call it a visiting exchange student without any partnerships or cooperation.

The University of Stirling is located in the very heart of Scotland and is about an hour drive from both Glasgow and Edinburgh. Stirling University was ranked best in the UK for 'a good place to be' (*International Student Barometer, 2008*), and was named Scottish University of the Year for 2009/2010 (*The Sunday Times*). Excellent infrastructure is offered at Stirling: Most students live directly on campus, meaning that people connect much faster and an international atmosphere is created (90 nationalities are represented on campus). Stirling students are offered a wide range of sports opportunities and social gatherings.



Standing in front of Loch Ness



The loch and teaching facilities



Golf anyone? It's right on campus...

Reason for my exchange: An exchange program is not a must at HTW, even so I feel it's essential for a thorough education in tourism: What would a schooling in Tourism be without any international experience? My exchange program at Stirling University allowed me to fully immerse myself in Scotland's culture (to this day an important tourist destination) both inside and outside the classroom. The personal growth and independence gained through this exchange has been irreplaceable and life changing.

Furthermore, the course modules sounded very exciting and challenging; the course contents reflected those of the HTW.



Sustainable Tourism students on a field trip to Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park

Experiences: Not only did I learn a lot in the lectures and seminars, I met wonderful people from all around the globe and made many close friends. Also, I had the chance to experience the rich cultural heritage in Scotland and of course the beautiful landscape. An exchange program doesn't only improve one's career possibilities, but it also generates everlasting memories for a lifetime. By the way, it hardly rained during my whole exchange, so I didn't even need an umbrella!



Ceilidh – a traditional Scottish dance, organized by the International Society



The art of British food... Fish 'n' chips with a good ol' Tennents

The support from HTW Chur and the University of Stirling: Both Chur and Stirling supported me in every possible way. I felt that if I had any kind of issue I could go to the International Office for help. There were about 200 exchange students at Stirling during the semester I was there, but even so I felt the closeness and familiarity. We were like one big family!

Please note that if you are thinking of doing an exchange as a freemover you will have to organize almost everything by yourself. This means a lot of running after things; especially if you are thinking of going to a decent sized University (Stirling has more than 10'000 students). Everything, especially in the UK, just takes its time!

If you are thinking of doing an exchange but aren't happy with the selection of partner Universities at the HTW I highly recommend an exchange as a freemover. That is if you want to put a lot of time and effort into it and are willing to pay semester fees at the exchange University. But as you can see from my experience: It is definitely worth it!

All in all, it is to be said that I enjoyed my exchange so much that I decided to finish my whole degree at the University of Stirling and won't be returning to Chur.

Ever seen Braveheart? This is THE most important Scottish monument – the William Wallace Monument – located right next to the University

