**Study Abroad letter Year 2**

04 August 2023

Dear student,

Congratulations on getting to the end of 1st year of law studies. Another year beckons. You possibly still experience a mixture of emotions – excitement, apprehension, anticipation – only some of which may have dissipated somewhat. I do hope you found your studies rewarding. I now am writing as the International Officer for the School of Law to encourage you now to think more seriously about studying abroad in your third year, for decision-time is much sooner than you think. Indeed, the most important decision you have taken (apart from the decision to study law at Glasgow) is just around the corner. However, even if you cannot spend time abroad, we can offer you the chance this coming year to do something unusual.

**1. Study abroad**

Our School has the highest percentage of ‘study abroad’ participation of any law school in the UK. Traditionally, more than 60% of Glasgow Law students have spent all (or part) of year 3 abroad. Indeed, in Scotland, 1 in 18 of all Erasmus participants (including language students) were Glasgow law students at last look. Of some note is the fact that virtually every student going abroad now chooses to go for the full year. Students return to Glasgow at the end of their 3rd year reporting strong benefits including increased confidence, new skills, international friendships, and awareness and understanding of another legal system. In short, ‘study abroad’ has positive outcomes in the academic, personal and professional spheres. Particularly in the current employment market, it is vital you develop your profile (and it may be no accident that Glasgow’s top ranking as No 1 law school in Scotland was in part on account of employability statistics). It’s also enjoyable: 97% of Glasgow students consistently report positive/highly positive experiences. Whatever the constitutional future of Scotland, this country will need graduates with the skills and attributes and outlook that study exchange promotes.

You may fall into one of 4 categories:

* You may already be on a ‘law with language’ programme. You may have committed yourself to studying abroad in a foreign language to help strengthen your employability… or you may possibly be having a doubt or two about the language coursework.
* You may have made up your mind to apply to take part in ‘study abroad’ (in another university teaching in English), and now face the questions of choice of country and of institution.
* You may be swithering – ‘should I?’, ‘could I cope being away from home?’
* You may have already decided not to go abroad (and indeed, you may already be studying ‘abroad’ at Glasgow as a student from another country). You may have compelling personal or financial reasons for staying. Or you may simply feel you cannot face the prospect of coping with life away from home.

Assuming you fall into one or more of the first three categories (and even if you fall into the fourth category, you may still want to ask yourself again ‘why *not*?’), it is now time to begin to consider year 3. I encourage you to start to consider your choice of country and institution. Further, certain curriculum choices in year 2 may have to be made in September. Need more information?

* There are in essence various ‘study abroad’ schemes – European or non-European exchanges (Australia, New Zealand, Canada, USA, etc) run by the School of Law; exchanges open to all students from all disciplines and administered by the University of Glasgow’s central services; and ‘law with language’ programmes where you study in another language for all your time abroad.
* Your choice of country (or countries, for your application form will ask you to indicate various preferences) may obviously be determined already if you are on a law with language programme. But otherwise, there’s a wide selection. You will also have the opportunity in September to meet (and also welcome) our ‘incoming’ students. (And for those of you keen to develop language skills, you are encouraged to take part in the weekly language-group meetings with incoming law students. Details will follow at the start of the session.) Remember, too, that we are now able to offer study abroad in Germany, Italy, Spain and France not as part of the ‘law with language’ programme – you can follow English-language courses at these institutions and also develop your language skills in semester one, and possibly even take a law course in another language in semester 2. We have also signed new agreements pre-pandemic with Brno, Ljubljana and Hamburg (Bucerius).
* Your choice of institution is likely at least in part to be determined by the choice of courses available. For example, you may be attracted by a course (or even branch of law) not available at Glasgow – suddenly you have hundreds of courses available to you. Or you may begin to develop an interest in an area of law which you would like to study abroad from a fresh and comparative perspective. At least half of the subjects studied abroad need to be the equivalent of two ‘level 3’ courses recognised as two GU courses counting for Honours, although you may ‘package’ shorter overseas courses together, and only your best marks count towards Honours (the remainder only count in helping determine your GPA).

***2. Comparative Law Project***

We can also offer the opportunity to do something unusual in year 2 (this is also open to accelerated degree students who will only spend 2 years at Glasgow). This optional course carrying 10 credits seeks to provide a programme of academic (and cultural) benefit for up to 10 students from the Universities of Mainz, Germany and Glasgow who otherwise would not have any international dimension to their studies (for example, through taking part in study abroad opportunities). The design of the course aims to give students a working understanding of another legal system and thereafter to allow groups of students from both institutions to work together on a joint comparative law research topic. It is normally available only in year 3 to those not abroad on an exchange – but this is now being extended to year 2 students (and participation does not preclude study abroad in year 3). It will be of particular interest to students who have studied German at school or university (but the working language is English) or to students thinking about studying in English at Mainz or Freiburg. Normally, we have a trip to Mainz in November, with a return visit by Mainz students in late March. Further details will appear in semester 1.

Please begin to think about study abroad and the opportunities, benefits and choices this entails. Your year will be the fourth year that will not be able to benefit from the EU’s ERASMUS programme following the UK Government’s decision to withdraw from ERASMUS in 2020. The UK Government’s replacement scheme is third rate at best: and we still await clarification of how this is going to work. Until ERASMUS returns (as undoubtedly it will some day), students will continue to be harmed by senseless shortsightedness. We will do our very best to assist you through these transitional times.

And have a good summer!

Yours sincerely,

Prof Jim Murdoch

School of Law International Mobility Officer