BA (International Honours)
Students’ Orientation Guide
Welcome to St Andrews,
Scotland’s first university!

Whether you are studying Classical Studies, Economics, English, Film Studies, History or International Relations, as a BA (International Honours) student you are part of a unique and truly international joint degree programme between William & Mary and the University of St Andrews. You are a member of a very special community which transcends borders and fosters a global outlook, enriching both universities with fresh ideas and perspectives.

BA (International Honours) students experience a number of transitions throughout their degree programme, and we believe these transitions help you to develop agility and adaptability, a confident and flexible approach to your learning, and a broad and international perspective, all of which will help you to prepare for employment in a global market.

In the following pages, you will find information to help you make the transition to St Andrews – from advice on planning your travel to a guide to Academic Advising and information to help you make the most of your time at St Andrews.

We offer a range of support services to ease the transition and to help you settle into your new home in St Andrews, and we look forward to welcoming you to our lively community.

Professor Clare Peddie
Vice-Principal Education (Proctor)

Student profile

“One of the best things about the BA (International Honours) Programme besides the friendships within the Programme is the opportunities available at both St Andrews and William & Mary. As full students at both institutions, students can take advantage of academic and professional opportunities through both schools. I am excited to be taking advantage of this as an intern in the Global Office at St Andrews and as a Freeman Fellow and La Plata Fellow through William & Mary, as well as seeing friends in the Programme get involved in many other great opportunities at both schools.”

Isla Hanlon
(Massachusetts, USA BA (International Honours)
Global Office Intern 2024)
How to get to St Andrews

The closest airports to St Andrews, which offer plenty of connections both nationally and internationally, are Edinburgh (48 miles), Aberdeen (84 miles), Glasgow (90 miles), and Glasgow Prestwick (113 miles).

From Edinburgh airport there is an Airlink bus that runs roughly every 10 minutes to the centre of Edinburgh. It takes around 30 minutes and you can get off either at Waverley or Haymarket Station. Alternatively, you can take the tram service to Edinburgh Gateway, Haymarket or Waverley which operates every 8-10 minutes Monday to Saturday and every 12-15 minutes on a Sunday. From there you catch a direct train to Leuchars, which is the station closest to St Andrews. The train journey takes approximately an hour. Full details can be found at the National Rail website.

From Leuchars you get to St Andrews by bus (the 94, 96 and 99 lines) or taxi. You can also buy a Fife Dayrider+ when you board the Jet Service 747 from Edinburgh Airport to the Halbeath Park & Ride, where you have to change onto the XS24 or the XS59 to St Andrews. To determine whether or not taking the bus fits with your itinerary, full schedules can be found at the Stagecoach website.

There are also several taxi share services offering competitive rates for a transfer from Edinburgh airport to your hall of residence. There are special rates for the weekends prior to both semesters as well as the days at the end of each semester for your return to the airport. Check their webpages for more information:
- St Andrews Direct taxi share service
- St Andrews Shuttle airport transfer service

Living in St Andrews

St Andrews is located in a breath-taking position. It is set on a rocky headland overlooking the dramatic waters of the North Sea. Inland are the rolling fields and wooded hills of the Kingdom of Fife.

Contrasts are everywhere – with local quirky shops, cafés and boutiques alongside well-known supermarkets, bakeries, stationers, bookshops, mobile phone outlets and a range of high street fashion and shoe shops.

If you are thinking about hiring a car for weekend trips there are certain conditions that affect if you can drive, and what you can drive in Great Britain. In general you can only do so if you are over the age of 21 and have held your licence for at least 12 months. Read more about driving on a non-GB license.

Further afield

Thanks to the train link, as well as our proximity to Edinburgh and Glasgow, it is very easy to make St Andrews the base for your exploration of other parts of Scotland, the UK and regions further afield.

The Scottish Highlands are a particular favourite amongst international students and there are several companies which offer all-inclusive bus tours.

From Leuchars you can catch a direct train down to London. If you are planning to do a lot of travel by train it may be worthwhile getting a Railcard, which can save you a third off the price of each ticket you buy. For more information visit the National Rail website.

Matriculation

Matriculation is the process where students register with the University each academic year. This includes online matriculation, and attendance at the matriculation and advising events during Orientation Week in September. Find out more information about matriculation.

It is important to complete the full matriculation process within the time-frame prescribed otherwise it will result in the implementation of our Failure to Matriculate policy.

Immigration

In the spring, you will receive an email from Registry about your Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) that you will need to make an application for your student visa. It is essential you have a passport prior to applying for your visa or you risk not receiving it in time to commence studies in September. Your application will follow the same procedures as any other visa application. Details of your Student visa can be found here.
Students entering the UK for the first time with a student visa should bring their joint degree programme acceptance letter to show the immigration officer at the border. Those with visas should not take connecting flights through Dublin during initial entry as your visa will not be stamped. The Republic of Ireland has a ‘Common Travel Area’ with the UK.

Students studying at the University under a student visa are required to have their passport and visa documentation verified twice each academic year. Verification will take place at Matriculation and as part of a visa confirmation event held early in the second semester. Failure to attend the events may result in the University considering you absent. That absence will be reported to the UKVI and may ultimately result in your studies being terminated and your visa being curtailed.

If you have any queries regarding passport/visa checks, please contact: visas@st-andrews.ac.uk

### Student ID card

Your student ID, also called your matriculation card, is a form of personal identification and confirmation that you are a student at the University of St Andrews.

- It provides access to many University buildings, including the University Library, Students’ Union, 24-hour computer classrooms, and your own hall of residence.
- It is your Library card, to manage your Library record, including the issuing of books.
- It is your ID for voting in student elections.
- If you purchase gym membership, that will go on your card.
- You can add funds to your card to enable you to use the various printers located throughout the University.
- Your ID card is valid for the duration of your studies.

Although we ask students to upload an image for their ID card, it is possible to have your photograph taken during matriculation by our ID Card team.

Find out more information about student ID cards.

### Fees and funding

As a student who started their degree at William & Mary you will pay tuition fees to your home institution. However, you are responsible for paying your accommodation fees to St Andrews. You can pay these in full or by instalment either by international wire transfer, bank giro credit (BGC) or credit/UK debit card. Take a look at your fee payment options.

There are several banks which have branches in St Andrews, and most of them offer special deals if you open an account with them. Take a look at the steps needed to set up a bank account as an international student.

Opening an account and transferring money from another country into the UK can take some time, so you should ensure you bring enough money for living expenses for the first few weeks. It is advisable to bring some cash (but not large sums) and a credit card that will allow you to take money from a cash machine until funds have been transferred. Phone your home bank a few weeks prior to departure to notify them of international travel and to request a pin for your credit card. Some banks will also mail you a new card with a chip (all European cards have chips) free of charge, making it much easier to use machines. Be mindful of the fact that American Express is only accepted by a few businesses in St Andrews, whereas Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted.

In terms of how much spending money is needed per week, there is an approximate guideline on student educational expenses (look under International Students).

“...My enrollment in the JDP has provided me with an extraordinary academic journey. It has given me the chance to immerse myself and challenge my understanding in diverse cultures and educational systems, while forging lifelong friendships with peers from across the globe. The program has also afforded me the opportunity to easily and cost-effectively travel to numerous countries, which has been a highlight of my experience. I’ve deepened my understanding of the world by exploring the bustling streets of unique cities in Portugal, Italy, England, Poland, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, and Morocco, as well as traversing the rugged landscapes of Scotland. Every destination has enriched my understanding of the world. Undoubtedly, this program stands as an unparalleled opportunity in global college education.”

Benjamin (Washington, USA)
The BA (International Honours) Programme has taught me the importance of being adaptable in such an ever-changing world landscape. The programme has emboldened me as an individual, gaining confidence in my academics and beyond. The transitions between the universities are difficult (I will not lie), but the value of the education I am receiving is immense. I have fantastic friends in both places, and without the programme my life would look so different.

Olivia (Texas, USA)
**Library**
The University has several libraries throughout the town. The Main University Library, located in the centre of town, is open for more than 100 hours per week during the semester with a wide range of studying options, including group study rooms, silent study areas as well as more informal and relaxed areas, as well as a café.

The King James Library is located on South Street in St Mary's College with opening times from Monday to Friday. Find out more about library services.

**IT Services**
It is easier and safer to buy a new UK laptop when you arrive. However, if you bring your own laptop, you will need to get a UK power lead for it.

IT Services also work in partnership with Getech and participate in a national procurement agreement to secure very competitive prices for students to buy computers through the student store.

Each room in halls of residence has a data point which allows you to connect to the internet via an Ethernet cable (which will be provided to all students arriving during Orientation Week, at no extra charge).

Our wireless service is Eduroam, which is available throughout the public areas, Schools and libraries around the University and also in the bedrooms of halls of residence. Find out how to connect to Eduroam.

Printers are available in the Main Library as well as in the individual computer rooms of the halls of residence, but it is also possible to buy them from stores in town. Information on printing costs can be found on our website.

Our IT Helpdesk in the Library can help with any issue related both to University computer equipment and your personal laptop. You can get free advice without booking an appointment, or alternatively you can call them or send them an email: helpdesk@st-andrews.ac.uk

They also run a PC Clinic Service where you can hand in your laptop for any problems. Turnaround time for repairs is usually 48 hours. Since it is a University subsidised service the prices are very competitive. Explore more details about the current PC Clinic services.

**Halls of Residence**
Our Halls of Residence webpages are the best starting point for all related questions.

There are ten different undergraduate halls of residence in St Andrews, each offering a unique experience. From historic to modern, large to small, there is something for everyone. You will select your preference for a type of residence rather than choosing an individual hall. As each hall is located in a different part of town and hall events vary, there is no standard experience of hall life. The cost of living varies between halls so check the webpages for the current accommodation fees.

There are several different options to choose from our residences:
- Single or shared room. If you are in a shared room you will not find out in advance the name of your roommate. However, students in the past have used social media to connect prior to the start of semester.
- Standard (hall-style) or en-suite (you have your own toilet and shower).
- Catered (with meals) or self-catered (cooking for yourself).

Catered residences:
- Provide 19 meals a week (no weekend dinners), 14 meals a week if in David Russell Apartments (no weekday lunches or weekend dinners) or 15 meals a week at Agnes Blackadder Hall (no meals at weekends).
- Students may only eat meals in their own halls of residence.
- Meals in most halls have a duration of one hour, with the offer of a ‘packed’ lunch or dinner alternative. Students are allowed to select one entrée, one dessert, and one piece of fruit, however, you may take as much salad and sides as desired. There is always a vegetarian option and catering staff are happy to discuss other dietary requirements.
- All Catered halls with the exception of Agnes Blackadder and David Russell Apartments close during the Christmas vacation, but your belongings may remain in your room. Rooms must be vacated at the end of Semester 2 in May.

Self-catered residences:
- Are equipped with kitchens, but students must purchase their own cooking utensils.
- Halls remain open during the Christmas vacation, but must be vacated at the end of Semester 2 in May.
There will be a special welcome event held for you and your fellow joint programme students, organised by the Associate Dean for the BA (International Honours) programme. An invitation will be sent to you by email.
Take a look at semester dates for the coming years.

Traditions
During its more than 600 year history, St Andrews has developed many traditions, all of which play a significant role in making student life here so unique.

Academic families are, in essence, a way to incorporate freshers (new students) into the student community. At St Andrews you have the chance to be adopted by an ‘academic mother and father’. These academic parents are Honours students, i.e. students in their third or fourth year of study, who will act as mentors and introduce you to student life at St Andrews. Academic parents can adopt more than one student so you will have some academic siblings too, and over the years your academic family will grow with each new intake of freshers.

Every year in the first semester one of St Andrews’ unique traditions takes place, Raisin Weekend. On Raisin Sunday academic parents host parties for their children to celebrate their introduction to the St Andrews community. Traditionally, children would present their parents with a pound of raisins, hence the name. On Monday morning your academic mother will dress you up in fancy costumes and your academic father will present you with a Raisin Receipt, which could be anything from a teddy bear to a door. You will make your way through town carrying the receipt and end up with all the other academic children in the foam fight near St Salvator’s Quadrangle!

On 1 May many students brave the freezing waters on the North Sea in celebration of the heroic efforts of John Honey who, in 1800, saved five people from a sinking ship off the St Andrews pier, swimming out and back with one person at a time. The May Dip sees its culmination at the first light of dawn and the screams of the students as they enter the cold North Sea can be heard for quite a distance!

Support systems
Student Services provide a comprehensive support system for all students, with specialised advice and counselling in areas of finance, disabilities, international student service, academic issues, health concerns, mental health issues, personal and emotional concerns. Student Services as well as the other departments involved in dealing with the joint programme have great experience dealing with international students and their transition to the UK higher education system, so you will be in good hands.

For any queries that you may have whilst at St Andrews you can go along to the Advice & Support Centre (ASC), 79 North Street, where staff will be able to listen, give advice or refer you on to appropriate services. The Advice & Support team will provide advice on all welfare matters including overseas student issues, flatmate problems, financial matters/problems or any matter of concern to a student. If they cannot help then they will refer you to an appropriate person either within or outwith the University.

Liam (Virginia, USA)
“The Joint Degree Program has allowed me to appreciate and adapt to the different academic traditions of the UK and USA. I will always fondly remember studying with friends on William & Mary’s lush sunken garden and heading to class on the cobbled streets of St Andrews. This program gives you access to two cohorts of professors and students that will have a life-lasting effect on my career aspirations.”

Sergio Castagnoli (Texas, USA)
Healthcare
As part of your Student visa application, you will be required to pay an Immigration Healthcare Surcharge so that you have access to the National Health Service (NHS), which provides routine or emergency medical treatment.

If you require regular medication you should ensure that you arrive in St Andrews with at least one month's supply. You should then have time to consult a doctor here before you need to obtain further supplies.

If you are an international student on prescribed medication from a doctor in another country you may be unable to get this in the UK. Speak to your doctor who can advise you if your medication is licenced in the UK. If not, you may bring medication into the UK but please check for advice about the paperwork requirements that you need. Find out more about prescription medication.

The NHS will not repatriate you to your home country if you become very ill or are seriously injured, so it is strongly recommended that you maintain some limited insurance cover in your home country.

Find further information on medical and dental care.

The Careers Centre
The Careers Centre has a variety of tools, resources, opportunities and support and guidance available to BA (International Honours) students and graduates seeking to highlight their unique educational experience to employers in the UK, the US and across the world.

The Centre offers one-on-one careers guidance and practice interview appointments for joint degree programme students and hosts various events that facilitate networking and career exploration in partnership with alumni and employers. The Centre also hosts informative webinars and practical seminars specifically for joint degree programme students that focus on, for example: global networking and job searching; LinkedIn profile development and creating effective CVs and resumes. In addition to appointments students are welcome to access the Career Connect platform and website at their leisure to explore the many employability events, internships and work experiences that are available to them while based in St Andrews.

There are regular virtual events that feature American employers and alumni as well as, where possible, in-person US-focused events in St Andrews and in the United States. These events include Networking Nights, Coffee Connect mentoring, Alumni Career Panels, Work-Shadowing Programmes, and practical sessions with sector-relevant companies within the US to meet with alumni and employers. Further, the Careers Centre webpages have numerous career sector guides and information about US and UK labour markets.

As a service to BA (International Honours) students, the Careers Centre provides a platform to connect you with alumni who are already working in interested sectors or companies. Students are strongly encouraged to join Saint Connect, the Career Alumni Network that brings together St Andrews alumni and current students. On Saint Connect, students on the joint degree may join a specific group for BA (International Honours) students and alumni.

The Careers Centre has a dedicated North American Opportunities Manager who organises events and resources for joint programme students. For more information, or for any questions, please reach out to careers@st-andrews.ac.uk and follow us on social media at @stacareerscentre for announcements and updates.

Beyond graduation – the continuing St Andrews connection
While you are at St Andrews
Parents/guardians of St Andrews students are important members of the University’s extended community. For this reason, Development runs a Family Programme which aims to keep families up to date with news and developments at the University and provides them with a range of benefits and services.

Once you leave St Andrews
Leaving St Andrews does not mark the end of your association with the University but the beginning of a lifelong relationship with the University as St Andrews alumni. When you leave, you will receive a digital SPARC alumni benefit card which will provide access to a range of benefits and online services. The University will keep in touch through the annual alumni magazine, Chronicle, and through a monthly St Andrews in the News e-newsletter.