Information for Community College Scholars travelling to Aberdeen

CEUD MÎLE FÀILTE

Welcome to this information brochure for Associate Degree students from Canadian/USA Community Colleges. We sincerely hope that you will come and study with us, so that we can welcome you to Aberdeen and demonstrate the hospitality of Scotland. We aspire to provide you with the highest level of education enabling you to obtain (through hard work) an internationally recognised qualification from the best modern University in Scotland 2013 (The Times).

Not only will you gain a qualification and new life-long friends, you will also experience a very different education system and a whole new and exciting culture.

The education system in Scotland is entirely different from that you have experienced at home. Here we have a 4 year undergraduate Bachelor with Honours based on the following model:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Exit Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Certificate of Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Diploma of Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bachelors with Honours (classified)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you will already have successfully achieved an Associate Degree or Diploma from your College when you arrive, you will normally enter your chosen course at the beginning of year 3. Therefore it will be possible for you to obtain a Bachelors degree within 1 year – subject to you passing everything of course. Remember that in the UK if you fail a course you can re-take the assessments up to a maximum 3 attempts (there is a small administration fee for resits).

Most Canadian/USA students will exit at this stage, although you would be welcome to stay on for Honours year – but remember many Canadian/USA employers may not know the meaning of this, as it is a unique aspect of the Scottish Higher Education system. Undertaking this additional year may, however, be of value if you wish to consider entry onto one of our 1 year Masters programmes (subject to minimum entry qualifications).

Robert Gordon University,
a Scottish charity registered under charity number SCO 13781.
This document cannot answer all of your questions, so if you would like further information, then please feel free to contact me, Richard Barnes on r.barnes@rgu.ac.uk or my colleagues Duncan Harcus and Morag Kennedy (d.j.harcus@rgu.ac.uk or m.s.kennedy@rgu.ac.uk). I really hope that one day very soon I will be able to personally welcome you to Aberdeen with the traditional Gaelic welcome – ceud mile fàilte – A hundred thousand welcomes!

Now down to the nitty-gritty:

Student Visa Eligibility

Edited from: http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/studying/

Who can apply?

You can apply for an adult student visa (if you are 18 or over) if you are coming to the United Kingdom for your post-16 education.

How long can I come for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of course</th>
<th>Length of course</th>
<th>Length of stay allowed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree level or above</td>
<td>12 months or more</td>
<td>The full length of the course plus four months after the end of your course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree level or above</td>
<td>Six months or more, but less than 12 months</td>
<td>The full length of the course plus two months after the end of your course</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What do I need to apply?

You need 40 points to be able to apply for a student visa and must provide the proof needed with your application form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>What you get points for</th>
<th>Proof and documents needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Doing a course (at an acceptable level) with an approved education provider (also known as sponsorship)</td>
<td>Visa letter from your approved education provider, and the documents used to get the visa letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Having enough money to cover your course fees and monthly living costs (also known as maintenance)</td>
<td>Bank statement or letter confirming that you have enough money available to cover your course fees and monthly living costs for up to one year, at the time you submit your application</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You must be able to prove that the money you need to apply has been in your account for 28 days before you submit your application.

Canada and USA are considered 'low risk' countries, so you do not need to include mentioned documents with your application. However, you must confirm on your application form that you meet the requirements set out here and that you hold the required documents. UKBA reserve the right to request any or all of these documents, and will refuse your application if you do not provide them.

http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/studying/adult-students/evidence.

- You must also arrange to have your photograph taken and give your fingerprints, which are known as biometric information. See Biometrics for more information. If you are applying from outside the United Kingdom, you must attend in person to register your biometric data at the offices of the British mission, visa issuing post or in certain cases, the host government.
All UK visa applicants, save for those benefiting from a limited number of exemptions and exceptions, are required to provide biometric data (UKBA will take 10-digit finger scans and a digital photograph for our records) as part of the application process.

You will have to go in person to your nearest visa application centre to provide your biometrics and submit your application.

Your visa application will not be processed until you have provided the necessary biometric information. The finger scans are electronic so the members of staff do not need to use any ink, liquid or chemicals. You will have your digital photograph taken at the same time and the whole procedure should take no more than five minutes to complete. You should make sure that you do not have any decoration (such as henna), or any cuts or other markings on your fingertips before having your finger scans. You should also make sure that if you have any cuts and bruises on your face, they have healed or disappeared before you have your photograph taken. Digital photographs must be of your full face and you should not wear sunglasses, a hat or any other head covering (unless you wear it for cultural or religious reasons but the face must not be covered).

If you are in Canada you must apply through WorldBridge Service.
(https://www.visainfoservices.com/Pages/Welcome.aspx)

Canada - WorldBridge Service centres are located in Edmonton, Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver.

If you are in the United States you must apply online.
( http://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/Welcome.htm )

USA - Biometric finger scans are collected at one of 129 Application Support Centres throughout the United States. You will be able to book an appointment to have your finger scan once you have completed your online application.

Approved education provider

Education providers are approved by UK Borders Agency when they give them, a licence to teach international students in the United Kingdom, and add them to the tier 4 register of sponsors. Once
you have chosen an education provider to study with, you can check to see if they are on the tier 4 register of sponsors. If the education provider is not on the register, you will not be able to get a student visa. (Robert Gordon University is Tier 4; ‘A’ rated – highly trusted).

**Course at an acceptable level**

You can do courses that lead to an approved qualification and are:

- approved at level 3 or above on the National Qualifications framework (NQF); approved at the same level in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF); **This is the category you will be applying for.**
- short-term study abroad programmes in the United Kingdom as part of your qualification at an overseas higher education institution, as long as the qualification is confirmed as the same as a United Kingdom degree level by UK NARIC. (Which it is)

**Money needed**

The money that you need includes course fees and monthly living costs. The monthly living costs needed depends on where you are studying. As a citizen of the USA or Canada, both of which are considered low risk applicant countries, it is unlikely that you will be required to provide financial information.

http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/studying/adult-students/can-you-apply/money/how-much

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of course</th>
<th>Where will study</th>
<th>Money needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nine months or less</td>
<td>Outside London</td>
<td>Course fees and £800 for each calendar month of the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than nine months</td>
<td>Outside London</td>
<td>First year of fees</td>
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How much does a student visa cost?

The student visa application fee depends on where you apply from:

Inside the United Kingdom by post - £406
Inside the United Kingdom by person - £781
Outside the United Kingdom - £298

(Prices as of February 2014)

http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/aboutus/fees

What application form should I use?

Community College students should use the online system at:

http://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/Welcome.htm

Canada Once this form has been completed, an appointment must be made with WorldBridge Services via their website in order to complete the process.

What else do Community College Scholars need to do?

To gain credits and a Bachelor award at Robert Gordon University, you must apply to be accepted as a student. You will need to apply online through the UK National System called UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). You will need to pay a fee of approximately £12 to apply. You can do this with a credit card.

All offers of a place will include a condition of making a pre-payment of 40% of the first year Tuition Fees. This fee is refundable if your visa application is unsuccessful or there are extenuating circumstances which means you can no longer start your studies with us. Once you’ve made this payment and met any other conditions of entry, you will be issued a CAS (Confirmation of
Acceptance for Studies) which you MUST have before making your Tier 4 General Student Visa application.

Guide to Tuition Fees
http://www.rgu.ac.uk/9176D9A5-1D62-11DF-9DA8000D609CB064

To apply, you will need the University code name and number:
Institution code name: **RGU**
Institution code number: **R36**
We do not have a campus code.

The code for the course you are applying for is:
**M114** - Law
**M990** – Law & Management
**N201** - Management
**N120** - International Business Management
**N2N5** - Management with Marketing
**N2N6** - Management with HRM
**N221** - International Hospitality Management
**N420** – Accounting & Finance
**N820** – Events Management
**N840** – International Tourism Management
**P210** – Public Relations
**P300** - Media
**P500** – Journalism
**WN22** – Fashion Management

For the question, ‘Point of entry’ – please enter ‘3’

For the question, ‘Who will pay your fees?’ – you should answer ‘Self’ or ‘parents’

Please apply online via the UCAS website at:
- [www.ucas.com/apply](http://www.ucas.com/apply)

Applications should reach UCAS between 1 September and 1 June, but please try to get your application in early – **International students will require a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) Number in order to apply for a Tier 4 student visa. Your CAS Number can only be issued once your UCAS application has been submitted and you have accepted an offer of a place from the university.**

Once you have applied, you will hear from UCAS and us.

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Once we have accepted your application, you will be sent an official ‘Offer Letter’. You are required to pass all of your courses at your Community College with a grade point average of 3.0 prior to departure, but you will receive an offer which is ‘unconditional’ as this will then allow you to apply online for RGU accommodation. For information regarding University accommodation, please visit http://www.rgu.ac.uk/accommodation.

Applications for accommodation are made online via the Roomonline booking system, the link to which can be found on the Accommodation website. You can only register and apply on Roomonline when you have accepted your unconditional offer of a place at RGU. If you have problems with this then please contact the RGU Study Abroad Administrator, Morag Kennedy m.s.kennedy@rgu.ac.uk

Remember to carry all your documentation e.g. visa letter, offer letter in your hand luggage so that they can be inspected at UK Border control if required.

Scholarships and Recourses

Saltire Scholarship.
Students from the US and Canada can also apply for a Saltire Scholarship. Designed to encourage and promote the mobility of US and Canadian students to Scotland, the Scottish government offers a £2000 award to successful applicants for any course at Robert Gordon University. For more information, please visit www.talentscotland.com/Students/Study/Scholarships.aspx

RGU Dean’s Scholarship
This £1000 scholarship is awarded to all students who are successfully accepted onto a degree programme at RGU to help with fees. In order to claim it, please email Morag Kennedy (m.s.kennedy@rgu.ac.uk) providing proof of your acceptance into the university. The discount will then be deducted from your fees.

IIE (Institute of International Education) Administered Programs:
Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program
Awards of up to $5,000 to support U.S. citizen undergraduates receiving federal Pell Grant funding at two-year or four-year colleges or universities to study abroad. Students studying a Critical Need Language may receive an award for $8,000. This program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Deadline: March for Summer & Fall/Academic

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Year programs; October for Spring programs. Website: http://www.iie.org/gilman

Fulbright U.S. Student Program
Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Fulbright is the largest U.S. international exchange program offering opportunities for students, scholars and professionals to undertake international graduate study, advanced research, university teaching, and teaching in elementary and secondary schools worldwide. Deadline: October. Website: http://www.us.fulbrightonline.org

When to arrive
You should aim to arrive in the UK with some time to spare before the start of your course. Induction and orientation usually begins 1 week before the official start date of your course. You should therefore aim to arrive in the UK a few days before your induction begins so you have time to settle in.

Not only does this mean that you can participate in the events during this period; it also allows you some time to recover from your journey and to familiarise yourself with the University and the City of Aberdeen. Arriving at this time will also enable you to sort out the administrative aspects of your stay, such as opening a bank account and registering with a doctor. There is no charge for registering with a Doctor in the UK.

What to bring
Money
There is no restriction on bringing money into the UK. However, you must declare to UK Customs if you bring more than the equivalent of $10,000 (approx. CAD $9,750, or GBP £8,000). This includes currency, travellers cheques and bankers drafts. **DO NOT CARRY LARGE AMOUNTS OF HARD CURRENCY IN YOUR PERSONAL BELONGINGS.** It is simply not safe to do so, and once the money is lost it cannot be replaced.

The best and safest way to bring money is to either bring Sterling travellers cheques or arrange two bank drafts:

- one payable to The Robert Gordon University for your fees, with your student number and name on the back or as the reference details, and
- one for your living costs, payable to your own name

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In addition to these, you should bring around £200 - £300 in cash and travellers cheques or a pre-loaded card for your first few days in Scotland. Do not bring it all in cash for safety reasons.

Your fees will be payable in advance. If you are in receipt of a Scholarship, this will be shown as a discount on your tuition fees.

**Documents**
While you are a student in the UK, you will need to have certain documents with you (such as visa extension applications) for administrative and local tax purposes. The most important are:
- Your passport
- Your Unconditional Offer Letter
- Bank statements - don't throw them out
- Pay slips you receive from part-time work
- Affidavits of support from your parents (if you applied for your visa with them)
- Letters of sponsorship from company, government or sponsor agency (this can be your community college)

**Identification**
There is no requirement in the United Kingdom to carry official documentation with you in your daily life and there is no national compulsory system of identification. Therefore, there is no need to carry your passport or any similarly important documents around with you every day.
The official age to drink alcohol in the UK is 18 and you may be asked to provide proof of age in restaurants, pubs and bars.

**Clothes**
Usual winter temperatures in Aberdeen range from around -3 to 6 degrees Celsius (25 to 42 Fahrenheit), but the city has been known to reach lows of between -10 and -18 °C (15 to -2 Fahrenheit) so come prepared.
Remember: several thin layers of clothes are warmer than one thick jumper or jacket.
We recommend that you pack some long sleeved jerseys or pullovers, a warm jacket, strong footwear and heavy socks. If these items are difficult to obtain in your home country, there are plenty of places in Aberdeen where you can buy warm clothing at comparatively cheap prices.
Contrary to popular belief, Scotland does also sometimes experience some fantastic summer weather! Temperatures can get into the high 20s Celsius (early 80s Fahrenheit) and the beach and public gardens provide beautiful spots to enjoy the sun.
Electrical Equipment
If you bring computer or electrical equipment, you should get them insured as soon as you arrive as repairs can be expensive. Most computer and electrical goods retailers can assist you in choosing the right insurance package for you.
The electrical system operates on a voltage of 220 volts and electrical sockets use a 3-pin system.
You will need to bring an adapter with you. These can normally be bought at airports or large department stores in your home country.

What NOT to bring
It is illegal to bring certain items into the UK. These include some foodstuffs such as dairy products, meat products and dry foods. It would therefore be safest not to pack these items at all.
Aberdeen has a good number of halal and Asian food shops and a large Chinese supermarket; kosher foods are also freely available so you will be able to get many of the foods you enjoy at home, in Aberdeen.
Please also remember that it is a criminal offence to attempt to bring drugs into the UK and the penalties for possession of drugs are strictly enforced.
To avoid any confusion when you arrive, ensure any medicinal drugs whether pharmaceuticals or traditional remedies (such as Chinese medicine or Ayurvedic treatments) - are in clearly labelled bottles or sealed packaging.

Meet and Greet
During enrolment a Meet & Greet service is offered to all International Students at Aberdeen Airport.

A Student Ambassador will be at the airport between 9am and 10pm to provide important information and guidance, including advice on onward travel to your accommodation. He/she will be easily identifiable wearing a purple RGU T-Shirt.

Please note that the University will provide a free minibus service at advertised times during the day, to take you to RGU Halls of Residence. Space is limited therefore seats will be given on a first come first served basis. You can also choose to pay for your onward travel by bus or taxi and you should ensure you have enough money to do so.

Please note: we cannot collect students arriving at other UK or Scottish Airports, or the train or bus stations, nor are we able to meet students who arrive in private transport.
There are direct flights from Canada/USA to Glasgow, however, the train or road connection to Aberdeen is about 2.5 – 3 hours. There are very good connections to Aberdeen Airport from London Heathrow, London Gatwick, Paris, Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Copenhagen. British Airways, Air France and KLM have connecting flights – together with partners United, AA, and Delta.

**Medical Treatment**

As an International Student you are entitled to free healthcare on the NHS (National Health Service). This only covers treatment by NHS administered practices. **It is important to register with a GP soon after you arrive to ensure you are covered in an emergency. We will advise you on arrival.**

If you have any further questions, please contact:

Richard Barnes  
Head of International Academic Development  
Aberdeen Business School, Study Abroad Office  
Garthdee Campus  
Garthdee  
Aberdeen AB10 7QE  
United Kingdom

Tel: +44(0) 1224 263030  
Email: r.barnes@rgu.ac.uk

Some useful links

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<th>Details</th>
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<td><a href="http://www.rgu.ac.uk/">http://www.rgu.ac.uk/</a></td>
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<td>RGU website for International Students</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rgu.ac.uk/future-students/international-students/after-you-apply">http://www.rgu.ac.uk/future-students/international-students/after-you-apply</a></td>
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<td>End of Second Semester for all Students except Final Year Honours Students</td>
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