



Scotland – Fact Sheet for Lakehead University Placements 2023 (updated Oct. 2022)

Flights

-Depending on placement location, flights will likely be from Toronto-Aberdeen (11+ hours with 1 or more stops) or Toronto-Inverness (13+ hours with 1 or more stops). There are multiple airlines that fly into Scotland.

Visas

-A visa is not required for visiting Scotland, assuming you are staying for less than 6 months. You must present a valid passport upon entering, and you may be asked to show your return ticket, proof of sufficient funds for your trip, and proof of lodging.

Language

-English is the official language of the UK, spoken by approximately 98% of the population. In Scotland, English is the main language, and Scots/Scottish Gaelic are minority languages.

-The dialect is known as Scottish English, with many variations/expressions/slang words that may be unfamiliar. For example:

- *Aye - Yes*
- *Nah, Nut (the letter t is silent), Nae, Naw - No*
- *Alright?, Awright? - How are you?/Hello*
- *Nowt, Nuttin (pronounced "nu-hin"), Heehaw – Nothing*
- *Ye ken, no whit ah mean - You know, do you know what I mean*
- *A cannie mind, ma heids away - I can't remember/think*
- *Dinnae - Don't*
- *Wit, Eh? - What*
- *Bairn, rugrat, wean - Baby*
- *Mankit, manky, reekin, mauchit (pronounced "mokit"), clatty - Dirty*

-“Lochs” are what the rest of the English speaking world refers to as lakes. “Hill” or “Ben” can refer to a mountain, and “glen” means valley.

-The above examples, and many more, can be found at:

[How to Understand Scottish Slang](#)

[Appendix: Glossary of Scottish Slang and Jargon](#)

Currency

-The official currency of the UK is the pound sterling, known as the pound (£, GBP). Each pound is divided into 100 pence (100p = £1). 1 pound = \$1.54 Canadian.

-ATMs are widely available throughout the UK, however, in small communities in Scotland, cash machines (ATMs) may be located inside the village shop or post office, and thus access is limited to open hours.

-Credit cards and debit cards can be used widely.

-Note that there are Scottish bank notes that are different from those issued in England and Wales – however, these are not always accepted as tender throughout the UK (even including Scotland!). The official currency to use is the pound.

Food

-Scotland's national dish is haggis, a savoury meat pudding, and it's traditionally accompanied by mashed potatoes, turnips (known as 'neeps') and a whisky sauce. Other traditional things to eat include desserts such as Cranachan, sweet treats like shortbread and tablet and savoury dishes, including Scotch broth and black pudding. Regional cakes and snacks can be found across the country, including Aberdeenshire butteries (a type of bread roll), Dundee Cake and Cullen Skink – a creamy seafood soup.

-Other common foods and drink include oatcakes, porridge, colcannon, whiskey and beer.

-The Atlantic Ocean supplies copious amounts of seafood to Scotland. Fish and chips are a classic dish, but there is also smoked salmon, fresh oysters, langoustine, trout, scallops, sea urchin...

-There are vegan/vegetarian options throughout Scotland.

-Note: Tipping is not mandatory in Scotland and Scots wouldn't dream of tipping at a pub. That said, it's customary to tip 10% in restaurants.

Water

The tap water is safe to drink and meets European water quality standards. Most water in Scotland is classified as “soft” in taste. Some parts of Scotland have water from mountain reservoirs with a distinctive peaty colour; this does not affect the safety.

Vaccines

-You do not need to take any COVID-19 tests or fill in a passenger locator form. This applies whether you are fully vaccinated or not.

-The World Health Organization recommends the following vaccinations for the United Kingdom: hepatitis A, hepatitis B, rabies, meningitis, polio, measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis), chickenpox, shingles, pneumonia and influenza.

Travel Advisories

-Visit <https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/united-kingdom> for latest notifications.

-Currently, there is a Level 2 travel advisory, recommending that visitors exercise a high degree of caution when visiting due to threat of terrorism.

General Information about Scotland and Travel Tips

-Scotland is 4 hours ahead of Ontario.

-In some parts of Scotland, such as the western isles, you won't find a Sunday paper or an open shop on Sundays. Tourist places may be open, such as hotels and bars, but some places may have reduced hours.

-If you plan to use public transportation to travel around Scotland, take a look at the [ScotRail Travel Pass](#). The pass covers most trains, buses and ferries, and allows for multiple travel days.

-Carry a pen with you (or use your phone) to write down street and town names for directions. Chances are, you will pronounce these wrong!

-If you plan to hike in the Highlands, bring proper hiking equipment, including waterproofs, hiking boots and a map. Never underestimate the weather in the hills and only go as far as you can safely navigate back.

-Tour guides and hotel staff appreciate gratuities.

- Do more than the typical bucket list items, like Edinburgh, Loch Ness and the Isle of Skye. They are all beautiful, but Scotland has much more to offer and it's easy to go off the beaten track!
- If you want to see more castles, try the Scottish Castle Trail through Aberdeenshire – it covers 19 castles.
- Come prepared to charge your devices: bring an adaptor for the 3-pin UK outlets. The voltage is around 230V in the UK.
- For other tips about Scotland, visit [21 Things to Know Before Visiting Scotland](#).

Cellphones and Wi-Fi

-It is recommended to purchase a new SIM card, or to use an app that allows you to talk and text over Wi-Fi. Apps such as WhatsApp and TextNow that allow you to text/call over Wi-Fi are alternatives to buying a new sim card.

Temperatures and Weather in March/April/May

- The weather is generally unreliable in Scotland (you may hear that you'll experience all four seasons – in one day! – especially if you move from one region to another). Generally, however, the weather is not extreme.
- Common advice is to layer your clothing: there is a Scottish expression that “there's no such thing as bad weather, only the wrong clothes!”
- The average temperature in March-May in Scotland is between 7°C and 13°C.
- Expect rainfall approximately 12-15 days per month (varies by region), and some wind.

Travel and Tourism

Scotland is known for its ancient architecture, big skies, spectacular wildlife, majestic gardens, fascinating museums, fairytale castles, stunning Highlands, and friendly, down-to-earth people. For further information, see

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism_in_Scotland

Further information to prepare students for placements and travel in Scotland, including a packing list, will be organized through Lakehead University.