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UNIVERSITY
OF ABERDEEN

Aberdeen

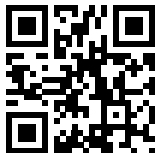
STUDYING IN THE SILVER CITY

Aberdeen

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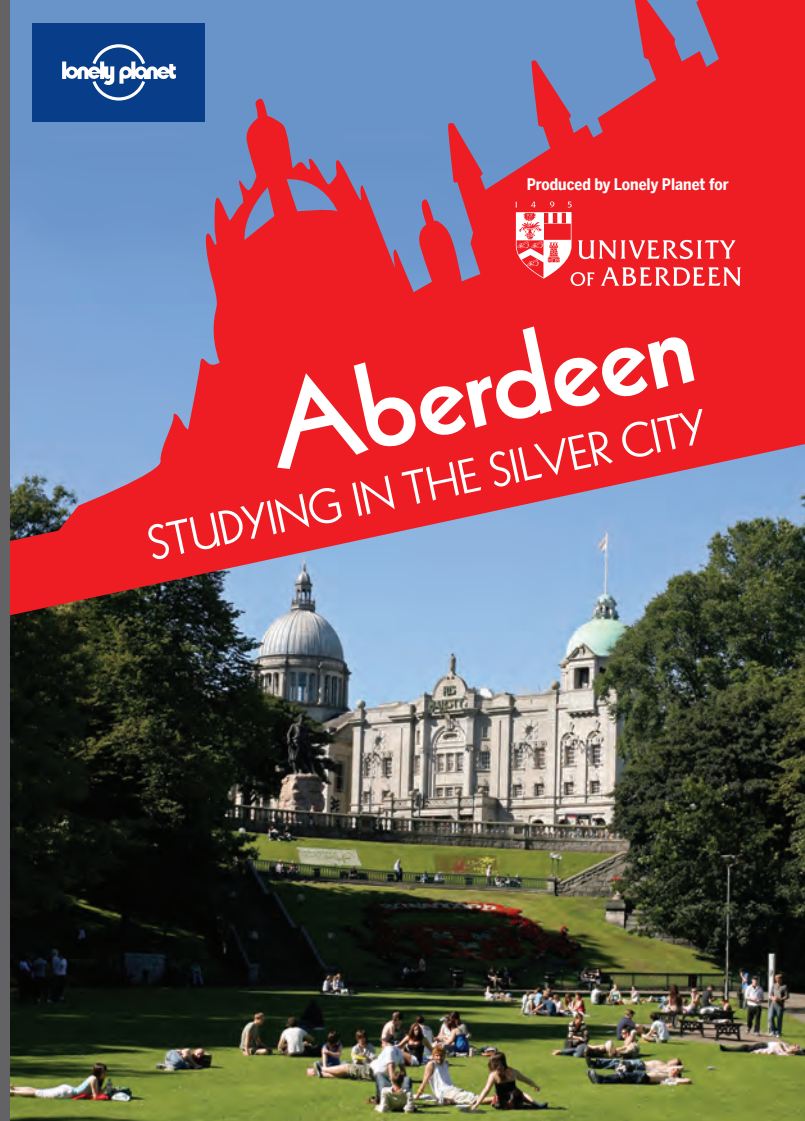
Aberdeen can teach you a thing or two. This bustling city by the sea offers a vibe that's hard to beat. And what's more, at the city's heart is the historic University of Aberdeen, a world-class institution. Deciding which university to go to?

In association with the university, Lonely Planet offers you a glimpse of student life in the Silver City.



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STUDENT VOICE

Kojo Oduro-Kwateng, 27; originally from Ghana, brought up in Vienna, Austria; studying for a Masters in International Law

What do you do when you're not studying? I'm a DJ and Aberdeen's music scene is really lively so there's always something new going on. I also do the Urban show on the student radio where we promote current local bands.

How would you describe Aberdeen?

It's a really cosmopolitan, welcoming city. The night scene is splendid. You go from pub to pub, club to club and party to party. When I go away I really miss it – I think: 'aw – I just want to go back to Aberdeen!'

Have you explored around Aberdeen?

There are so many castles and lochs to explore, places like Balmoral, Loch Ness, Fort William and Stonehaven – all beautiful. I've really, really enjoyed it.

Where do you live? I've lived at Hillhead Halls for five years now – it's like home to me. And having wi-fi everywhere is so convenient. There's no queuing for computers; at home or everywhere you go, you're hooked up to the internet.

STUDENT VOICE

Allison Pusateri, 22; from Kane in Pennsylvania, USA; studying Politics and International Law

Do you like the King's College campus?

I love knowing it's been around since the 15th century. It has a beautiful Ivy League feel to it, especially around Elphinstone Cloister and New Kings.

How would you describe Aberdeen?

It's a smallish city. I come from a small town so it's been a great stepping stone for me. I wouldn't have wanted to move straight to a big city, no way, so this has been perfect.

Have you explored the area around Aberdeen?

Aberdeen is a great hub. You can visit stone circles, castles, whisky distilleries, the West Coast and the Isle of Skye. And Stonehaven is really close, it's beautiful – the coolest little Scottish village on the cliffs. And then there are the beaches.

Do you get to the beach often?

For sure. I love the sand dunes and endangered flora. It must have left an impression as I'm getting married this summer and we're having the wedding reception on the beach.

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Aberdeen beach

THIS IS ABERDEEN

Aberdeen can teach you a thing or two. Packed with potential, this cosmopolitan city by the sea is just itching to spring some surprises. Here, broad boulevards of grandiose architecture lead towards miles of sandy beaches. Impressive civic buildings and big-city stores rub shoulders with pockets of funky independent shops and chilled-out cafés, and winding lanes snake past buzzing bars, restaurants and clubs. You can linger over brunch in a cool café then walk to the shore for a spot of surfing, sunset-strolling or dolphin-watching. Then head back to town to sample the cutting-edge club scene, an arthouse flick or a dram of local whisky in a supremely snug pub.

And then there's the University of Aberdeen's historic campus. The epitome of cobbled collegiate-chic, its exquisite architecture, ornate spires and Hogwarts-esque coat of arms must turn other academic institutions green with envy. But here, ancient meets modern: free campus-wide wi-fi sees students surfing the net while lounging on the grassy quad; superb new sports facilities let you get fit and feel good; while a new jaw-dropping, multi-million pound library delivers world-class inspiration.

Aberdeen also has more than a whiff of adrenaline-fuelled adventure. You can snowboard down local mountains in the morning and go to seminars in the afternoon. Fancy windsurfing and white-water kayaking? That's close at hand too.

Nearby whisky distilleries put the study of a top Scottish export on the timetable, while a scattering of classic castles and a sumptuous stately home provide stunning field trips. Good transport links mean connecting with the wider world is easy too.

Where you choose to study shapes the way you live your life. Finding out more about potential-packed Aberdeen could tempt you to this surprising Scottish city by the sea.

Belinda Dixon
Lonely Planet author



GET TO KNOW THE CITY

Even for those not big on buildings, Aberdeen's architecture is impressive.

An extraordinary array of fairytale turrets, Gothic baronial piles, spires and green copper domes pop up unexpectedly from behind grand civic buildings and modern shopping arcades. Known as the Granite City, highlights include the fantastical Salvation Army Citadel, which was modelled on Balmoral Castle, the immense edifice of Marischal College and the twisting turreted towers of the New Town House. Colours range from honey-grey to light pinks, reds and pale blue, while in the sunshine – and in the rain – the stone's silvery flecks make the city sparkle.

Aberdeen is Scotland's third-largest city. It's also a city of layers – literally and metaphorically. Built on sometimes steep slopes, flights of steps lead down from bustling Union Bridge to the Green, an intimate enclave of eateries and shops. Here you can shop for snowboards, drum kits or electric guitars, sip a cappuccino or tuck into some truly great bistro grub. Just opposite,

Belmont Street's fabulous selection of boho cafés and lively drinking dens allows you to spend the night touring its quirky bars, trendy clubs and ancient pubs (p12). By day you can try on designer clothes, browse for CDs or munch on an organic brunch (p12). You'll also find all the major retail chains in Aberdeen, with four large city-centre shopping malls, including the piazza-style Academy and brand new Union Square.

Around a mile north of town, Old Aberdeen is home to the University of Aberdeen's King's College campus. An appealing oasis of colleges, cloisters and cobbles, strolling here at times feels like walking around a fantasy film set.

Its heart is King's College, complete with an ornate 15th-century chapel, whose vividly painted heraldic crests, crenellated turrets and minispires would make Harry Potter feel at home. Add lions and unicorns bearing gilded shields and the Hogwarts effect is complete.

A stroll, cycle or rollerblade down the promenade takes you to the picturesque village of Footdee

(pronounced 'Fittie'). This cluster of ancient fishermen's cottages is a warren of tiny lanes and low granite terraces, turned into a riot of colour by brightly painted sheds, backyards overflowing with pot plants and a healthy population of garden gnomes.

Aberdeen's coastal location means its climate is much better than you may expect – in fact, the city has relatively mild winters and warm summers.

Aberdeen is also a bustling port and its links with the oil industry have seen it dubbed Europe's energy capital. But the energy the city generates extends far beyond petroleum. There's a vibrancy that can be felt in its avant-garde art gallery and superb museums, as well as in its thriving bars, restaurants, pubs and clubs. It's also felt in a buoyant local economy rich in student jobs.

Aberdeen has been welcoming non-Scots for centuries. The legacy of that is a cosmopolitan city big enough to pulse to a metropolitan beat, but still small enough to be friendly. Perhaps it's time to peel back those layers...

Surfers at Aberdeen beach



SAND & SEMINARS

A 15-minute walk east of the campus leads to the salt-tanged air of Aberdeen's miles and miles of sandy beach. An exhilarating expanse, it's perfect for a touch of sandcastle-building, windsurfing or kite-flying. Or head to the funfair to ride a rollercoaster, fly round a Ferris wheel or just tuck into some ice cream while wave-watching from a beachfront café.

STUDYING IN ABERDEEN

Most University of Aberdeen students study at and live on or near the King's College campus. Despite having more ancient buildings than you can shake an architecture textbook at, the campus is far from locked in the past.

In fact, £90 million has recently been ploughed into facilities, with an extra £270 million on the way. Some £8 million has been spent on the Hub (p23), a funky one-stop-shop in the heart of the King's College campus, which combines a swish cafeteria, free wi-fi and internet, and student drop-in services. A whopping £28 million has been invested in the new Olympic-standard sports facilities (p24), while a major upgrade of student accommodation, with new ensuite flats, occurred in 2008 (p22). Medical students study at Foresterhill, 25 minutes' walk from King's College.

Despite the ultra-new facilities, the King's College campus retains a delightful sense of the past. Atmospheric quads, ancient colleges and a stretch of calming cloisters remind you that you're at the UK's

fifth-oldest university. A stroll down the cobbled High Street with its pub, shop, bakery, bank and bookstore is a walk students have taken for generations. All those grand old buildings are not just for show either – you could find yourself having lectures inside the historic King's College or sitting down to study in the beautiful New Kings opposite (the 'new' here is relative – 1870 to be exact).

For the low-down on what's happening on campus, students tune into their own radio station or leaf through their free weekly newspaper, *Gaudie*. As well as being full of the latest gossip and student news, it's also packed with pub and club reviews and info about the university's 58 sports clubs (p24) and 80 societies (p23).



University of Aberdeen library

ICONIC INSPIRATION

The university's bold vision for its spectacular new library was to give Aberdeen a design icon equivalent to the Sydney Opera House. Breathtaking in design, ambitious in scope and the largest cultural project in Scotland for years, it was pegged at a cool £57 million and opened in 2011.

It's an inspirational piece of architecture as well as a superb study space. Scandinavian designers have come up with a seven storey, shimmering, fluted cube, complete with an asymmetrical central atrium. This corkscrews up through open-plan floors filled with book stacks, historic collections and the latest high-tech kit.

STUDENT VOICE

Amye Robinson, 21; from Aberdeen;
studying Economics and French

Why did you choose Aberdeen?

When I came for the open day everybody was very friendly and supportive, an atmosphere I hadn't found at some other Scottish universities. The University of Aberdeen has such a good name that I'm sure it'll help when finding work.

Do you enjoy the campus? I love the tradition surrounding King's College. I went to a modern school so these cobbled streets and the vintage feel are wonderful.

What about the social life? There's so much that you can't do it all. The city has a good music scene and the university has so many clubs. I'm the President of the French Society, and there's also the Celtic Society, which organises great parties. The other day the African Drumming and Belly Dancing societies did a joint presentation. I wasn't sure what to expect but it was fantastic!



VITAL STATISTICS

The University of Aberdeen has a prestigious academic pedigree.

Here are a few impressive stats:

- Ranked in the world's top 200
- 16,000 students
- 120 nationalities
- 91% of graduates go into work, further study or training within six months
- Five Nobel Prizes have been awarded for work carried out or begun in Aberdeen
- 90% of the research conducted at Aberdeen is considered to be of international quality

For the history of the university, see p29.



New Kings, University of Aberdeen

AND NOW TO THE WEATHER...

Did you know that Aberdeen is the sunniest city in Scotland?



Ninety-nine Bar & Kitchen

DESTINATION ABERDEEN

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Partying

As befits a buzzing city, Aberdeen knows how to party. In the lanes around Belmont Street, trendy vodka bars, lively drinking dens and student-friendly clubs sit alongside wide courtyards ideal for a summertime beer.

Aberdeen's music scene is second only to Glasgow and a wealth of venues host a wide variety of gigs, while clubs cater for tastes ranging from uber alternative to cheap n' cheesy. The cavernous Tunnels is the city's live-music nucleus, featuring DJ nights and gigs by homegrown talent and up-and-coming bands. The Lemon Tree and other venues also stage well-known performers.

The city is peppered with ancient pubs. All worn wooden tables and scuffed wooden floors, they're places to drink in the atmosphere, sip the local ale and sample a malt whisky or two. In Aberdeen's oldest pub, Ma Cameron's, they've been quenching thirst since 1789, as the lino floor, ancient bench tables and battered stools testify.

Next to the King's College campus the ever-popular Bobbin boasts sports screens, pool tables and pulsing music. While on the campus, the historic St Machar

Bar is a long, thin wooden-floored pub with no music and no pool table; just copper drinking jugs, a dartboard and bags of atmosphere.

Eating

Places with great natural assets tend to dish up great grub – and Aberdeen doesn't disappoint. The land is famous for Aberdeen Angus beef, while the waters surrender succulent fish. In Aberdeen meals don't have to cost the earth. Tuck into a bistro burger or settle down in the grassy grounds of the student halls, fire up the BBQ and slap the catch of the day onto the grill. At the beach you can sit amid miles of golden sand, watch the wind on the waves and tuck into super-fresh fish and chips. The Silver Darling restaurant at Footdee may tempt you for a treat. Named after the old Scottish phrase for herring, it overlooks the harbour mouth and serves up fine local ingredients with fancy French flair. Aberdeen is full of great multi-cultural grazing grounds. Restaurants and takeaways include Chinese, Vietnamese, Greek, Indian, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Mexican, Polish and Turkish.



AN ELEGANT EATERY

The warm stone walls at Café 52 on the Green set the scene for some truly fabulous food. Tuck into prawns and caviar, grilled vegetable salad or a bratwurst hot dog. If you're thinking that something this stylish can't be affordable, check out the lunch menu where everything's a fiver (£5) or less.

Two weekends a month a mouthwatering array of local produce fills market stalls in Belmont Street. Piles of local veg and stacks of tempting cheese sit alongside a smorgasbord of local fish, including the Scottish delicacy Arbroath Smokies – whole haddock smoked over oak-wood barrels.

Relaxing

Although Aberdeen revels in a high-energy social scene, it also has chilling-out down to a fine art.

While your studies will help you think deeply, the city's clear sea-air and the lush greenery of nearby Royal Deeside will help you breathe in deeply too. As well as a mind-

expanding stretch of sandy beach, Aberdeen has its own permanent fun fair, complete with 100ft Grampian Eye Ferris wheel, three rollercoasters and a log flume. Nearby you'll also find a swimming pool, sauna, climbing walls, skate park, restaurants, cafés and a 10-screen cinema. After all that sea air, or for a lazy start to the day, what you really need is to linger over a good brunch.

Join the students and artists tucking into crepes and coffee in Kilau, a chilled-out café on Little Belmont Street. Just around the corner, Beautiful Mountain serves up organic porridge, steaming hot chocolate and immense most-of-the-day breakfasts.

STUDENT VOICE

Nicholas Edwards, 22; from Aberdeen; graduated in Law, secured a Post-Graduate Diploma

How would you describe Aberdeen?

A perfect-sized city: big enough not to be claustrophobic, but not too sprawling that you spend the whole evening traipsing from one end to the other.

Have you enjoyed student life?

It's been fantastic. The university has a huge variety of things to offer. Fresher's Week hooked me in and it all carried on from there. The Sport's Union and its social scene are great, too.

Did you find it easy to get work as a student? I started working for the university as a Student Ambassador; it's quite easy to get involved with, and it's paid. Then I went on to teach computing courses. There are quite a few different options.

Are you pleased you studied at Aberdeen? Very. Aberdeen is the leading provider of law in the UK and the teaching is excellent. This university has helped shape me into the person I am and I'll look back with very fond memories.



Alternatively, duck into the boho hangout Books and Beans, opposite. Here, internet terminals and café tables tuck in among book stacks, allowing you to sip a latte among the literature. Grab a first-floor window seat, gaze down onto Belmont Street and watch the world go by. Then head over the road for an arthouse flick at Aberdeen's independent cinema, the Belmont.

Adrenaline

For less extreme sports, see p24. Wedged between the mountains and the sea, Aberdeen is the place to actually do all those high-octane things you've only dreamed about. And the university's clubs make it easy. In Aberdeen you really can head to the beach, pull on a wetsuit and ride the North Sea surf before trotting back to campus for your first lecture. Whether you've never put a foot on a surfboard or are an expert barrel rider, the university's Surf Club is there for you.

Aberdeen's long strip of beach provides top-notch kite and windsurfing. The university Sailing Club's fleets of boats train on Forfar Loch, and also run West Coast yachting weekends. Or venture under the waves with the university's Sub Aqua

Club; it teaches diving and runs affordable trips to Oban, Kyle and Lochaline.



Aberdeen beach

DOLPHIN DELIGHT

Aberdeen's harbour mouth is one of the best locations in Scotland for watching dolphins from the shore. Good vantage points include the harbour entrance at Footdee, or the Torry Battery on the opposite side. Scan the waters for bottlenose and white-beaked dolphins, then settle back to enjoy the display.

Adrenaline junkies will be tempted by the white-water rivers accessible from Aberdeen and the university's Canoe Club offers pool sessions, kit and coaching. There are also clubs for orienteering and mountain biking, or you can try your hand at abseiling, gorge walking and rock climbing locally, too.

Culture

Aberdeen has a vibrant arts scene. Venues feed cultural cravings with stand-up comedy, studio theatre, music and dance – Radiohead, Jimmy Carr and West End musicals have all appeared here. The city's Music Hall stages artists ranging from jazz and folk through rock and pop to classical, while His Majesty's Theatre puts on plays, musicals and opera, as well as the annual Student Show – the most successful charity musical in the country. Aberdeen has some superb gig venues (p12), movie multiplexes and an arthouse cinema as well.

The University of Aberdeen's cultural engagement programme offers events year-round including the Director's Cut (a series of staged discussions with international filmmakers and broadcasters,

including the likes of Sir David Attenborough, Nicola Roeg and John Akomfrah), University of Aberdeen Music Prize, Café Science



Descending the slopes, Glenshee Ski Centre, near Braemar

WINTER WONDERLAND

There's nothing else like it: the crunch of snow under your skis, chilled air whooshing into your lungs and experiencing that downhill thrill. Three of Scotland's five main ski centres are only two hours from campus. Aviemore, the Cairngorm Mountain, Glenshee and the Lecht provide perfect pistes for board-riders and alpine skiers; the university's Ski and Snowboard Club will show you the way.



Aberdeen art gallery

AVANT-GARDE ART

Culture-vultures flock to the contemporary works on display at Aberdeen's Art Gallery.

Innovative pieces include five painted porcelain pelvises, a shocking Gilbert and George, and a table full of ice cream set sideways and suspended way above ground.

There's also a full complement of gilt-framed paintings, including a Sickert, and Edwin Landseer's *Flood in the Highlands*. Best of all it's free to get in.

Programme, Sound Festival and the Aberdeen International Youth Festival.

To get under the skin of modern Aberdeen, it helps to peel back the past. The Maritime Museum (free entry) does this in an imaginative, multimedia style. Massive lighthouse lenses sit alongside walk-in boat cabins, ships' bells rub shoulders with tales of the herring fishing heyday, and spiral staircases surround a three-storey model of a North Sea oil platform.

Explore

Aberdeen sits amid such spectacular surroundings you'll find it hard to leave after your studies. The Donmouth Nature Reserve is just metres from the university's Hillhead

Halls of Residence (p22). Here acres of woodland, saltmarsh and sand dunes wind towards the sea, providing glimpses of otters, seals and wading birds.

The 165-mile North East Coastal Trail is alongside the reserve. Within a few miles you could see spawning salmon, leaping sea trout and even porpoises. Inland, Aberdeenshire's forests bring you closer to Pictish forts where peregrine falcons wheel over panoramic views.

Fifteen miles south of campus the historic fishing port of Stonehaven has an attractive cliff-fringed harbour and the gloriously crumbling Dunnottar Castle. It's so picturesque Franco Zeffirelli filmed Hamlet with Mel Gibson here.

A similar distance west takes you to 16th-century Castle Fraser, a grand pile where towers and turrets loom over secret rooms and hidden stairs.

The stately Georgian home that is Haddo House is 20 miles north, while

Fyvie Castle, a ghost-riddled baronial pile, is five miles further on; the grounds are open year-round.



Balmoral Castle

A HIGHLAND FLING

A couple of hours' drive inland from Aberdeen leads to Britain's biggest national park: the Cairngorms. As well as offering superb adventure sports (p15), this collection of frosty mountain tops, rivers and lochs is a springboard for sledging, reindeer-herding and sled-dog rides. You'll also find the Queen's holiday home, Balmoral, the start of Scotland's Malt Whisky Trail and hundreds of kilt-wearing Scots at the Braemar Gathering.

STUDENT VOICE

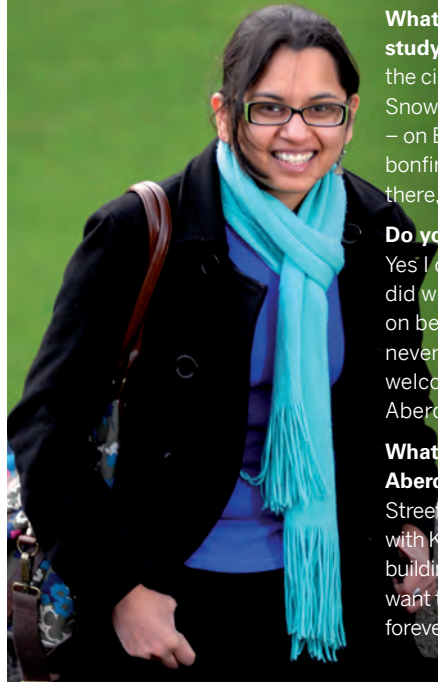
Nooreen Akhtar, 22; from York and Karachi; studying Biomedical Science

Have you enjoyed studying at Aberdeen? I've loved it. It's the best decision I've ever made. Before you come away you have pet worries, such as will I make friends, will I find somewhere to live, but it's all worked out beautifully.

What do you do when you're not studying? I go out with my friends, to the cinema or to gigs; we saw Muse and Snow Patrol. We also go to the beach – on Bonfire Night there was a huge bonfire and a great fireworks display there, it was magical!

Do you feel at home in the city? Yes I do. I'm of Asian origin and did wonder if I might be picked on because of my race – but I've never felt that here. People are very welcoming and I actually feel that Aberdeen is my home now.

What will you miss most about Aberdeen? Walking down the High Street on campus as the sun is setting, with King's College and all the old buildings looking so beautiful. I don't want to leave; I want to stay at uni forever.





Cliff Scrambling, Slains Castle, Aberdeenshire

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Accommodation

Halls of residence are where you make your first friends and really begin to feel at home. The University of Aberdeen's halls are set in King's College campus or close by. All first year students are guaranteed a place in the halls (provided they meet the application deadline).

Around 400 first-year students opt to stay in the catered Crombie-Johnston Halls in the heart of the King's College campus. Advantages include: the meals provided, which are dished up in the Hub; having all the main campus facilities on tap; and the fact that you're only minutes from lectures, allowing for an extra-lazy-lie-in.



King's Lawn, University of Aberdeen

The university's main student village is the tree-fringed Hillhead Halls on the banks of the River Don, a 15-minute walk from King's College. These self-catered halls, some with ensuite rooms, are home to around 2000 students. A £20 million new-build and refurbishment programme is underway at Hillhead, delivering a further 520 ensuite rooms.

Hillhead has a bar, a five-a-side football pitch, laundrettes, pool tables and a shop. Regular buses shuttle between Hillhead, the teaching campus and the city centre. For students opting not to stay in the halls, Old Aberdeen is full of student properties.

WELCOMING CITY, COSMOPOLITAN CAMPUS

Around 20% of the University of Aberdeen's students come from outside the UK, representing 120 different nationalities.

There's an International Support Office, while university cultural societies include Chinese, Indian, European, Saudi and Japanese. Faith societies include Christian, Jewish, Islamic and Buddhist.

Living in Aberdeen

With a hefty student population of 50,000 in a city of 250,000, you'll feel at home in Aberdeen, wherever you come from. Shops in the city centre combine big-city chain stores with quirky independent boutiques and thrift shops. From supermarkets for those cheap groceries to tailors for kilt-hire, Aberdeen has all you need.

The centre of campus life is the Hub, a funky one-stop-student-shop. In its cool cafeteria you can sit on red pod-like stools and tuck into a burger and chips, pasta, curry or a stir-fry while watching plasmascreen TVs. Downstairs the Tiki Café rustles up great fair-trade coffee and excellent cakes amid laptop-friendly sofas and brightly coloured chairs. Internet terminals and campus-wide wi-fi makes surfing free and easy. The full range of student services are on hand within Infohub, and there's even a Subway, too!



Demonstration from Capoeira Geneva association

QUIRKY CLUBS

The university's 80 non-sport clubs include heavyweights like Economics, Philosophy and Law – and some surprises. Fancy joining these?

- Anime and Manga
- Paintball
- Capoeira
- Juggling
- Malt Whisky

(For sports societies, see p24)

Sport

With a brand-new, £28 million sports complex right on its doorstep, the University of Aberdeen's facilities are Olympic-class. Built in partnership with the city council and **sportscotland** the centre is used as a training camp for the Commonwealth Games and Olympics for athletes from the North East of Scotland. And no wonder. There's a full-size indoor football pitch, a nine-court games hall, four squash courts, a large fitness suite and gym, an indoor running straight, throwing and jumping areas, a 400-metre outdoor athletics track and a hockey pitch. The university's rugby and lacrosse pitches, swimming pool, cricket wicket and tennis courts are just over the road on the King's College campus. The Bobbin pub (p12), popular with sporty types, is tucked in between. The university also has a rowing boathouse on the banks of the Dee and a climbing bothy on Royal Deeside. (For adrenaline sports, see p15.)

The University of Aberdeen has a fearsome sporting reputation (they've lost only one inter-varsity boat race in their history), and teams include men's and women's football, rugby, hockey, basketball, badminton

and squash. In total, 58 sport clubs cater for all standards, so if you've never played before you're as welcome as an experienced athlete. Sports Blues are awarded, while scholarship schemes support up to 20 students who compete at near-national level.



Ultimate frisbee at Balmedie beach

SURPRISING SPORTS

As well as the mainstream ones, the University of Aberdeen has some more specialist sports societies. How about trying your hand at these?

- Curling • Fencing • Gliding
- Underwater Hockey
- Ultimate Frisbee



City centre and ship in harbour, Aberdeen

Orientation & Accessibility

Aberdeen's oil-industry links ensure the city is extremely accessible. The three London airports – Gatwick, Heathrow and Luton – are just over an hour's plane ride away (£45). From London connections include those to Beijing (£420), Dubai (£300), Mumbai (£380), USA and Canada (£330/450 East/West Coast) and Nairobi (£440). All fares above are low-cost, approximate returns.

Flights also link Aberdeen to Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Dublin, Durham, East Midlands, Exeter, Humberside, Leeds Bradford, Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich and Southampton. International flights include those from Aberdeen to Antalya, Amsterdam, Bergen, Copenhagen,

Ibiza, Palma and Paris – so not only is it easy to get to Aberdeen, it's also easy to explore pockets of Europe over a long weekend.

Regular train services connect Aberdeen to London (7½ hours), Birmingham (7½ hours), Manchester (seven hours) and Bristol (nine hours). Using a 16–25 RailCard, a sample Aberdeen-to-London fare is around £85. Coaches, which shuttle between Aberdeen and all major UK cities, are a very affordable way to travel.

Scotland itself is a compact destination which can be easily explored from Aberdeen. The cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness are each around a 2½-hour drive or train trip, while the Highlands are on your doorstep. The Cairngorms, with snowboarding and adventure sports

(p15) are just a two-hour drive; or hop up to the Highlands by rail – the ski slopes of Aviemore are a 3½-hour train trip away.

Working in Aberdeen

Students' finances always need a boost, and Aberdeen is awash with student jobs. Being Europe's energy capital means a buoyant local economy and plenty of bars, clubs, restaurants, shops and services all needing staff.



The Aberdeen University Association Student Advice Centre can help you find work. It connects students with around 1000 employers who've all been briefed about study commitments, holiday periods and exams. Once you've signed up you'll get weekly email updates and access to a searchable vacancy database. The university also holds two Recruitment Fairs a year, where you get to meet employers just itching to give students jobs.

All the Student Advice Centre employers will sign a code of practice. This stipulates they won't expect students to work more than 15 hours a week in term time and that they must pay at least the minimum wage.

Although largely for part-time, holiday and temporary vacancies, the Student Advice Centre is also used by employers wanting to fill graduate posts.

Some students work in areas related to their studies, boosting their employment prospects when they leave university.

The Student Advice Centre, as well as the University's Career Service, can help you update your CV and offers tips on applications and interviews as well as advice on pay, tax and National Insurance. It also guides international students through any employment restrictions and work permit regulations.

STUDENT VOICE

Ranuka De Silva, 22; from Sri Lanka; studying Economics and Finance

How was finding somewhere to live? In my first year I lived in Hillhead Halls. This was such a good stepping stone to meet all sorts of people from around the world. Everybody was in a similar situation and everybody was really helpful.

What do you do when you're not studying? Well, I do love my golf and my riding! And I've been able to do both. I'm currently training with the university club, which is fantastic.

Have you enjoyed Aberdeen's social scene? Absolutely. There are lots of student bars and nightclubs and lots of independent cafés.

What will you miss most when you leave? I'll miss the friends I've made here, the riding, and the people. Aberdeen has been a home to me – people have opened their arms here. The days in Aberdeen have been the best days of my life.





Ornate gateway of the University of Aberdeen

BACKGROUND

Get chatting to an Aberdonian and they'll soon tell you, with gentle pride, that for 267 years the city of Aberdeen had two universities when there were only two universities in the whole of England.

In fact, we have to head back as far as the Renaissance for the founding of the University of Aberdeen.

In 1495 Bishop William Elphinstone established King's College to train doctors, teachers, clergy and lawyers. From 1497 it had the first chair of medicine in the English-speaking world. Marischal College followed in 1593 and the two colleges were united to form the University of Aberdeen in 1860.

Walking through the King's College campus it's clear you are in Scotland's third-oldest university. The picturesque High Street, flanked with low granite cottages, winds past

shops, a bank, pub and Blackwell's, the university bookseller. Next comes the cobbled Chanonry, home to clergy in the 13th century, and the medieval St Machar's Cathedral. Elsewhere, the fantastical turrets and minarets of the creamy-white Powis Gates shoot skywards. The architectural gem, though, is King's College, parts of which date from the 1520s, and its exquisite chapel, capped by a magnificent crown tower.

Yet the old rubs shoulders with the new. Campus-wide wi-fi allows a spot of net-surfing in the central green, while multi-millions have been poured into the ultra-modern student Hub (p23), new accommodation (p22), Olympic-class sports facilities (p24) and an iconic, inspirational new library (p7). All this ensures the 500-year-old University of Aberdeen has a clear vision for the future, as well as a prestigious past.

BON ACCORD

Knowing what Aberdeen's motto means really helps you feel at home. In case anybody asks it means: 'happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again'. Kind of fitting really.

While the University of Aberdeen's past is fascinating, the city's history has some gripping chapters too. In the 1300s the townspeople supported Robert the Bruce in his fight to free Scotland from English rule. The password they used at local fortifications was Bon Accord, which is still the city's motto today.

Five Nobel Prizes have been awarded for work carried out or begun at the university. Innovations include the life-saving drug insulin and the development of Magnetic Resonance Imaging – the MRI machines that help diagnose disease. The thinking that began here has in some cases changed the world.

Through the 20th century the University of Aberdeen's student numbers swelled. Major investments followed, including in the field of medical research with the custom-built Institute of Medical Sciences, completed in 2002, providing state-of-the-art facilities for researchers and students.

As the University of Aberdeen boomed so did the city. In the decades after the discovery of North Sea oil in the 1950s, Aberdeen became the hub of the UK's off-shore oil industry, and is dubbed Europe's energy capital. The port is still packed with brightly coloured oil-platform supply ships, record

cargos are being handled and the prosperity feeds through to the wider city, making it a cosmopolitan, vibrant place to study and live.

In the 21st century Aberdeen has hit its stride. Cool cafés, a buzzing night scene and some great

shopping, along with its location in one of the most beautiful sections of Scotland, combine to make this a wonderful city to study in. Adventure, excitement, history and culture – what more could you want from a place to study?



Botanic Gardens, Aberdeen

FOUND IN TRANSLATION

A trace of Aberdeen's rich history can be heard in Doric, a form of Scots whose historic phrases and lyrical pronunciations pepper some local's everyday speech. Here are a couple of handy phrases to start you off:

Fit like? – How are you?

Nae Bad – Pretty good



King's College, University of Aberdeen

FIND OUT MORE

Feeling inspired? Want to add your name to the University of Aberdeen's illustrious alumni, or just find out a little more? Here's how. The university's website (www.abdn.ac.uk/sras) has a step-by-step guide on how to apply, as well as links to all things studenty, from clubs and bars to accommodation and fees.

Useful WebSites

University of Aberdeen

www.abdn.ac.uk

Prospective Students

www.abdn.ac.uk/sras

Accommodation

www.abdn.ac.uk/accommodation

Aberdeen University

Students' Association

www.ausa.org.uk

Aberdeen City and Shire

www.aberdeencityandshire.com

Visit Scotland

www.visitscotland.com

Music, Arts & Film

www.thekiosque.co.uk

Adventure Sports

www.visitscotland.com/adventure

Transport: Aberdeen Airport

www.aberdeenairport.com

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