

Studying in Scotland

Since the 15th century, Scottish universities have been providing students with a high-quality academic experience. Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, and Aberdeen are among Scotland's best-known universities, but Scotland also has a specialist Conservatoire, a world-renown art school and an agricultural college.

In total, Scotland has 19 universities, and of these, 4 are in the top 6 oldest universities in the UK. The 19 universities in Scotland break down into three main types:

- **Ancient:** St Andrews, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen.
- **Modern:** institutions that relatively recently acquired university status such as Abertay and Robert Gordon.
- **Plate glass:** institutions given university status in the 1960s, offering a mix of traditional degrees and degrees related to industry. Examples include Strathclyde and Stirling.

Scottish universities are also home to world-class research facilities and Scottish researchers are responsible for several key discoveries and innovations such as the MRI scanner, the discovery of penicillin and the introduction of keyhole surgery. Currently, Scottish universities are particularly considered to be at the forefront of research in medical sciences, aeronautics, and computers.

UCAS applicants are usually aware of the fact that the UK degree structure requires early specialism, with applicants making clear at the point of application which course of study they wish to follow. However, studying in Scotland is unlike studying elsewhere in the UK. At English universities, a standard honours degree requires three years of study, while at Scottish universities, a standard honours degree requires four years of study. Although the total time graduates of both systems spend in primary, secondary and higher education is usually the same, typical English graduates spend one year more at secondary school and one year less at university than Scottish graduates.

Scottish degree programmes are designed to enable you to try different subject areas before specialising. After completion they can be awarded as a single or joint honours. The structure of a four-year Scottish degree is typically as follows:

- 1st Year – study up to 3 different subjects from within the same faculty (e.g. arts, social science or science)
- 2nd Year – as 1st Year, with the option to either continue with the same three subjects or drop one and take a 1st Year module in a different subject instead
- 3rd and 4th Years – study just one subject. This could be your original course choice or one of the ones you elected for in your 1st or 2nd Year.

Essential Reading

[Study in Scotland | Scotland.org](#)

[Study in Scotland — Universities Scotland](#)

Remember...

Be analytical - record your key learning outcomes regarding Scottish courses and then consider their relevance in your hierarchy of choice. This will enable you to make a truly informed decision on if studying in Scotland is right for you.