International Students
Student Information

Updated: August 2019

This information is provided by the International Students Advisor
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Welcome to Edinburgh

We are delighted that you have decided to study in Edinburgh – it is a city of history, culture and literature. Many of the most famous events in Scotland’s history took place within walking distance of the Seminary.

This guide has been compiled to help you through most of the formalities and procedures both before and after your arrival. You will find information ranging from the important immigration regulations to instructions on how to claim a VAT refund. Also included in this handbook are the contact details of the many services which are available to support you throughout your stay.

After reading this handbook, if you have any unanswered questions, please feel free to contact the Seminary Secretary at: offices@ets.ac.uk.

I hope you enjoy your time in Edinburgh and your studies at the Seminary.

Iver Martin
Principal, Edinburgh Theological Seminary

Welcome to the Seminary

Arriving in Edinburgh was both exciting a daunting. Edinburgh was clearly a magnificent city with so much to see and do but I did not know anyone and couldn’t find my way around the city. Twenty-nine years have passed, and Edinburgh remains my home. No matter how long you are in Edinburgh, I hope you have a wonderful stay that is full of learning and excitement.

I have experienced Edinburgh Theological Seminary (formerly, Free Church College) both as a student and now as a member of staff. Our desire is to make your study here as valuable and rewarding as possible.

We have been most fortunate to welcome students from all corners of the globe and the Seminary has been enriched by this diversity.

This guide is a brief introduction to some of the information you need to know as an international student. However, your best resources will be your fellow students and the staff and secretary at the Seminary.

So please ask for information and advice. If we don’t have the answers, we’ll know who to ask.

I wish you every blessing and encouragement as you study at ETS.

Bob Akroyd
International Students Advisor, Edinburgh Theological Seminary
Before You Leave Home

Applying for Your Student Visa

For up to date information, please consult [https://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration](https://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration)

You must have a valid passport and remember that entry clearance (a student visa/ Biometric Residence Permit) is mandatory for all nationals who intend to stay in the UK for longer than six months. You apply for this at your nearest British Embassy, High Commission, Consulate or Visa Application Centre in your country of residence. A full list of contact details can be found on [https://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration](https://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration)

To apply for your entry clearance, you will need the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) which you have received from Edinburgh Theological Seminary. You will also have to show the originals of any documents named on the CAS as being used as evidence to obtain the offer.

Money

Before you commence study at Edinburgh Theological Seminary, you must have adequate funds available to finance yourself to the end of your course. In addition to tuition fees, you must take into consideration board and lodgings, books, equipment, clothing, travel, holidays and entertainment. There is no limit to the amount of money you can bring into the UK, but your own country may operate exchange controls.

Additional Information

Consult the following websites to find valuable information on a wide range of subjects, including travel to the UK, accommodation, banking, budgeting, medical care, employment while a student, telephone and internet connections, the cost of a haircut and the price of fish-and-chips:

**The University of Glasgow**: [www.gla.ac.uk/international/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/international/)

**British Council Education UK**: [www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)

**Edinburgh Classifieds**: [www.edinburgh.gumtree.com](http://www.edinburgh.gumtree.com)

Tuberculosis Screening

If you are coming to the UK for more than six months, you may be required to provide a certificate (from an accredited clinic) to show you are free from infectious Tuberculosis (TB) before applying for your visa. Please check [https://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration](https://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration) for up-to-date requirements.
When You Arrive in Edinburgh

Edinburgh is a small city but it does have its own public transportation system, including a new tram system built in 2014.

You can take a bus, tram or a taxi from Edinburgh Airport into the city centre.

Overall, the UK has great public transportation, but it can be expensive. Train travel is the best and easiest way to travel around the UK. Students, no matter your age, are all eligible for a 16-25 rail card, which gives 1/3 off fares.

Within the UK, you can also use National Express or Megabus for reasonably priced bus journeys. Both of these services also offer student discounts.

Accommodation

Edinburgh Theological Seminary is non-residential and students are expected to source their own accommodation. You will be required to sign a lease. This is a binding contract, which means that you must remain in the accommodation and pay the agreed rent for the period stated.

A limited amount of accommodation is available in Church-owned flats. For more information, please contact: sharon@freechurch.org

Carrubbers Christian Centre, a local evangelical church, runs a helpful website to connect people and places to live in Edinburgh, www.carrubbers.org/resources/accommodation

Other accommodation web-sites include:
Studentpad Edinburgh: http://www.studentpad.co.uk/Company
Edinburgh University Students’ Association: http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/adviceplace/accommodation/
Edinburgh Solicitors’ Property Centre (ESPC): www.espc.com
Edinburgh Classifieds: www.edinburgh.gumtree.com

Cost of living

The British Council has very helpful advice on making a budget to live and study in the U.K. Please consult: https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/planning/money-costs

Money

One pound sterling (£1) is divided into one hundred pence (100p). Coins issued are 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, £1 and £2 and notes to the value of £5, £10, £20, £50, £100. Scottish banks issue their own notes and you can also use Bank of England notes. Sometimes Scottish notes are not acceptable outside Scotland, so if you are travelling, ask your bank for Bank of England notes.

Banking

If you are studying at Edinburgh Theological Seminary for more than one semester, you should be eligible to open a basic bank account. Contact your local bank for more details.
**Mobile Phones**

There are many different deals for mobile phones. You may wish to consult: 
[https://www.moneysupermarket.com/mobile-phones/](https://www.moneysupermarket.com/mobile-phones/)

**Internet Services**

All Edinburgh Theological Seminary students have email and internet access via the Seminary’s own Computer suite. If you would also like to have internet in your flat, please consult: [www.uswitch.com](http://www.uswitch.com)

**Postal Services**

Letters and parcels are carried by the Royal Mail. For more information, see [www.royalmail.com](http://www.royalmail.com). You can also buy postage stamps at newsagents, supermarkets and other shops.

**VAT refunds**

If you are normally domiciled or live outside of the European Union (EU), but have a visa to remain in the UK to complete a period of study, you may be able to claim a VAT refund on certain goods that you personally export from the EU. For more information, visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www hmrc.gov.uk).

**Insurance**

If you have not already done so before leaving your own country, you are strongly advised to take out some form of insurance policy to cover the cost of your personal property should it be lost or stolen. You may wish to consult: [https://www.comparethemarket.com/home-insurance/contents/](https://www.comparethemarket.com/home-insurance/contents/)

**Photographs**

After your arrival, you will need some passport-style photographs. There are automatic photo machines at main railway stations and some post offices. Specialist photo shops also provide this service quickly.

**Electricity**

Electrical current in the UK is 240 volts at 50 cycles. If you come from a country which operates on a different voltage, you should ensure that you are equipped with the appropriate transformer. Alternatively, there are discount electrical stores and supermarkets where you can buy electrical items.

**National Health Service (NHS)**

For information on local health services, see the NHS Scotland web-site: [www.show.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk). Shortly after you arrive in Edinburgh, you must register with a doctor or GP (General Practitioner) near your accommodation. Please do not wait until you are ill.

When you applied for your Visa, you would have had paid a Health Surcharge. If you are a full-time student in Scotland and have paid your surcharge then you will not have to pay NHS (National Health Service) medical charges. Consultations with a doctor and hospital treatment will not cost you anything. This applies to your spouse and family, if they have paid a Health Surcharge too. In Scotland, there are no prescription charges for medication.
Dental Treatment

For a list of local NHS dentists, visit [www.nhs24.com/findlocal](http://www.nhs24.com/findlocal). Please note that you must be registered with a doctor/GP before being entitled to be treated by a dentist under the National Health Service.

Eye Treatment

If you want to have your eyesight tested, make an appointment for a test with any qualified optician. The eye test is free, and costs will vary depending on what you may require (eyeglasses, contact lenses, etc).

Student Welfare

The Seminary assists international students during their period of study. Your first point of contact is our Seminary Secretary or our International Students Advisor. You can also access support services through our partner institution, the University of Glasgow, [https://www.gla.ac.uk/study/studentlife/support/](https://www.gla.ac.uk/study/studentlife/support/).

Directors of Studies

Every undergraduate student is allocated to a Director of Studies whose prime responsibility is to guide students in their course of studies. The Director of Studies can also help students with other queries or concerns pertaining to their course of studies and overall student experience.

Disability Service

The Seminary welcomes enquiries from any international student applicant who has a disability. This includes dyslexia; or any other specific learning difficulty, a chronic medical or mental health condition, sensory impairments or access and mobility difficulties. Please contact the Seminary Secretary directly for further advice: [offices@ets.ac.uk](mailto:offices@ets.ac.uk).

English Language Support

All International students are required to attain at least IELTS 6.5 before they are accepted for our main undergraduate and postgraduate programs. Members of staff can help students for whom English is not their native language. A writing lab is also available to all students. This is free of charge. If you require additional courses to increase your English proficiency, please contact the Seminary Secretary. Please note, you are responsible for the cost for any additional English tuition.

UK Visa and Immigration

ETS is a sponsor of international students within the UK immigration system (known as ‘Tier 4’ students) and is required to evidence Tier 4 student attendance and engagement. ETS is required to demonstrate that sponsored students are attending and engaging in their programme of study and that there are active procedures in place to identify and address attendance/engagement patterns of concern.

The ETS Tier 4 Student Attendance and Engagement Policy outlines how ETS will do this. This is available on ets.ac.uk/MyETS.

This policy also supports the improvement of the overall student experience by identifying where students may be experiencing difficulties and ensuring timely intervention and appropriate support.
All international students are required to bring their passports, when registering at ETS. We need to take a photocopy of the pages containing the Passport Number and photograph and also photocopy the Biometric Residence Permit (BRP). These copies will be kept by the Seminary Secretary. You must collect your BRP from the designated Post Office branch within 10 days of arrival in the UK.

**Tier 4 Student Responsibilities**

1. Students with a Tier 4 visa must ensure they have obtained the appropriate visa for studying in the UK in advance of enrolling at ETS.
2. Students with a Tier 4 visa must ensure the Seminary holds their most up to date contact details on the student record. This can be updated via the student’s record on SIMS.
3. Tier 4 visa holders are expected to be in attendance on their chosen programme and actively engaged with it, as required by relevant Degree Regulations, and Programme Handbooks.
4. The attendance and engagement of Tier 4 visa students will require a minimum of ten contact points for each academic year of their study. For this reason, you must ensure that you do not miss any of the required ‘Contact Points’ as an undergraduate student (Registration, Semester Visa Checks, Weekly Lecture/Seminar Attendance, Submission of Course Work and Examinations) or as a postgraduate student (Registration, Semester Visa Checks, PG Seminar Attendance and logged meetings with your supervisor).
5. These ‘Contact Points’ are detailed annually in the **ETS Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Plan for Tier 4 Students**.
6. If there are any concerns regarding this, students should approach the ETS Office who may contact the Programme Leader for the Bachelor of Theology or the Director of Postgraduate Studies as required.

**ETS Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Plan for Tier 4 Students 2019-2020.**

**Undergraduate Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester 1</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Semester 2</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>02/09/2019</td>
<td>Visa Check</td>
<td>02/09/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa Check</td>
<td>02/09/2019</td>
<td>Visa Check</td>
<td>28/01/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Studies</td>
<td>Twice per semester as arranged</td>
<td>Director of Studies</td>
<td>Twice per semester as arranged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Attendance</td>
<td>02/09/2019</td>
<td>Weekly Attendance</td>
<td>28/01/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>09/09/2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>04/02/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16/09/2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>11/02/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23/09/2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>18/02/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30/09/2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>25/02/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>08/10/2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>03/03/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21/10/2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>17/03/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28/10/2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>24/03/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>04/11/2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>31/03/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11/11/2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>07/04/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18/11/2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>14/04/2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weekly attendance is recorded Tuesday -Friday during teaching weeks in each semester, each week will count as one contact point.
Edinburgh Theological Seminary: International Students Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>25/11/2019</th>
<th>21/04/2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Work</strong></td>
<td>As per Assessment Timetable</td>
<td>Course Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>As per Assessment Timetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examinations</strong></td>
<td>As per Examination Timetable</td>
<td>Examinations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>As per Examination Timetable</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Postgraduate Students (Research)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester 1 Date</th>
<th>Semester 2 Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration (Sep)</td>
<td>Registration (Jan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/09/2019</td>
<td>28/01/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa Check</td>
<td>Visa Check</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/09/2019</td>
<td>28/01/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Postgraduate Studies</td>
<td>Director of Postgraduate Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per semester as arranged</td>
<td>Once per semester as arranged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG Seminar Attendance</td>
<td>PG Seminar Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As per PG Seminar Timetable (usually, five per semester)</td>
<td>As per PG Seminar Timetable (usually, five per semester)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision Meetings</td>
<td>Supervision Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision Logs taken at regular intervals (usually, four times a semester)</td>
<td>Supervision Logs taken at regular intervals (usually, four times a semester)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Postgraduate Students (Taught)

The ‘PG Taught’ programmes are not classroom based, but delivered by and directed reading and one-to-one supervision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester 1 Date</th>
<th>Semester 2 Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration (Sep)</td>
<td>Registration (Jan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/09/2019</td>
<td>28/01/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa Check</td>
<td>Visa Check</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/09/2019</td>
<td>28/01/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Postgraduate Studies</td>
<td>Director of Postgraduate Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per semester as arranged</td>
<td>Once per semester as arranged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG Seminar Attendance</td>
<td>PG Seminar Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As per PG Seminar Timetable (usually, fortnightly)</td>
<td>As per PG Seminar Timetable (usually, fortnightly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision Meetings</td>
<td>Supervision Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision Logs taken before and after submission of Assignments as per Programme Assignment Timetable</td>
<td>Supervision Logs taken before and after submission of Assignments as per Programme Assignment Timetable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your Privileges and Responsibilities

As a resident of a new city and a new country, you have both privileges and responsibilities.

All Tenants

Council Tax is a tax on where you live. Students are not automatically exempt but may qualify for an exemption. Please consult: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20111/discounts_and_exemptions

TV Licence

If students watch or record programmes as they’re being shown on TV or live on an online TV service, they need to be covered by a TV Licence. That includes a TV, laptop, tablet, mobile phone, games console, digital box, DVD/VHS recorder or anything else. For more information: http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/

Car Owners

If you own a car in the UK, you must pay road tax and car insurance. You may require a parking permit from Edinburgh City Council. Please consult: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20275/parking

Some non-EU Nationals: Registering with the Police

Your passport will be endorsed on entry to the UK if you are required to register with the police. If your passport is endorsed in this way, then you must register with the Police within 7 days of your arrival in the UK. For more information, please see: https://www.gov.uk/register-with-the-police

In Edinburgh, you can register with the police at:
Nationality Department
Police Headquarters
Fettes Avenue
Edinburgh EH4 1RB
Tel: 0131 311 3171
http://www.scotland.police.uk/your-community/the-lothians-and-scottish-borders/

Working in the UK while You Study

If you can work while studying, this will be clearly detailed on your visa. The following government website is helpful: www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk.
Important Contact Addresses & Phone Numbers

**Emergency and Ambulance Service**
Dial 999 (free call) for immediate assistance from fire brigade, police or ambulance.

**NHS24** is a branch of the National Health Service which provides 24-hour telephone access to medical advice from qualified professionals.  [www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com), 08454 24 24 24

**Citizens Advice Bureau**, [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk)
58 Dundas Street, EH3 6QZ
Trained volunteers give advice to the general public on any matter.

**Department of Transport**, (DVLA Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency), [www.dvla.gov.uk](http://www.dvla.gov.uk)
DCS Correspondence, Team, Swansea SA6 7JL, 0300 790 6801

**UK Visas and Immigration**, [https://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration](https://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration)
Lunar House, 40 Wellesley Road, Croydon CR9 2BY, 0870 606 7766

**Scottish Refugee Council**, [www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)
5 Cadogan Square (170 Blythswood Court), Glasgow G2 7PH, 0141 248 9799

**United Kingdom Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)**, [www.ukcisa.org.uk](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk)
9-17 St Alban’s Place, Islington, London N1 0NX, 0203 131 3576

**Embassies and Consulates in Scotland and the UK**

Please see: [https://www.visitscotland.com/about/practical-information/embassies-consulates/](https://www.visitscotland.com/about/practical-information/embassies-consulates/)
Some Local Churches

There are many churches which are close to the Seminary. Here are some you may wish to attend:

**St Columba's Free Church of Scotland**
https://stcolumbas.freechurch.org/
Johnston Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2PW

**Buccleuch Free Church of Scotland**
www.buccleuchfreechurch.co.uk
10 West Crosscauseway, Edinburgh, EH8 9JP

**Leith Free Church**
www.leithfreechurch.org.uk
9 Casselbank Street, Leith, Edinburgh, EH6 5HA

**Charlotte Baptist Chapel**
www.charlottechapel.org
58 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh, EH2 4RT

**Chalmers Church**
www.chalmerschurch.org
69b Morningside Road, EH10 4AZ

**Niddrie Community Church**
www.niddrie.org
12 Hay Drive, Edinburgh, EH16 4RY

**Holyrood Evangelical Church**
http://holyroodevangelical.org/

**Carrubbers Christian Centre**
www.carrubbers.org
65 High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1SR

**Cornerstone – Free Church of Scotland**
https://cornerstone-edinburgh.com/
140 Morningside Road, Edinburgh EH10 4PX

**Christchurch – Free Church of Scotland**
http://www.christchurchedinburgh.org/
68, Britwell Crescent, Edinburgh, EH7 6PT

**Grace Church Leith – Free Church of Scotland**
http://www.gracechurcheith.org/
Ebenezer Church, 31 Bangor Road, Leith

**Bruntsfield Evangelical Church**
http://bruntsfield.org.uk/
70 Leamington Terrace, Edinburgh, EH10 4JU
Places of Interest

Explore and enjoy Edinburgh. Take the opportunity to visit Scotland and to meet its people.

**Sightseeing in Edinburgh**

**Edinburgh Information Centre**, 3 Princes St, Edinburgh, EH2 2QP
https://www.visitscotland.com/info/services/edinburgh-icentre-p234441

**Edinburgh & Lothians Tourist Information**, www.edinburgh.org

**Edinburgh World Heritage Site**, www.ewht.org.uk

**Edinburgh Castle**, www.edinburghcastle.gov.uk

**Greyfriars Kirkyard & Greyfriars Bobby**, www.greyfriarskirk.com, Greyfriars Place, EH1 2QQ,

**National Galleries of Scotland (Free Admission)**, www.nationalgalleries.org/
- **Scottish National Gallery**, The Mound, EH2 2EL
- **Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art**, 75 Belford Road, EH4 3DR
- **Scottish National Portrait Gallery**, 1 Queen St, EH2 1JD

**National Library of Scotland** (Free Admission), https://www.nls.uk/, George IV Bridge, EH1 1EW

**National Museum of Scotland** (Free Admission), www.nms.ac.uk/, Chambers St, EH1 1JF

**Palace of Holyroodhouse**, www.royalcollection.org.uk/visit/palace-of-holyroodhouse, Canongate, The Royal Mile, EH8 8DX

**Royal Botanic Garden** (Free Admission), www.rbge.org.uk, 20A Inverleith Row, EH3 5LR

**Scotch Whisky Heritage Centre**, www.scotchwhiskyexperience.co.uk, 354 Castlehill, EH1 2NE


**Sightseeing in Glasgow**

**Tourist Information Office**, 170 Buchanan Street, Glasgow, 0141 204 4400
Get the Most out of Glasgow Life: www.glasgowlife.org.uk/Pages/default.aspx

**Glasgow Museums** – Please see: https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums#venues


**Some Helpful Websites for Travel and Tourism**

**Visit Scotland**, www.visitscotland.com – Scotland’s National Tourism Organisation,

**The National Trust for Scotland**, www.nts.org.uk/Home

**Historic Scotland**, www.historic-scotland.gov.uk