

Costings for Exchange at Glasgow Caledonian University

What costs do incoming exchange students need to cover?¹

1. Accommodation (*Essential*)

Caledonian Court

For those students staying in GCU run accommodation '[Caledonian Court](#)', the 2024/25 prices are:

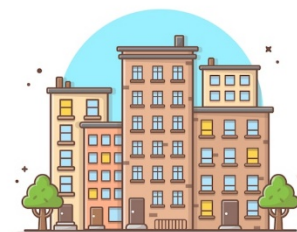
- £125 per week (shared bathroom)
- £148 per week (en-suite)

The above costs include utilities (water, gas, electricity and internet bills).

Exchange students joining GCU for a single-semester only will have a 20/21 week contract for accommodation. Contracts for the full academic year are for 41 weeks.



Please note, if you receive an offer of accommodation from the GCU accommodation office, you will need to make an advanced payment of £650 to confirm acceptance of the offer (prior to your arrival in Glasgow).



Private Accommodation – Privately Run Halls



As an alternative to GCU run accommodation, there are plenty of options for privately-run student halls of resident in the nearby area.

Privately-run student halls tend to be slightly more expensive than Caledonian Court, however they are a good alternative option as they are specifically tailored for students and their costs are usually inclusive of utility bills.

The website [My Student Halls](#) allows you to search for privately run student halls and provides a breakdown of the weekly costs.



We would strongly suggest that you read over any contract for privately-run student halls very carefully! If you are in any doubt about what the contract covers or what the cancellation policy is, please ask for advice before signing any contract.

2. Food, Household Goods & Clothing (*Essential*)



[GCU's funding and finance team](#) estimate that grocery and essential shopping will cost on average £220 per month. Couple this with other essential items like clothing, etc. we would advise that food, household goods and clothing will come to around £300 per month. Of course, the amount is dependent on your lifestyle as well as the level of living standard you want to maintain.

¹ Costs listed here are an estimate – they could be lower or higher depending on your spending habits. The items listed here are also not exhaustive – there are likely to be other costs and charges throughout your exchange period.

To see which grocery stores are cheapest, we recommend viewing the website [Which?](#). This site compares how much the UK's biggest supermarkets charge for a trolley of groceries, including everything from bread to toothpaste.

Generally speaking, Lidl and Aldi tend to be the cheapest supermarkets, with Waitrose being the most expensive. (The nearest Lidl and Aldi supermarkets are about 15 mins walk from GCU).

Tip! There will be some items everyone in your halls/house will use, which you can buy cheaper in bulk and split the cost (for example, toilet roll, rice and tea bags).

Tip! Plan your meals for the week ahead (and stick to the plan). You'll be surprised how much you can save by avoiding spontaneous takeaways or quick-but-pricey ready meals.

3. Transport (*Mode of Transport Optional*)

Subway

Glasgow has a small subway system which connects the city centre to the West End and south of the River Clyde. (The nearest station to GCU is Cowcaddens).

Cost: Single - £1.80 / Return - £3.40 / All day - £4.30



Tip! To save money on subway travel, we recommend you sign up for a [Smartcard](#). The card costs £3 to set up, but then gives a discount on all fares thereafter, for example a Single - £1.60 / All-Day - £3.10. You can also buy weekly and monthly passes which bring the daily cost down further.

Bus Travel

In Glasgow, there are several bus companies responsible for different routes. Below we have noted the most common bus companies and provided a link to their ticket price information:

- First Bus - <https://www.firstbus.co.uk/greater-glasgow/tickets/ticket-prices>
- McGill's - <https://www.mcgillsbuses.co.uk/fares-and-tickets>
- Stagecoach - <https://www.stagecoachbus.com/regionaltickets/west-scotland/glasgow/singlesandreturns>

Glasgow Tripper also offers a multi-operator ticket here: <https://glasgowtripper.co.uk/>

Tip! **If you are under the age of 22 and live in Scotland for at least 6 months a year you are entitled to apply for a free bus pass which is accepted on most bus services in Scotland.** You can find more information on how to apply for the bus pass on the Scottish Government [website](#).

Train

As with buses, there are several companies which run train services throughout Glasgow and beyond. For services in and around Glasgow and Scotland, the most common provider is [ScotRail](#).

To go further afield into England, there are a few options such as [Avanti](#), [LNER](#), [TransPennine](#) and [Caledonian Sleeper](#).



Travel during peak times can increase tickets costs so we would recommend where possible choosing an off-peak ticket in order to save money.



For discounts on rail travel within or outwith Glasgow, you can buy a 16-25 (or 26-30) [railcard](#) for £30 which in turn gives you 1/3 off a full-price ticket. (Be mindful – This card cannot be used before 10am on weekdays!)



**16-25
Railcard**

Cycling

Glasgow is home to a fantastic cycle hire scheme, operated by OVO Bikes. Bike hire is available 24/7 from many locations across the city, [visit OVO Bikes' website](#) for information on how to get started.

For a handy guide on where to find OVO Bike Hire stations, bike racks and cycle routes, [visit Glasgow City Council's GIS Map](#). (Here you can click on icons to find the nearest hire points or use the search bar.)

Standard OVO Bikes Pricing:

- Pay as you ride: £1 for 20 mins (maximum charge per day £10)
- Monthly: £12 (First 30 Minutes - £0, Additional 30 Minutes - 50p, Maximum Charge per day - £5)
- Annual: £78 (First 30 Minutes - £0, Additional 30 Minutes - 50p, Maximum Charge per day - £5)

Walking



Glasgow is a very walkable city, especially in the city centre, so you can easily explore it on foot whilst taking in the beautiful buildings and architecture around you.

We recommend the following webpage from 'People Make Glasgow which sets out the different neighbourhoods in Glasgow and points out the must see attractions and places to eat and drink: <https://peoplemakeglasgow.com/neighbourhoods>

4. Visa Costs (Essential)

Student Visa (for studies over 6 months)

It costs:

- £490 to apply for a Student visa from outside the UK²

You'll also have to [pay the healthcare surcharge](#) as part of your application. How much you pay depends on how long your visa lasts. [Check how much you'll have to pay](#) before you apply.

As part of the application, you will be required to meet the [financial requirements](#), which involved proving you have access to sufficient funds.



² Accurate on date of publishing 14/02/2024, however subject to change <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa>

On this visa type, you may be able to take up employment. How many hours per week you can work depends on what you're studying and whether you're working in or out of term-time. You cannot, however, claim [public funds](#) (benefits) and pensions, work in certain jobs, for example as a professional sports person or sports coach or be self-employed.

Standard Visit Visa

To apply for a Standard Visitor visa in advance (in cases where you are a [visa national](#)), it currently costs £115³.

It is important to note that there is no set level on the amount of funds you will need to show in order to acquire a visitor visa in advance, however UKVI officers are advised to "Check the applicant has access to sufficient resources to maintain and accommodate themselves adequately for the whole of their planned visit to the UK or for the period of any application for permission to stay"⁴.

If you are a non-visa national, then you will not need to apply in advance and pay the application fee.

5. Social Activities and Entertainment

[GCU's funding and finance team](#) estimate that the average monthly cost for social activities and entertainment is £120, however the actual amount will differ based on your interests and spending habits. Below we have noted some possible costs:

Gym

GCU's on Campus Gym ([the ARC](#)) offers monthly memberships of £15 (or £10 per month for the 'early bird' option). Other city centre gym options include [PureGym](#) (£15.99 for an off-peak package) and [The Gym Group](#) (£15.99 a month for off-peak membership). Many gyms in the city centre also offer additional discounts to students, so it's worth looking into this further if you are interested in signing up.



Cinema



If you are interested in cinema, many of the chain companies offer a monthly package for unlimited number of films, often working out cheaper than buying individual tickets. For example, [Odeon](#) (£17.99 a month) and [Cineworld](#) (£16.99 – nearest to GCU). [Vue](#) cinema also offer discounted tickets, without a monthly package.

Student Societies

GCU's Student Union hosts several different societies, some relating to your programme of studies, and others that are more based around hobbies and interests. You can view the list of societies here: <https://www.gcustudents.co.uk/societies>. Many of the societies have a one-off joining fee of £3-£5.

³ Accurate on date of publishing 14/02/2024, however subject to change <https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visit-guidance/visit-caseworker-guidance-accessible>

Nightlife

If you are interested to explore Glasgow's bars and restaurants, we recommend the website [Design My Night](#). Here you can view a list of recommended places, as well as viewing menus and prices.



An average pint in Glasgow is said to cost £3.93 meanwhile, the average price for a cocktail comes in at £7. For a 'fast-food combo meal' the average price in Glasgow is £5.56.

[GCU's funding and finance team](#) suggest an average of £120 per month is spent by students on social activities.

Subscriptions

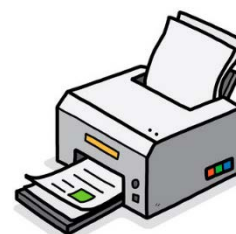
Don't forget if you have any subscriptions such as for streaming services, you'll need to cover the cost of these whilst away too or cancel before arrival.

6. Books and Printing

[GCU's funding and finance team](#) estimate that the average monthly cost for books and printing is £40.



You can choose to take out books from the [GCU Library](#) or one of Glasgow's many [public libraries](#) to help you save on the cost of books. You will also gain access to some online journal articles for free with your student email address.



Printing on Campus⁵

Costs for printing on-campus at GCU:

A4 single-sided page black and white laser	£0.05
A4 double-sided page black and white laser	£0.08
A4 single-sided page colour laser	£0.35
A4 double-sided page colour laser	£0.56
A3 single-sided black and white laser	£0.10
A3 colour	£0.70

7. Mobile Phone



International students have plenty of choices when it comes to phone coverage in the UK.

You may wish to purchase a mobile phone in the UK. There are two main options:

- 'Pay-as-you-go' where you buy the phone and separately purchase 'top-up' credit when you need it
- A contract where the phone is often free or considerably discounted and you pay a monthly fee for an allocated amount of calls, texts and mobile data usage.

⁵ <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/support/it/printing>

There are many network providers to choose from so it is advisable to undertake some research online or visit a mobile phone shop to discuss your options. SIM providers in the UK include:

- [EE](#)
- [giffgaff](#)
- [O2](#)
- [Three](#)
- [Vodafone](#)
- [Voxi](#)

You may be able to use your current mobile phone in the UK. Check with your mobile phone provider before arriving if the phone will work in the UK and whether there are any additional costs. Alternatively if your phone is 'unlocked' and compatible, you could buy an international or UK SIM card to use your existing phone.

Additional Notes and Resources

Comparing Costs in Glasgow to Home

We recommend using [Numbeo's Cost of Living calculator](#) to look further into the average cost of everyday items and charges in Glasgow.

You can also use their [comparison page](#) to see how the costs in Glasgow compare to your costs at your home institution.



Student Discounts

If you have an ID card from GCU, this will be accepted by many places for a student discount.

However, for online discounts - and access to other exclusive discounts - you may need another card. For example:

- [Totum](#): offers more than 350 UK discounts on big and small brands, and also acts as a proof-of-age ID. There are several cards on offer: a one-year Totum digital membership is free (but has fewer discounts), while the classic student card costs £14.99 for a year.
 - Any paid memberships also come with a free Tastecard - a dining loyalty scheme, where you can find deals like 2 for 1 at participating restaurants, up to 50% off pizza delivery and up to 40% off at the cinema.
- [UniDays](#): this is an app rather than a plastic card, featuring offers and discounts on everything from clothing, tech and food and drink, and it's completely free to use. Anyone who's 16+ and studying at a university, sixth form or college can use it.
- [Student Beans](#): this app and website is also free to use, with hundreds of discounts and advice articles for students.

International Student Identity Card (ISIC): this card opens up tens of thousands of discounts in more than 130 countries. It costs £12 if you're happy to hold the card on your phone, or £15 if you also want a physical card.

It's worth noting that each service offers its own exclusive online discounts, so you'll get different deals with each.

Resources for Additional Money Saving Tips

- [How to Spend Less at the Supermarket](#)
- [Save the Student](#)
- [UCAS - Student Budgeting Tips](#)
- [Student Information Scotland](#)

Importance of Budgeting

Although Glasgow may be less expensive to live in day-to-day than some other major cities in the UK, you may find that living here is more expensive than in your home country; particularly in relation to suitable accommodation. It is important that you plan your budget and take into consideration all expenses you may have while studying here. You will not be able to access any public funds.