

Ask Aberdeen Episode 16 Transcript

Georgie [00:00:07] I'm Georgie.

Michaela [00:00:08] And I'm Michaela,

Georgie [00:00:08] and we're here to tell you about the University of Aberdeen,

Michaela [00:00:11] in each episode, we will discuss frequently asked questions about topics such as applications

Georgie [00:00:15] go abroad,.

Michaela [00:00:17] Student life,.

Georgie [00:00:18] Sports and Societies,

Michaela [00:00:19] Budgeting for Uni and

Georgie [00:00:21] life in Aberdeen.

Michaela [00:00:22] We will be speaking to current Aberdeen students, those who really know what it's like to study and live here.

Georgie [00:00:27] And we'll be getting exclusive tips from members of our amazing staff.

Michaela [00:00:31] Join us for this episode of Ask Aberdeen.

Michaela [00:00:36] Hey, welcome to the podcast. Thank you for joining us today. This episode is specifically for our North American listeners who are interested in our undergraduate programmes. We have recorded a previous episode with one of our current students whose name is Jack. He's from California. And he offered an amazing insight into what studying in Aberdeen is like from his perspective. However, in this episode, we will go into a little more detail about the application process, organising finances and explain some of the terminology that you might hear us use in the other episodes, which you might be unfamiliar with. I am joined by an expert on everything, North American art, which is our officer, Amy.

Amy [00:01:14] Hi there. Thanks for having me.

Michaela [00:01:16] So can you describe a little bit about what your job is?

Amy [00:01:18] Yeah. So I'm the regional manager for the Americas. And what it really means is that I look after all the students that have questions about the university or want to apply to the university, anything they really need. I'm kind of their go to person for information, for contacting the university and also just helping them with their journey of figuring out what university that is right for them, making an application and then actually getting here to campus. I think once students are here on campus, they're fully integrated to the support system of the university. So I really do lots of different things from like answering basic questions to going out to actual events and providing really basic information to new students, looking at different options to really in depth kind of one to

one calls that I do with students to get all the questions they have answered at any point in that journey that they have.

Michaela [00:02:11] And you don't sound like you're from Scotland. Where are you from yourself?

Amy [00:02:14] Yeah, I'm not from Scotland. I'm originally from Southern California, a place called Riverside, which is kind of outside of L.A. and I've been an international student myself. I came and studied in Scotland for my undergrad degree and my masters, and then have been working in kind of university life in Scotland ever since.

Michaela [00:02:34] So you just you do know absolutely everything there is to know, which is fantastic, because you can then tell us what the difference is between the undergraduate degree that we have in Scotland and the degree that's in the US, because while they're both sort of four years as a standard, they're actually quite different, aren't they?

Amy [00:02:52] Yeah, they are quite different in the sense that usually you need to know what you want to do or vaguely what you want to do when you apply to the university in the U.K. And so you do apply for a major from the get go. But we are kind of similar to a liberal arts university in the sense that you do pick up some electives. So you usually have the option to pick up some subjects that are outside of your major unless you're doing something very, very specialised, in which case you would have a really strict kind of set classes that you need to take to graduate with the degree that you want to do where in the US you tend to do a general ed electives and then make a decision on your major usually in the first two years of your university and then specialise in those last two. So it is different than that, that you need to know what you want to do from day one. But we still have that flexibility that you get to try new things. And then if you did want to change your degree, you can do that in the first two years, providing you've studied for that subject from day one and then you can go on and specialise and major, you major from day one, but you really do really specialised work in your last two years. So it is kind of similar in that that specialism in the last two years is still the same flexibility in the first two years, still the same, but it's a little bit more focussed here in school.

Michaela [00:04:15] You don't have to take those maths 101.

Amy [00:04:17] Yeah, that was a big draw for me of not having to do General Ed, like no more foreign languages and no more maths.

Michaela [00:04:24] Yeah, that's I think that's definitely a draw for Scotland because, you know, you can take some management classes, you can take some Spanish classes, you can take, you know, history classes, but you don't have to take the stuff you don't want to take.

Amy [00:04:36] Exactly. Yeah, exactly. Especially when you're in you're spending so much time and money to come to university. You're really picking what you want to do and really kind of get the opportunity to really showcase what you can do and what you're interested in, which is pretty exciting.

Michaela [00:04:51] And you are using some of some of the wording there that we use in Scotland, which is, for example, like we call things like a degree or programme. And can

you explain if we talk about like modules and classes, what our modules were, our classes?

Amy [00:05:06] Yeah. So I feel like I'm very much one that uses all of them interchangeably. But we use module a lot here in Scotland and a module essentially is your entire class. So it's things like all of your classwork, your lectures, your seminars, there's a whole little module, but really it means your classes. So when you go into class and you go into lectures, it's just your classes. Sometimes it gets called courses as well. But some universities will also exchange courses as to mean their degree, which essentially just means your major, so they all kind of get used together, but modules tends to mean classes, courses or a degree tends to mean your major. But we also have joint degrees or combined degrees, and that essentially is a double major where you're actually specialising in two two subjects that you're going to have at the end of the day on your degree certificate. It's going to have both of them. So it's like a double major and it does naturally tend to have a major and a minor. So you tend to do a little bit more classes in one than the other. But we call them a joint degree or a double degree.

Michaela [00:06:17] And you mentioned their tutorials. You go to lectures. How frequent should we be expecting these lectures and tutorials? Like what is the what is the sort of split between those two, you know?

Amy [00:06:28] Yeah. So in your kind of early days of university, it tends to be a lot more lecture heavy and that you're going to be in a classroom or you're you'll have it online depending on how big your classes is, especially this coming year with the pandemic where we are trying to have students come on class and have kind of touch points in person. Larger lectures might still be held online. You tend to have a lot more of those in your first couple of years. And then when you specialise in your classes, get smaller, you tend to have more seminars and tutorials. But I think most classes you should expect to have both a mixture of those kind of big lectures, smaller seminars, tutorials or labs, if you're doing anything science based. But it's pretty much I always tell students, expect to have class Monday to Friday, but you should have less kind of actual classroom hours. Then you would say in a traditional US or Canadian university where they tend to have a lot more kind of class time. You should have fewer class hours here, but actually have a lot more independent study to do. So taking time in the evenings or in between classes to do reading for your summer tutorials, practising, you know, reading scientific journals, if you're doing a science to to kind of know what's out there and what's interesting to you, that you can pull back then to your actual kind of degree or coursework that you have. And so you are expected to do a lot kind of independent learning in addition to those class hours you have, but is definitely less class hours, day to day than you might expect from a North American university.

Michaela [00:08:05] You know, there's definitely reliance on you to actually do stuff in your own spare time. However, that suits a lot of people, you know, learning on your own terms. And let's talk about how does one apply? So in the US, CommonApp is quite a common way to apply. However, in the UK, we use UCAS. So what do people use to apply?

Amy [00:08:28] Yeah, so it really depends on the individual. For our American students in particular, they do have the option to use either CommonApp or UCAS. They are very similar in the sense that you can take one application and send it to multiple schools. So if you're applying through CommonApp, you can apply to other schools in the UK or other places in the world using that one application. It does have a fee attached to it. It's about seventy five dollars to apply using that. And it's a really good option if you are only looking

at Aberdeen like I would only recommend using CommonApp if, you know, Aberdeen is the only university in the UK that you were looking to apply to. UCAS is pretty much the CommonApp for the UK. You have one application and you can send that to either five universities or five courses. So if you're in between two courses, you might send kind of two of your choices of the five to one institution, but for two different degrees. And if you wanted to, you know, you're going to do history. That's what you're interested in. You can send that application to five institutions and that's where it really comes down to applying to the degree, because you won't be able to talk about why you want to go to these five different universities. You really want to talk about why that degree is right for you. And but every single UK university is on UCAS. And that's why if you are looking at more than one university in the UK, UCAS is the one to go for. It is much more affordable. It's about equivalent to about thirty five US dollars at the moment, that one application to go to five institutions. So it's much more affordable, but not everyone's only CommonApp. So that's why it's great. If you are looking at more than one place, use UCAS so that you can apply to all the universities you're interested in all at once. But you are limited to the five and you can only use one or the other. So if you if they're coming up and then apply through UCAS, we actually have to input your data into you cos at some point, so we will definitely know if you have tried to apply to more than five university. So it's just not worth it. It's definitely worth using one of the other. But UCAS is actually a really great resource, even if you do choose to go through CommonApp because it has information about how to make personal statements for the U.K., how the whole system works, and it's just a really useful tool to search degrees, what's offered and just how the UK system is set up. So even if you do go through CommonApp, always have a look at that UCAS website. That's what I recommend.

Michaela [00:11:01] We're going to put this in the show notes. And we've also done an episode on just how to write your personal statements on the show. So I'm going to link this in the show notes as well so you can listen to that if you're looking for some advice on how to actually write your personal statements and what goes into an application. So it might be quite useful, but talking about deadlines, are there any deadlines people should be aware of when it comes to applying?

Amy [00:11:26] Yeah, I think if you're looking at medicine, that's one of those degrees that has a really strict deadline of the 15th of October. And that degree you have to apply through UCAS. So you have an option on that one medicine 15th of October through UCAS. That's the only option you have available if you are looking for anything besides medicine. We actually have a 30th of June deadline on. You have you will see an earlier deadline in January. I think it's the 13th to the 15th.

Michaela [00:11:55] I never remember they actually moved it now to the third Wednesday in January. So it is now late January that the deadline for UK based students.

Amy [00:12:04] Yeah. So that's UK based students. So you will see it advertised everywhere on all the university websites on UCAS that January deadline. But actually as an international student, you have until the 30th of June if you wanted to wait that long to apply.

Michaela [00:12:21] And while I'm applying, do I need to submit my SAT or scores or is Aberdeen Test optional?

Amy [00:12:28] So at the moment we are test optional because we do understand that all the efforts have really been disrupted in the US as a result of the pandemic. So students

haven't been able to take them in the last 18 months. So we are test optional. If you are in a situation where you can take SATs or ACTs, I actually really highly recommend you do still take them if you can. And that's just because we're test optional for this year. But in future years, we may not be test optional and other universities might not be test optional as well. So if you're listening to Aberdeen going, that's one of my choices. But another school is also one of your choices to apply to. They might not be test optional and then you might not be able to get in because you haven't taken your expertise and acts. So if you are able to take them this year, I definitely recommend them. I definitely recommend if you have taken them and you've done well in them, to include them along with your your application, like we always like to see those. And they definitely make an easy decision for us. But if you haven't been able to actually set them, just get in touch with me and let me know. And we can work together with our admissions team to have you considered as a test optional application.

Michaela [00:13:43] And if there are people who are looking to transfer to Aberdeen, is that a possibility? Is the process the same for them or would it be quite different?

Amy [00:13:51] It's quite similar. So, again, you have two options of applying through Common App as a transfer student, but also you can apply through UCAS as what we call advanced entry so you can select on your application and you have to put in a year or two or even year three as an option. It can be a little bit tricky taking credits from the US and transferring them over to the UK. So it's not just in Aberdeen thing, it's a general UK wide issue that we come across and that everything is so kind of in order that you take. So if you're doing psychology, you take Psychology 101 essentially and semester one and then one or two, then one, two, three. So we always build on the information that you learn each semester and kind of grow that knowledge. And so what we look for in a transfer is what classes have you taken? What subjects have you taken that are the same as what you would have taken in Aberdeen? And if you've taken the right number of classes with the right number of subjects, we can allow you to come into your two or year three. But what we see actually is a lot of students come with General Ed and because they've done general classes that don't meet the kind of equivalent to the major that you're taking here, sometimes we will look at it and offer you year one or a year or two and maybe you were looking for a year or two where you're three. So it's definitely worth applying, have it evaluated, have it looked at. And then if we are able to offer you either a year one or your two or your three, we'll let you know at what year we can allow you to come in out

Michaela [00:15:22] so you don't actually have to apply, you know, it's not going to be like if you apply for year two, you're not eligible for a year or two, you are rejected. You will still get offered possibly a year one entry.

Amy [00:15:32] Yeah, it's not a risk. And it's just a case of like once we know that you you were looking to transfer, we can go and work with our academic advisors here and they'll have a look through all the classes you've done. If you've got any supporting documents like course outlines or syllabi, if you send those in along with your application, you can always like you can send those separately directly either to me or to our admissions team. We'll make sure that it gets added to your transcripts and we can review that to see what we can do to make it work for a transfer. But potentially, if we think you'd be more suited for a kind of freshman level, your one entry, we would offer that instead of outright reject you.

Michaela [00:16:14] And if you're looking for Amy's email, we're going to include this in the show notes as well. So have a look there if you're keen to get in touch with Amy directly.

So another big part about looking at studying in the UK will obviously be financial aid and finances overall. Is it more expensive to study in the UK or how does it compare to American universities?

Amy [00:16:36] So it does depend. A lot of times it can be the same or it can be even more affordable depending on where you're looking to go. It will vary from state to state, depending on what school you want to go to. If it's a private institution or a public institution or a state school, the kind of tuition fees can vary. But overall, I would say we're pretty affordable. We're pretty much on par with like an average university cost. And if you're looking at like private institutions, it actually can be a lot cheaper for you, especially some of the the ones that you see like Ivy League schools, or if you're looking at kind of the private schools that you find on the East Coast, they can be pretty expensive. So tuition fee is pretty affordable, I would say. And then the living expense actually can be a lot less here. So rent is cheaper. The food that you would buy your weekly kind of grocery shop tends to be cheaper. And then we have national health insurance. So your actual health insurance that you pay when you apply for a visa is cheaper and then what you would say, pay in the US. So for an American student, it can be it can be cheaper depending on kind of what options and what other places you're considering.

Michaela [00:17:50] And is it possible to still apply for the same financial support from the government like FAFSA?

Amy [00:17:56] Yeah, absolutely. So any FAFSA applications that you make, you can make to Aberdeen. And then we accept any financial aid that you would be offered in the form of a loan. So like your parent plus loans, Stafford loans, things like that, even the GI Bill that we can accept, you can bring all those loans over. If you're applying from Canada we do take provincial loans as well. So we actually see a lot of students come from Ontario and they'll bring their Ontario student loans with them. You can bring those over. The only thing we can't really do is grants. So Pell Grant is really popular in America and we can't accept the grants. It has to be the loans that you bring over.

Michaela [00:18:34] And how about scholarships? That's quite that's quite a popular thing in the US. You know, everyone's trying to achieve all these scholarships. Does Aberdeen offer any at all?

Amy [00:18:42] Yeah, we do. So we have North American specific scholarships. So we are looking to update every single year what's being offered. So it's definitely important to check the website closer to the time of application to see what would be available to you. But a lot of times it's based on your academic achievement or even something that you've achieved, like an excellence that you've done in your personal life. So if you've come up, come up and get good grades against adversity, adversity, or have done something really cool, we want to hear about it and potentially be able to give you a scholarship based on your academics or something cool that you've done in your personal life that you want to shout about. We always want to hear about it and see if we can provide scholarships for you.

[00:19:27] And is it right that there are some there even based on your ACTs or SATs?

Amy [00:19:32] Yes, I think we definitely were offering that. And it's looking like because of the pandemic, we'll probably be moving away from your test results as the main contributing factor. But again, if you've got really amazing grades and your SATs ACTs, fill in an application form for our excellent scholarship and we'll see if we can offer you a

scholarship based on those grades so it can really be your GPA, SATs, ACTs or anything that maybe isn't grade related. Like if you've done something amazing in your your community or you've set up a non-profit during high school, like, let us know and we'll look at all kind of options for excellence.

Michaela [00:20:14] We're going to link this in the show notes as well. So if you are looking to have a look at what sort of financial aid there might be available, just click through the link in the show notes. And you also mentioned, you know, living costs and living and operating in general. So let's move on to that topic. And obviously, the visa applications might seem like a huge, huge, complicated. And it might be a bit daunting to look at that and think about all the different things that one has to do to apply, can you help with that?

Amy [00:20:46] Yeah, I can give very basic advice. We do have actually a dedicated team that will help with visa and immigration questions. So I definitely provide really over an overview of kind of what the steps are, what's included, what you should prepare for. But the kind of nitty gritty detail we actually have staff members that are trained to be able to provide the best advice that they can to you. So you're definitely not alone in this process. My advice is always to start early. Just give yourself plenty of time and make sure that you you've kind of got everything that you need to for the university itself. So once you've submitted all the documents and all the information we need, once you've accepted your offer, that speeds everything up. So we just try to do everything early. That's that's the biggest piece of advice that comes to visas. But it is a bit daunting. But we have students come every single year from the US and Canada, so we are definitely here to help you. So you don't feel like you're going through that process alone. And then once you do it, you can apply for all four years. Or if you're coming for a Masters and you're just doing a year like you can apply for the length of your actual degree that you're doing with us. So you don't have to do it every single year, which is like a relief that you just do it once. And that's you're taking care of the entire time you're Aberdeen.

Michaela [00:22:11] Great to know. We've applied with, you know, visas processes and we're about to get here. So how does one actually get to Aberdeen? Do I have to fly to London and then take a train? Or is there a better way to get to Aberdeen?

Amy [00:22:25] Yeah, I mean, I'm all one for exploring the U.K., but when you first get here, you can actually fly directly into Aberdeen. So usually you have a connecting flight somewhere in England. It can also be Europe. So we do have major hubs in London and we also see flights coming in from all over Europe. So like Paris, you usually get some in Germany or Amsterdam and then you can connect to Aberdeen. And then from there it's about a 15 minute taxi ride, 20 minute maybe if there's traffic from the actual airport to the university's kind of main accommodation area and Hillhead. But once you're used to the city and you've been here a couple of times, you can definitely use public transportation. So if you do find cheaper flights in Edinburgh or Glasgow after that, you can take the train up if that's what you prefer. But first time always like just get to Aberdeen, make it nice and easy, get a flight directly to our airport and then taxi it to your university accommodation. And that's the quick, smooth way to do it.

Michaela [00:23:30] Yeah, I have to say, I've flown a few times to Atlanta in Georgia, and it's just so convenient getting on a flight in Aberdeen, going to Amsterdam and then just a direct flight. So it's pretty much two flights. And you're in Aberdeen, which is something that you might not realise is possible for a city our size is actually quite amazing that we have such a good international airport with so many connections. You know, you can go

through Paris, you can go through Amsterdam and London. There's just a lot of different choices. But obviously, as you mentioned, you can also fly if it's cheaper for you. You can fly into Edinburgh at Glasgow. And you also mentioned, you know, it's about 20 minutes away from the main housing area that we have in Aberdeen. So do people do a lot of people live in halls?

Amy [00:24:16] Yeah, a lot of people live in halls, especially in their first year, you know, just coming to the city, getting orientated, meeting people and just having that support that the university provides of having staff on hand so that if you do get locked out or you need a light bulb and you're not sure where to go, it's late at night. We have a staff there to support you. So it's really nice to have the independence of moving away from home for the first time, but also have that safety net of we're going to have people here that are looking out for you and are here to help with anything you really that you need. It's also great when you first arrive because you don't have to worry about setting up the Internet or just getting bills sorted. It's all included. So you can really just, you know, arrive, plug in, check in with home phone charging, laptops, parking. All of that is set up. And it just allows you to come in and not have to worry about that. You're really just worrying about where your classes are and how you're going to make friends and what's happening at Freshers Week. You can just really focus on the university instead of really that life admin of getting a new kind of what we call a flat, also known as an apartment to Americans getting that all set up and organise. So we do recommend definitely look at the university accommodation in the first year. The other thing that we have that is amazing is that because it's apartment style living, no one has roommates. So everyone has their own individual bedroom, which I definitely appreciate. And then depending on how much you want to spend and what your price point is, we have what we call catered accommodation, which essentially has meal plans or self catered, which means it doesn't have meal plan. So you have the option of like having that again, that little extra support of having meals provided. Or you can definitely cook for yourself. For me, I am lactose intolerant. I'm a very bad lactose intolerant, I eat pizza all the time. But when I was being very good, lactose intolerant like it, that was great for me to have access to the kitchen and buy all my own food and cook for myself. So I really appreciated not having to have a meal plan because I knew I wasn't going to use it because of my diet.

Michaela [00:26:26] Yeah, I think as opposed to the US, only one out of our portfolio of accommodation on the one building is actually dedicated to cater to students and if you live in the rest of them are just you can buy a meal plan as well on top, but as a standard, you cooking for yourself. So I think it's way more common here. And also the university is sort of prepared for that. So they're like cooking classes and, you know, like all these sort of support mechanisms here to help you transition into feeding yourself for possibly the first time ever. So that's definitely good. And also something that I was reminded of as you were talking, when you come into halls, you fly in, your flight might be quite late in the day. Something that is quite popular is ordering these like packs of like essentials, which is like your bedding is got your cutlery and your plates and all of these little basic things which probably you're not going to travel with, because if you are travelling with like one or two pieces of luggage, it's probably full of clothes or like personal personal things you want to bring with you. So you might not want to bring in, like Three Forks with you. So what you can do is actually purchase these packs which come with, like, really good basic things you might need and those will be in your room as you arrive. So you don't even have to worry about where you're going to get your bedding from that first day, which is really handy. I would definitely recommend that over trying to get an online delivery arranged for the date of your arrival. I did that and it didn't work out and I slept under a coat for the first day. Oh, yes. I would definitely recommend those little packs, which are especially popular

with international students who are not moving in with an entire car worth of furniture and whatnot. But also one thing, you don't need any furniture. That's the good thing. Pretty much the only thing you need is like your personal belongings, your cooking things. All the big pieces are provided. So you don't have to worry too much about that. And as you said, people live in their own room. They don't have to share with anyone. Is it more common in the U.S. to have a big bed, because I think that's something we should clarify with people. It's single beds pretty much across all of our accommodation.

Amy [00:28:45] Yeah, I think in the US, I think as a whole, they're used to having like a single bed or what's known as a twin bed, but they tend to be extra long. So when you go to university, you don't have to buy extra long sheets and they sell them at like Wal-Mart and Target, like right before the start of each academic year because they'll have these extra long, little skinny beds. This is just the standard twin. So if you are extra tall, unfortunately, we don't offer any bigger beds for you. But the nice thing about that is if you do buy a bedding pack, which I also recommend for that very reason of light, again, you don't want to worry about it like you want to just off a flight. And it can be an overwhelming experience. And again, we have staff here to help you. But having that bedding pack ready for you because we work with the company as a university, you just have to make your bed and then you're all set. And then if you decide actually later on, I want to buy my own sheets and personalise my bedding, like you can go and either buy them yourself or if you're in America and going back for the winter break or something, you can always bring back kind of twin sheets and they're going to fit that bed.

Michaela [00:29:59] And something that people also frequently ask us about. So it seems to be a trend in some universities, you do not have to move out from your accommodation over the winter break.

Amy [00:30:09] Yeah, that's correct. So your room is your room from when you move in to the end of your contract when you move out. So if you are looking to stay over the winter break, you definitely can stay. That's your room. No one's moving in and you don't have to worry about moving stuff out. But usually for undergrads in your in the summer, that's when you would move out. And then you can either find your own accommodation for the next academic year or again, apply for university housing if you wanted to do that. It's really up to you what your preference. So a lot of students will move off campus. A lot of them will stay on campus as well, depending what what they like. For me, I definitely was a big fan of staying on campus and not having to pay additional bills or worrying about the wifi or, you know, just normal maintenance that you have to worry about when you live in your own accommodation. But some people definitely prefer to have that more independence and more responsibility of sorting out their Wi-Fi providers, which is really fine because you got that option for whatever you want.

Michaela [00:31:14] And let's talk about something that some people might want to hear about as well. Is it possible to get a job in Aberdeen? Is it really difficult to fit around your studies or is it actually, you know, something people can look into?

Amy [00:31:26] Yeah, they can definitely look into it. So with your student visa, you can actually work up to 20 hours per week. For me, as an international student, like 20 hours is more than plenty. Like I would say 12 to 15 hours is pretty manageable. Obviously, you don't have classes on a weekend and unless you're playing sport, usually have sport Wednesday afternoons on potentially on the weekend. You can definitely work weekend jobs, even jobs as well. And once you know your schedule, like you might have gaps during the day that you can pick up shifts and where you know, where university that has

different little shops and little cafes and stuff in the area. And then we also have the main city centre where you've got shopping malls, cinemas, restaurants, bars, cafes, bakeries, everything. So if you're looking for a simple hospitality job or a retail job, like you would definitely be able to find that. My only advice would be to definitely check out, like our kind of career services and get information about how to write a UK CV, because in America, like I came over with a resume which is very similar to a CV, but it is a little bit more basic and what's being offered. So just kind of converting what you already have in the form of a resume into a CV, because that's what employers are going to be used to looking at. But we generally have support on how to do that, and I'm sure they'll be running them as well as drop in sessions and want to get appointments, whatever you need to get that information, as well as just on our website.

Michaela [00:33:03] And another thing that might be sort of on American students and applicants' mind might be whether you need to have a car in the U.K. and specifically in Aberdeen. Is that a necessity or can you get around to Aberdeen without having a car?

Amy [00:33:19] You definitely do not need a car. It's for someone like me that came from Southern California that was used to like driving to L.A. and San Diego to do like things that I liked, like shopping and going to see like music and gigs. I was concerned about that as well. But actually, there's so many buses and cycle routes and the trains that are just so amazing and clean and safe and affordable that you don't need a car. Like I didn't have a car for the first seven years that I lived here, which if you had said to any of my friends that I was going to move to another country and not have a car like they wouldn't, they just wouldn't believe you because we just don't have the same infrastructure and just affordability and access to public transportation. But, yeah, you definitely don't need it. You can get on a train or a bus from Aberdeen and make it all the way down to London. And from there you get like the Eurostar so you can get over to mainland Europe on a train if you wanted to. And then there's also deals. So you've got like a youth rail card that you can get. So it's, what, 16 to 30 year olds or full time students? You can pay about 30 pounds to get a card. And it gives you what I think is about a third off or 30 percent. It's either a third or a 30 percent. It's around there. But basically, as long as you're not travelling during peak hours, you'll get a discount on all your rail so you can get anywhere, really anywhere in the U.K. with public transportation. But just in the city centre, like it's a short walk. So if you're happy to walk, like it's definitely what if you're a fast walker, 20 minutes slower or 30 minutes to town, which is we say town or the city centre. But it's basically like the main kind of shopping area of Aberdeen. But it just it's really it's a really nice place to be. And it's really nice not to have to rely on a car because you get to see more of the city and meet people and figure out what what you like, what areas you like, where your favourite coffee shops are that you wouldn't necessarily get to explore if you were in a car.

Michaela [00:35:24] Yeah, I think it's definitely a good point that you do not need a car. Everything is walkable in Aberdeen. I've been here, you know, seven years and I still do not have a car and I do not ever use the bus because it's just cheaper to walk. And you can walk anywhere within like four or five minutes. So I know it might sound like a huge walk, but actually it's really not that bad. And once you get sort of used to it, it's perfectly normal to just walk to the shop and bring your shopping back. It's a different way of life as well. I like it. It does give you sort of the opportunity to keep fit. You can also cycle if people do cycle and you can get a bike quite cheaply around here. So, you know, you can just see what you prefer the most. But I think most people, because you sort of live locally, most of the time, you will get a flat that's quite close. You're never going to get a flat that's

like an hour and a half away by foot. So you do not have to worry about the transport part too much.

Amy [00:36:23] Yeah. And I always say like it just based on my own personal experience of that kind of first day or so that you're living in your accommodation and you meet everyone that you share a kitchen with and like your living room with, like go with them on the bus, because I wasn't used to just being like, can I get a single or a return? Because one in America you don't stay single or return. You say one way or round trip. So like getting the vocabulary right and just knowing and feeling confident like this is how I get on and off the bus and like this is the bus stop. I definitely had anxiety around that and was quite nervous to know, like, is this the right place? I doing it right. So I just like and I was just proactive and invited people in my flat to go explore the city centre with me. And then we they were used to using buses because most of them were Scottish or or European and had used to public transportation. So I definitely kind of got a group together to to make sure I wasn't alone in that experience.

Michaela [00:37:25] Great. And is there anything that you would say specifically to parents or counsellors who might be listening to us just now? Are you also able to advise them or can you only talk to students and applicants?

Amy [00:37:38] So I can definitely speak to anyone about how things work at the university. We do usually have pretty strict data protection laws. So if a student has applied to the university, they have the option on your app to put like a named contact. So it could be a parent or it could be their counsellor. And as long as they're named on their application, we can speak to them on the behalf of the students. But if a parent got in touch and was asking for basic information, I can absolutely tell parents and counsellors basic information about how things work, how this how visas work. This is how applications work. This is what Aberdeen is like all the kind of information that isn't specific questions application I can absolutely advise them on. And then if it is something very specific to an individual's application, we just need that student's permission. So even if they haven't applied, there can if they apply to coming up, the student can email us and give us permission to speak to their name contact as well. So there's always as long as we have it written down that the student has approved, we can speak to the counsellor and then we can talk to them about specifics. But yet counsellors, parents, friends, anyone who wants some information about Aberdeen, if you're living in North or South America or anywhere in between, can definitely reach out to me.

Michaela [00:38:56] That was great. Thank you very much, Amy. As we said multiple times during this podcast, you can reach Amy and also just her team in general through email. So we've linked the email address of Amy specifically in the show notes. And we also have a programme called UniBuddy, which is an online sort of chat platform where you can reach any of the international officers and also some current students. So if you're looking to speak to a current students, ask them specifically about their experience, you can do that as well. So we're going to drop a little note on that as well. Thank you for speaking with us throughout this episode. This is our last scheduled episode. However, we're always looking for more topics. So if there's anything else you would like us to cover, please do email us at ukteam@abdn.ac.uk with your suggestions. So thank you, Amy. It was a pleasure having you on and thank you so much.

Amy [00:39:52] Thank you for joining us for this episode of the Ask Aberdeen podcast, if you would like to suggest the topic we should cover, please email us at

ukteam@abdn.ac.uk. We would love to hear from you. To be alerted about new episodes, subscribe wherever you get your podcasts.