Welcome Parents!

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Gavin Douglas
Deputy Secretary – Student Experience

Influencing the world since 1583

Welcome!
Notable numbers and people:

- Founded in 1583
- Notable alumni: Charles Darwin; David Hume; Robert Louis Stevenson; Gordon Brown
- Consistently ranked as one of the world’s top 50 universities
- 35,500 students
- 42% from countries outside the UK
- Over 140 nations represented

Influencing the world since 1583

Statistics taken from The University of Edinburgh Factsheet 2015/2016
The University of Edinburgh is a very spread out University in the city of Edinburgh. This makes us a very good place to study for example – the Vet students are out in the country with access to animals, whereas the Medics are out at the hospital in Little France with access to patients and History students are in the centre of the city with close access to the museums and other historic buildings/sites.

Our student population is very diverse and we welcome students who call home just a few miles away as well as students who come to us from over 12,000 miles away!

The scale of the University can seem daunting at first, but there is always help available. If your student is not sure where to start, then they should have a look at the Student Services: Here to Help booklet at http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/new-students/getting-started-guides/overview
The University has a variety of Student Support services to provide assistants to our students. Those on this slide are only a few examples of the support we provide. You can find out more on the University’s website:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/students
As your child joins the University of Edinburgh, one of the changes that you will notice is that all information from the University goes from the University to your student, and then the student can communicate that with his/her parents. As a parent of a recent Edinburgh graduate myself, I know how it can often feel frustrating as a parent to ask ‘how are your classes going?’ and only receive the answer ‘Fine’. But keep asking those questions. The only way that you will get the answers is from your student.
I will not turn over to Kristin Sargeant who will talk to you a bit more about what you can expect during this first year.
A little bit of audience participation to help us understand who is in the room with us today.

- How many of you are parents/guardians?
- How many of you are students?
- Parents – for how many of you is this your first student coming to University?
- Now for how many of you is this your second, third, fourth, etc?

As Gavin mentioned earlier, our student population comes from all over the world – you can be from a few miles down the road or 12,000.
- So how many of you are from Scotland?
- The rest of the UK?
- The EU?
- The rest of the world?

Thank you!
All of the data presented on the slides about students and domicile region are taken from the University of Edinburgh Factsheet 2015/2016 distributed by GASP.

Commentary:

The infographic on this slide shows the overall student population at the University of Edinburgh in 2015/16.

You can see from these slides that we have a very diverse student population here at the University of Edinburgh, which makes this a wonderfully vibrant learning community.

The University of Edinburgh has been influencing the world since 1583. Our global reputation is built on pioneering research and innovation, and world-class teaching. Set in the heart of a beautiful city and a country which is passionate about international relationships, we have always had a commitment to diversity and a community in which students and staff feel valued and welcome. This is something
that we will continue to celebrate and embrace.

We also wanted to take this opportunity to discuss the recent EU Referendum vote as we know that no matter where you are from we realise that you may have some questions about this recent referendum.
As you are probably aware, on 23 June 2016 the UK electorate voted in a national referendum to leave the European Union.

It is important to remember that the UK will not leave the EU overnight – the negotiation process is expected to take up to two years, and the EU has indicated that this process will not commence until the UK triggers Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, formally signalling its intent to leave the EU.

We want to offer you some information and reassurance about the effect of EU Referendum on you as a new University of Edinburgh student.

Commentary:
Commentary:

Firstly, we wish to offer all of our new students some reassurance – there will be NO immediate change for you as new students. As we have already indicated the process to leave is expected to take at least two years.

For UG and PGT students there is no change as a result of the vote. Your immigration status has not changed as a result of the referendum. The fee levels that you are currently charged have not changed as a result of the referendum, and neither has your access to any support you receive from the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS).

For Research Councils UK (RCUK) fees-only funded students
EU students are presently eligible for fees-only funding under Research Council support for postgraduate training. EU students eligible for RCUK support under current rules will continue to be eligible for RCUK fees-only support if currently undertaking or about to start in the 2016/17 academic year, and will continue to receive fees-only funding for the duration of their courses.
Students planning to study at Erasmus partner institutions in 2016/17
The University of Edinburgh will fully participate in the Erasmus Scheme in 2016/17 and until further notice.
UK and other nationals participating in, or about to participate in, the European Union’s Erasmus scheme will continue to be eligible for Erasmus grants. This will continue as normal until further notice.
UK nationals studying in another EU member state as part of the Erasmus Scheme will not require a visa to do so as your immigration status has not changed.

So we can be reasonably clear about the impact of EU Referendum on your current immigration and fee status and also on your ability to study abroad as a University of Edinburgh student – no current impact everything stays the same and with the 2 year expected negotiation period that is unlikely to change in the short term.
Opportunities after graduation

The University of Edinburgh prepares students for global futures.

✓ Many of Edinburgh’s graduates progress to careers outside the UK.
✓ Degrees from the University of Edinburgh will continue to be recognised by employers and universities across Europe and the rest of the world.

Commentary:

We don’t know yet what the implications will be for those EU students who, after graduation, want to work in the UK. However, it is worth pointing out that we have a significant number of international students (non EU) at the university and have had for a number of years. One of the attractions (but clearly not the only one) has been that there have been visa opportunities that allow UK employers to recruit some of these international students and this remains the case after a recent review.

During the campaign there were those on the leave side who talked about potential systems for allowing international graduates to work in the UK (for example mention was made of the Australian points system). We anticipate that EU citizens wanting to work in the UK and UK citizens wanting to work in EU will be an important part of the discussions on our EU exit.

The Careers Service (and the International Office) will be closely monitoring those discussions and any decisions made and looking at any implications for all students.

As discussions progress there may well be a lot of speculation in the press which is
sometimes presented as fact so we certainly see our role as to be a reliable source of information and we would always urge any student who has questions about working here, the EU or internationally should look at our websites which will have the most up to date information including perspectives from employers with whom we have a lot of contact.

As further information becomes clearer over time we will ensure that we continue to share this with you and this will include information about employment, graduate opportunities or post study visas.

**We encourage you to speak with the Careers Service about employment possibilities – they are a wonderful resource and it’s never too early to think about your future.**
Commentary:

If you have further queries please visit our EU Referendum news webpages for the most up to date information, including a full list of contacts. The web address is http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/eu

These webpages include contacts for staff members who can offer further advice and information about a wide range of issues.

Once again, we want to offer you a very warm welcome to the University of Edinburgh and we look forward to working with you in the coming months and years.
Parents - How do you see your student?
- A full-grown adult?
- Someone who is mostly grown but still needs advice?
- You don’t need to tell me, but I would guess that some parents might have thought at least once today ‘My little ‘baby’ is all going to Uni – how quickly did the time go?’

But how do students see themselves?
- Full adult? Always independent?
- Able to do things – until it gets difficult and you call mom/dad?

Most often the students in the room look panicked at the idea of being always independent. They generally by consensus agree that they still want some advice and assistance.

How does the Uni see them?
- We definitely now think of them as adults
- That’s why in this session I’ll always refer to them as ‘your student’ not ‘your child’
- But we also recognise that this will be the first time that many of them will be
expected to do some ‘adult’ things on their own. Things like making their own GP appointments, going to the dentist, ensuring that their rent payments are scheduled, etc. We don’t expect them to do this without support. And we have many offices and support networks to provide help and guidance to your students.
The one thing that I can almost guarantee is that over the next semester and this first year at University, your students will go through changes. University exposes them to a lot of new ideas, new people, and new ways of doing things. This may result in changes to their ideas, friendship groups, and maybe even their appearance.

One big change for many of our students is living in student accommodation. How many of you here have shared a bedroom at home maybe with a sibling? (Generally only a handful if any at all in the room). How many have lived in a building with 150+ other students? (Sometimes one or two hands as some students have lived in boarding schools, etc). Most of you have not lived in an environment like our halls of residence and self-catered flats. I’ve been living in halls since I went to Uni in 1999. I was a Warden in the halls, and now still live in Pollock Halls as my husband is currently a warden. All my years in student accommodation mean that I can now sleep through ANYTHING. But one comment you as parents might hear from your students during the first few weeks is ‘it’s so loud in my accommodation – someone is always moving around, or in the common room’. This offers great benefits – if your student is trying to work late on an assignment, there is probably someone else in the accommodation also working on it. But it could also provide opportunities for procrastination – playing Xbox in the common room at all hours of the night. Living in
the student accommodation takes a level of compromise but is a great environment.

Your student might find that the academics are different than they expect. In order to attend the University of Edinburgh, your students have excelled academically in their previous studies. But now they are attending classes with others who were the top of their class. So some will struggle when they realise they are no longer the top of the class, perhaps they are in the middle or hopefully not at the bottom. Many of our students struggle with that! Or perhaps it’s the opposite way, perhaps your student was really worried about the coursework and then it turns out to be easier than what they expected!

No matter what, this is a time for your student to try on ‘different hats’ and figure out what and who they really want to be.
The W-Curve is a predictable pattern of stages, which occur when a person experiences culture shock. This model is based upon research done with students studying abroad; but works equally well as a way to look at all first year college students and the phases they go through in adapting to college life.

The W-Curve is made of five unique stages: 1) Honeymoon 2) Culture Shock 3) Initial Adjustment 4) Mental Isolation 5) Acceptance & Integration.

**Honeymoon:** This stage often starts before students arrive on campus. It typically begins once they have chosen and been accepted to uni, and continues to build as students attend Welcome Week and initial induction programs, and move into student accommodation. Emotions and experiences during this stage may include:
- Enthusiasm and desire to meet new people
- Wanting to get away from home and start out on their own
- Orientation and transitional programming
- Homesickness mixed in with all the fun and energy of their new experience

**Culture Shock:** Students begin to feel a dissonance between their perceptions of what uni should be and the reality of their transition. The newness of uni life begins
to wear off and students begin to deal with the reality of the many adjustments they are experiencing.

Emotions and experiences during this stage may include:
• Difficulty finding their way around and feel lost
• Excitement about living in the residence halls or with flatmates and on their own (having to cook their own dinners, do laundry, etc) wears off
• Adjustment to new surroundings and expectations are hard to adjust to
• Academic expectations are harder than anticipated
• Homesickness may become stronger. Some students may try to deal with this by maintaining strong ties to their home and going home often

Initial Adjustment: Students begin to feel an upswing as they begin to successfully manage many of the issues they faced during Culture Shock. It is during this stage that students feel more “at home” on campus. Extroverts often reach this stage quicker than introverts.

Emotions and experiences during this stage may include:
• Minor roommate irritations begin to diminish
• Students begin to make friends outside of their initial connections
• Fall into a routine and gain confidence in their ability to handle academic and social environments of uni

Mental Isolation: Commonly, this phase arises after students go home for an extended period of time. Strong feelings of homesickness begin to arise or re-appear for students and they often feel as though they are caught between two worlds. Uni life is still not as comfortable as home used to be and home is now not as familiar as it once was. From my time working in Uni accommodation I often saw this in my students after the winter holiday.

Emotions and experiences during this stage may include:
• Shock over finding changes that have happened at home and not having been a part of them
• Feeling of homesickness for a home environment that no longer seems to exist
• Doubts regarding choice in college, major, career and other decisions begin to surface
• Beliefs and values begin to be challenged and they may not be able to adapt to the ideas and values of the university culture
• Larger flatmate / res hall issues surface and students tend to sit alone in their room or find outlets to escape their housing situation
• Cliques may form and students may feel that getting to know others is harder than before
**Acceptance & Integration:** Connections to campus become stronger in this stage due to students becoming more involved in campus activities, developing stronger friendships, and connecting with faculty and staff. Students develop a more balanced view of the university, their academic pursuits and their future. A true feeling of acceptance, integration and connectedness occurs when a student has successfully adapted to their new world.

Emotions and experiences during this stage may include:
- Students begin to refer to college as their “home”
- They feel as though they are part of their new environment/community
- Roommate issues are likely resolved or overcome and new friends are made on and off-campus
- Home values are reconciled with university values
- Dependence on parents and former peers begins to lessen

Many of the parents who have had older children go to University often come up to me after this presentation to say that looking back, they can see that their child went through these different stages. The timeframes will vary for every student. But the thing to remember is that with the W-curve, there are dips down, but it ends on a positive note! Students should be encourage to hang in there, and find the support that they need at the appropriate times!

What can you do to help?

- Listen, Listen, Listen
- Be aware of the resources the Uni offers
- Maintain communication…
- Roles you can play:
  - Cheerleader
  - Encourager
  - Consultant
  - Safety net
  - Sign post
But try to avoid being this parent....
This is just a short list of some of the most frequently used resources. The Uni has many more student support offerings as well!

For those of you coming to the Tea and Coffee afternoon today you can pick up a copy of this year’s “Student Services - Here to Help” leaflet that comprehensively outlines the services that the University provides. It is also available online: http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/new-students/getting-started-guides/overview

I’ve put a blue star next to the Personal Tutor & Student Support Officers. Every undergraduate and postgraduate taught student has a Personal Tutor (PT), a member of the teaching staff who provides academic guidance and support. Personal Tutors work with students to help them:

• review academic progress
• reflect on how your student’s learning can help them pursue future development
• engage with a community of learners

More information about the role of the Personal Tutor can be found online:
Each School also has a Student Support Team (SST), who work with the Personal Tutors to support students. Members of Student Support Teams:

• are a point of contact to help you with routine queries
• maintain appropriate records and make sure that these are made available to staff who need updates
• provide administrative student support

Also highlighted Disability Service - We are aware that often parents of students who have support in School previously for learning disabilities may be concerned about how the change to a new place of study may affect their student. We encourage you to have your student start that conversation now with our Disability Service to discuss what resources might be available for them. Their website has a clearly indicated section for ‘New Students’ that includes information about how to make an appointment to talk about your specific case. [http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service](http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service)
Students can find out about all of the Events that are happening during Welcome Week on the New Student website and the link to download our September Welcome App: https://guidebook.com/app/UoEEEvents/guide/septwelcome2016/

Students who arrive after the Welcome Week in September will have missed these formal events, but will still be able to access all the support from the various offices, and their Schools will be able to provide them information about their coursework and expectations.
If students are arriving after Welcome Week in September, they can find all the information about these activities and processes online.

Paying Fees: http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/finance/students/fees

University Card collection: http://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/help-consultancy/card

‘Get Connected - http://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/computing/get-connected

Registering with a Doctor (GP = General Practitioner) http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/new-students/health-insurance/nhs-treatment
I will now turn over to representatives from EUSA (pronounced You-Sa), our current sabbatical officers who were elected by the students last year to represent their interests.
All 35,000+ students – both UG and PG – are automatically members.

Membership of the Students’ Association – sometimes known as a Students’ Union in other places – is free.

We have no fewer than 4 students’ union buildings, as well as facilities across the University estate.

Check out our vast programme of events, from weekly events to special events including food & drink festivals, in the What’s On area of our website.
We’ve organised an unbeatable programme of events for Welcome Week 2016, helping our members settle into the city, find their way around campus, meet each other, feel part of the student community and identify important University events. We’re here to provide lots of practical info and guidance, as well as lots of opportunities to have fun!

Our full events listing is in our What’s On Guide, as well as on our website at eusa.ed.ac.uk/whatson, and our Undergraduate and Postgraduate student guides are full of useful information on student life at Edinburgh.

And it doesn’t stop there – we’re here supporting and representing our members throughout their time at Edinburgh, from Welcome Week to Graduation Ball and everything in between!
Edinburgh University students have four student union buildings to choose from – we aim to provide safe, friendly and environmentally friendly spaces for students to socialise, relax and study. In our venues we organise a wide variety of events throughout the year, including club nights, live music, spoken word, pub quizzes, comedy and more.

Teviot is the oldest purpose-built student union building in the world, dating back to 1889! Last year we celebrated its 125th anniversary.

Across our venues, we have a variety of bars, catering outlets and shops, providing affordable food, drink and supplies to students.

In our cafes, we strive to offer a good range of products, including gluten-free and vegan options. Our shops stock all the essential student supplies, everything from stationery to groceries. And there are loads of bars to choose from, each with their own unique atmosphere. All of our shops and bars employ part-time student staff, and all of our profits go straight back into running and improving our student services.

Our venues are also home to a fun and varied programme of events, with something
for everyone going on every night of the week, from club nights and live music, to comedy and quizzes. There are also plenty of exciting annual events, including a Halloween party, Burns Night celebrations and, a few years down the line, the glamorous Graduation Ball!
We have societies for every hobby and interest you can imagine, covering academic; advice and community; appreciation; artistic and creative; campaigning and fundraising; dance, music and theatre; employment, transferable skills & finance; faith, belief & spiritual development; gaming and roleplaying; international & multicultural; media & broadcasting; physical & outdoors & political categories, in addition to a range of volunteering groups and a comprehensive volunteering database to help you find opportunities.

If all that isn’t enough, students can also chat to our Activities team about setting up a new society or volunteering group if their passion isn’t on our list yet.

Getting involved in activities provides a great way for students to meet people and learn new skills. All of our societies and volunteering groups are completely student run, our staff are just there to support them and make sure they have everything they need.
Our Peer Learning and Support programme gives students the chance to make the most of their study time!

PALS (Peer Assisted Learning Schemes) are collaborative study sessions linked to students’ courses and led by trained student leaders. Attending four or more PALS sessions has been proven to improve your grades! Check out our current PALS schemes for 1st and 2nd year students on our website to see what’s available in each School.

Students can also join a Peer Support Group and be part of an academic family led by Honours students from their School. They’ll meet other people on their course, make friends and get used to university life.

Head on to our website at eusa.ed.ac.uk/peersupport for details of what’s available in each School, as well as details of our peer proofreading and buddies schemes. Peer Proofreading offers free proofreading support for students who are not native English speakers. Students can also volunteer to work as proofreaders within the scheme.
Our professional advisors are here to give our members confidential advice and guidance, completely free of charge, on a range of topics, including money and funding advice, academic advice, accommodation and tenancy rights, council tax and more. We can also help students access University support services.

Students can drop into our offices at Potterrow or King’s Buildings House or check out eusa.ed.ac.uk/adviceplace.
Our Global programme brings together students from all over the world to share and discover new cultures. Our activities are open to all students at the University of Edinburgh and include:

**Tandem language exchange programme** Whether you’re brushing up on any of a range of global languages, including English, or starting as a beginner, our weekly language cafes and language partner pairing can help!

**Global buddies** We match Edinburgh students with visiting international students, providing a welcoming way to settle into Edinburgh life!

**Gather** An annual festival celebrating the diversity of global cultures, which we organise in conjunction with the University’s International Office.

So whether you’ve joined us from the other side of the world, or the other side of the city, there’s a place for you as part of our Global community!
We’re here to represent students to the University and beyond. Every year, students elect Sabbatical Officers, students who either take a year out or who’ve just graduated, who spend a year working full time for the Students’ Association on your behalf. We also have a wide range of elected student representatives throughout each school and various areas of student life. All students have the opportunity to run for elected positions, giving them invaluable experience as well as the chance to make a difference on issues they care about. All students, whether elected or not, are encouraged to attend Student Council and vote on our policies, and everyone’s encouraged to get involved in our annual elections and by-elections by voting and running for office.

Some of our elected student representatives look after our Liberation and Student Groups. These are groups dedicated to supporting groups of students who might be marginalised in Higher Education or wider society. Our Liberation Groups are Black and Minority Ethnic (BME); Disability and Mental Wellbeing; LGBT+ and Women and our Student Groups are are international students, mature and part time students, postgraduate students and student parents and carers.

We also run campaigns, and support students to run campaigns, on issues they care
about within the University and in wider society.
While university is an exciting time for students, there is a chance that they will find some things difficult. Here we’ve just outlined some of the more common problems that students have come to us about, and shown how they can get help. The Advice Place is a great starting point for almost any issue!

Students quite often find the transition from school to university is challenging, but it’s OK to ask for help! The most important contact will be the student’s personal tutor or course organiser, who will be able to advise them on getting extra help. The Advice Place is also useful for chatting through the issues and the advisors will point the student in the right direction for more help. Most schools have a peer support scheme which will allow them to meet like-minded students and work through the aspects of their course they are struggling with.
For students who completely run out of money, it is possible to apply to the Discretionary Fund, which is run by the University. The Advice Place can help with the application for this. Students shouldn’t wait until they are down to their last pennies, they can ask for financial advice at any time!
Unfortunately, some students don’t enjoy the university experience straight away. Although a trip home might be really beneficial, there is a strong support network available at Edinburgh to help students through difficult times. The Student Counselling Service can offer short-term counselling and workshops, and students can contact their personal tutor or The Advice Place for further support and guidance.
Lots of students get part-time jobs to support themselves financially and develop their experiences in the working world. There are lots of opportunities to work for the students association, in bars, catering, house and business support. The University’s career service also has a great online vacancy database called MyCareerHub, or students can also get advice on getting a job at The Advice Place.
The huge range of activities on offer at Edinburgh are a great way of meeting people – heading along to a meeting or event will allow students to meet others with similar interests, as well as try new things and gain valuable experiences. Sports Clubs and other activities through the Sports Union are also a great way to meet new people.

Global Buddies is a great way for international students to connect with home students who can help them to settle into their Edinburgh life.
Our emergency taxi scheme means University of Edinburgh students need never be left stranded at the end of a night out.

If students find themselves separated from their friends, or have lost their cash, or for any other reason need a taxi, they can call Central Taxis, one of the main taxi companies in Edinburgh, on 0131 229 2468, and book an emergency taxi. They just need to give the driver or call handler their student number, and the Students’ Association will pick up the bill and check in with the passenger later to make sure they’re ok and arrange repayment.
Check out the Undergraduate or Postgraduate Guides for all the essentials on student life; the What’s On Guide for the lowdown on Welcome Week, and pick up an Activities Guide for details of all the societies & volunteering groups on offer.

You can also access all of these guides at eusa.ed.ac.uk.
We’re looking forward to welcoming our new members!
We will be joined by colleagues from the International Student Advisory Service, Security, the Students’ Association & the Advice Place. We hope to see you there!