



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Host University</b>	University College Dublin
<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b>	S2 2022 (Sept – Dec)
<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	Bachelor of Commerce and Laws
<b>Major(s)</b>	Economics

### Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

<b>Course title</b>	<b>Language of instruction</b>	<b>Otago equivalent</b>
ECON30180 – Industrial Economics	English	Generic 300 level Economics Paper
ECON30400 – Political Economy	English	Generic 300 level Economics Paper
ECON20060 – Irish Economy	English	Generic 200 level Economics Paper
BMGT10160 – Global Marketplace	English	Generic 100 level points paper
SBUS10180 – Exploring Your Host Country	English	Generic 100 level points paper

Total Otago credits gained:  54 points  72 points  108 points  \_\_\_\_\_

Any comments about these papers?

The papers I took were all pretty interesting and good papers! The 100 level papers were relatively easy and were both internally assessed. I really enjoyed the Irish economy paper and political economy. The industrial economics paper, however was quite hard and very maths based. Overall, the lecturers were very good and help was always available.

*How did the academic experience/ workload/ style of teaching differ from Otago?*

The teaching style and workload is pretty similar to Otago. Only one of my papers had a tutorial each week, other than that each paper had 2 hours of lectures per week. Therefore, I found the workload slightly less than Otago and overall very manageable. I didn't have any group work but a couple of my friends did and said it was a good way of meeting other students in your class.

## Accommodation

*What accommodation did you stay in? What were the pros and cons of your accommodation?*

I stayed in Merville student residences which is on campus. This was perfectly located on campus with a short walk to lectures, the mini supermarket and the bus stop. Merville and the majority of other student accommodation are set up as shared apartments of 4-6 people. Merville is the cheapest option and you do not get provided with much when you first arrive. You receive the basics like a bed, desk, wardrobe, desk light, rubbish bin but you have to buy your own sheets and other bedroom attire. You share a small lounge and kitchen area with your other flat mates which is pretty decent! However, you do not get any kitchen appliances when you first arrive. There is a 'great donate' which is organised by the Uni where you can go and grab things previous students have left behind when they leave. We pretty much got everything we needed from this apart from a few things we bought from IKEA.

Overall, the apartment worked well, my flatmates were clean and tidy and we all got along very well. They try and group the exchange/international students together which is a helpful way of settling in because everyone is in the same boat. I couldn't recommend staying on campus enough! It really made a difference being right there on campus with heaps of people around you. It made it so much easier to meet people and hang out and organise things. It is super hard to get off-campus accommodation in Dublin due to such high demand and it is also very expensive. The UCD campus is about a 45 minute bus away from the centre of town and I had a couple of mates who lived off-campus and would sometimes take them over an hour to bus into lectures etc. So, definitely be ready to go and prepared when applying for on campus accommodation.

## Money matters

*Please detail your basic costs, e.g. accommodation, flights, visa, food, insurance*

Accommodation was roughly \$5000-6000 dollars. I booked my flights well in advance but I think they were roughly \$2,300 return. Dublin in general is quite an expensive city, groceries are similar to New Zealand and so are drink prices but they can sneak up on you in the more touristy areas such as Temple Bar. Eating out generally was very expensive and something I did not do very much at all. There are of course well priced places throughout Dublin and there are plenty of food stores on campus which is reasonably priced. The insurance I used is the one Otago require to use which I think cost roughly around \$800

*What means did you use to access your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, Cash passport, foreign bank account, etc.)*

I mainly used a debit card called 'Wise'. It is super easy to use and had very low costs. Basically, you are able to upload money from your NZ bank account which is then transferred to any currency you want which you can then use anywhere you go. Would definitely recommend using a wise card.

## Visas & Insurance

*Did you have to apply for a visa? What was the process?*

When arriving in Ireland I did not need a Visa to enter. However, I did need to apply for a 'residence permit' as I was staying in Ireland for more than 90 days. You have to organise an appointment with the immigration services to receive it. The process was quite difficult and there is often a massive backlog of appointments meaning it can be quite hard to get one. I got lucky as someone pulled out and I snuck in. However I recommend doing it early and make sure you have all the documents they list on the website as they are quite strict. It also costs 300 euro which was an annoying cost to say the least.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

No.

## Extra-curricular/Social Activities

*What organised activities were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?*

UCD has a tonne of clubs and societies you can sign up to in the first couple of weeks. There is a big sign up day when you can walk around and talk to all the different clubs/societies.. I joined the international students society which was great for events such as pub crawls and a few trips around Ireland. I also joined the surf club and tennis club. I went away on a surf trip to the west coast which was super fun and a great way to meet Irish students. The tennis club also held events and trainings each week, I went to a couple of trainings however should have gone to more. The clubs and societies are all super welcoming and even if you don't like the sport they encourage you to get stuck in and join all the events etc. Would definitely recommend doing this!

*What was the university/ city like?*

The Uni was great! The campus is huge and has everything you need! There is a massive sports centre with a swimming pool and a couple gyms, basketball courts etc. Football and rugby fields, a small stadium, tennis courts and even a cinema. There are plenty of wee cafes and food stores scattered round campus and all the lecture theatres were really good. There is a massive lake in the middle which is cool to sit around and chill. There is a mini-supermarket near my accommodation called centra. This was great for smaller shops and the odd snack but would Definitely recommend going off campus to do your bigger shops. They also do a mean chicken fillet roll there which I got plenty of times. They sell alcohol there but again it is quite expensive and is better going off campus.

Dublin itself is super cool and super easy to get around. There is plenty to see and do and the pub culture and nightlife is top tier! There is a bus stop right on campus where you can catch several buses right into town. The main bus we used was the 39A which is the only bus which runs 24 hours which was a life saver after late nights out. Would recommend ordering a LEAP card as soon as you

get there so you can swipe onto buses, otherwise you have to use coins every time which is slightly annoying. There is plenty of cool seaside towns/suburbs to see aswell.

*Any recommendations for things to do, places to visit, places to eat etc.?*

Dublin central is a great place to look around, have some food and drinks and enjoy the Irish culture! There are street musicians and buskers everywhere and the Irish people are so friendly and funny. They love meeting New Zealanders and overall there is a great vibe to the city. Howth and Malahide are great wee Irish towns to visit which are both roughly an hour train ride away. I did trips to Galway and Cork which are the other main Irish cities. Galway is very fun spot with great pubs and cool sites to see. Cork is also very cool, and worth checking out for a weekend. The surf trip I did was to county Donegal to a wee town called Bundoran. This was a great experience and an epic way to see a classic Irish township

Temple Bar area is also a cool area with the famous 'Temple Bar pub' however the prices sneak up on you there so if your buying drinks out head to other places. Pretty much all the pubs are great but some of my favourites were Devitts, Ryans and Flannerys. There are heaps of clubs to go as well, the biggest ones are Coppers, Diceys and Workmans, all great fun for a night out.

There are also some great museums and cathedrals to check out such as Christchurch Cathedral and St Patricks. The Guinness Store house tour is definitely worth it and the tour of Kilmainham Gaol. You can also do Jamieson and Irish whiskey museums tours which I didn't do but is apparently worth it. Also, the Guinness in Ireland is so good and is definitely my new favourite beer.

*Any tips for future students?*

Make the most of every opportunity you get! When you first arrive it can be slightly daunting but make an effort to meet new people and get stuck in, everyone else is in the same boat as you.

Also I would really recommend trying to get on campus accommodation, it makes such a difference in terms of meeting people and having the ease of being close to lectures and other students. It is expensive but definitely worth it.

## Overall Experience

*Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience. Please include some photos!*

Overall, I would definitely recommend doing an exchange to Dublin! As mentioned it is an awesome city with great history and culture. The people are quite similar to kiwis meaning it is easy to get involved and meet people. There are also so many international students who go to Ireland. I met so many cool people from all around the world. Ireland is also super close to the rest of Europe! Before I started in September I travelled around Europe for 6 weeks with heaps of friends who were also doing exchanges through Europe. I also did weekend trips to Milan to visit a friend and had a weekend in Berlin with mates from back home! Flights are always relatively cheap, the airline Ryan Air always had pretty cheap flights which made the travel so much more accessible. I loved my time in Dublin and will definitely return sometime in the future.