



Student Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Otago degree(s)	LLB and BA	Major(s) Law, Politics
Host University	Semester & Year of Exchange: Semester 1, 2018	
University		
College Dublin		

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
From Union To Bailout	English	Modern Irish History	¾ of an Otago paper
History of Science	English	History	¾ of an Otago paper
Early Medieval Ireland	English	Medieval History	¾ of an Otago paper
Introduction to EU politics	English	Politics	¾ of an Otago paper
Law, Politics and Human Rights	English	Political Philosophy	¾ of an Otago paper
Trump, Brexit and Global Politics	English	International Relations	¾ of an Otago paper

Any comments about these papers?

I am really happy that I took papers with an Irish perspective because they enhanced my experience in Ireland. The history and politics I heard about in the lecture theatres were immediately visible outside. The only paper I took specifically for exchange students was the Trump, Brexit and Global Politics one and it was quite strange in that there were no real lectures and it was all group work, but it was good for meeting other students. My six papers on exchange counted as four Otago papers.

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

There are fewer hours of university per paper and less work per paper, but more papers. It means that it can be quite difficult at times to divide and compartmentalise the workload and you need to be quite self-motivated, but the work expected of you for each paper is less.

Accommodation

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

So the halls on campus at UCD filled up within 15 minutes of the registration opening and neither Otago, nor UCD could provide me with any alternatives. This was a bit stressful at the time, but through some help from friends overseas I found accommodation with International Student Accommodation Dublin in a nine person flat in the centre of Dublin. It was a bit of a commute to university, the actual house was not in the best state and it was expensive, but luckily all of the people living there were students my age and super amazing and we had the best time together. It also had the added positive of being a fully equipped house so I did not have to pay for washing machine use, WIFI or power separately. Furthermore, while it was far away from UCD, it was also in a great location for going out and experiencing Dublin! However, it was a bit risky and for anybody considering Dublin, take the housing crisis into consideration.

Money matters

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

Accommodation in Dublin is very expensive, so I was paying around 960 NZD for a shared room around 15 minutes walk from the centre. Flights and insurance combined were 2,300 NZD. Visa was 500 NZD. Food really varied depending on whether I was travelling or in Dublin, but it is around the same price as in New Zealand. Transportation costs also really depend on where your accommodation is, but it is not that cheap.

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

I used a credit card and took out cash regularly because the price it would have cost to transfer my money to an Irish bank account for four months did not seem worth it.

Visas & Insurance

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

When you arrive in Ireland you have three months before you need a GINB card to renew your student visa and this costs 300 euros. I would recommend trying to make an appointment before you even leave New Zealand because the office is notoriously overbooked. UCD gives you instructions.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

No, but Otago did.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

I went on quite a few student trips with my flatmates around Ireland, was quite heavily involved in the politics department at UCD and did things like the model EU parliament simulation and played football. They were all really fun and we also went to watch Gaelic Football quite often as our house was near the stadium. But beyond organised activities, Ireland is a great country for just hiring a car and road tripping, or biking with friends around the seaside, which I did quite often too and found way more fun than organised student trips in busses where they only stop so you can take pictures. Another big thing for me was getting involved in the Repeal the 8th Campaign to legalise abortion in Ireland. Me and some friends went to the protests, marches, did canvassing and went to the fundraiser concert. It was really inspiring to be involved in something with so much history for Ireland and to feel like we were helping to make such monumental change. Ireland legalised abortion on my last day in Dublin!

What was the university/ city like?

Dublin has a really amazing, lively and friendly vibe to it and the pubs are always filled with people of all ages. UCD was the same. Although Dublin perhaps does not have the impressive architecture or organisation of other capitals, its atmosphere, its rich history and politics, the number of places to drink, eat, listen to music, and how friendly everybody is makes it one of my most favourite places I have ever been and despite the accommodation costs etc. I am so happy I went there on exchange and would not change that decision for the world.

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

Stay away from touristy Temple Bar at night. Other than that, Camden Street has lots of great pubs and bars if you are looking for a one-stop area. Over the whole of Dublin, my favourite places to go were: Devitts (for a classical Irish pub), Gravediggers (for an awesome, old-fashioned Irish pub), the Market Bar (more for cocktails and the best garlic bread ever), Castle Elephant (to eat) and Diceys (your classic student haunt with bad music, but 2 euro pints). If the weather is good than Phoenix Park, the Botanical Gardens, St Stephens Green and the canals are all lovely places to hang out and drink, listen to music and read etc (note: I did live in North Dublin, so these are all in that area and not near UCD).

Around Ireland, my favourite places to visit were Dun Laoghre (beach near Dublin), Kilkenny (for the cool castle), Galway (more than the song) and Dingle (an underrated seaside town with the best bike ride I've ever done). Other than that, use the cheapish Ryan Air deals to go around Europe and escape the Irish weather.

Any tips for future students?

My main tip would be actually to see if you can find accommodation with students in the centre of Dublin because although UCD is a nice, big campus, it is a 40 minute bus ride to the centre of Dublin and many of my friends who lived on campus felt as though they missed out on experiencing the Dublin city lifestyle and atmosphere – which is what makes Dublin worth going to.

Overall Experience

The only negative parts of Dublin are the weather and the cost of accommodation (which is now higher than London). Aside from that, I absolutely loved my exchange experience in Dublin! The initial accommodation stress turned out to be one of the best things that could have happened because the location of my accommodation and the people I met there were my two favourite aspects. I got to travel all around Europe (Rome, Edinburgh, Germany, England etc.) and also experience living in a big and lively capital with lots to do, see and listen to. My flatmates and

university friends were from all over Europe (predominately Germany, France and Italy) and it was so amazing to exchange views, language, ideas and realise that you can find common ground and interests with just about anyone. It was a great experience for personal development, too, to realise you can pack up a suitcase and relocate and build such an awesome life somewhere different with just yourself to depend on. UCD was also a decent international university with a nice campus, lecturers and papers. The people at the university and in Dublin are so lovely and accepting. I would recommend Dublin to anyone who can afford the accommodation and is prepared to perhaps find it themselves and isn't too bothered by weather.



Kilkenny Castle



Flatmates by the seaside in

Dublin



UCD in the summer



ST Patrick's Day



Campaigning in Dublin



Dublin in the Snow!

