



Student Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Otago degree(s) Bachelor	Major(s) Geology
Host University University College Dublin	Semester & Year of Exchange Semester 2, 2017

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
Igneous Petrology	English	GEOL364	12
Sedimentary Environments	English	GEOL373	12
Geological Structures	English	GEOL275	12
Low Temperature Geochemistry	English	GEOL362	12
Global Environmental Change	English	Unspecified	12
Geological Mapping	English	Unspecified	12

Any comments about these papers?

Geological Mapping was a great way to learn how to work independently. It was by far the most fun course. Only downside - they take FOREVER to grade our stuff, so I won't get my field notebook back before I leave. It was handed in in the beginning of November, and apparently they need to hold on to it until January..... I hope they manage to send it before I go on my Otago field trip in February.

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

Very different. We took more classes to get an equal work load, but there seemed to be just as much work, (if not more) as in Otago. Every lab was assessed, weekly assignments,

labs in 4 of the classes, compared to Otago where only 1 or 2 labs are assessed, monthly assignments and max 2 labs per week. I'm happy I went on exchange, because now I appreciate Otago more. They usually always ran late (2 hour lab is most of the time a 2.5 hour lab). They print out A LOT of paper. They printed out the powerpoint and labs which is around 30 pages total, and they do this for every student. It's a lot of papers to keep track of when they do this in four of the classes. The way they grade is also very "harsh". The average of the class was around 50. At Otago I was an A student, always getting grades in the 80-90 range, but here I'm happy if I get above 60. As I mentioned above, they take FOREVER to grade things, and they only post test results in word documents. Tests are normally worth 40-50%, and they don't put in grades for the other assessed material, so I'm not 100% sure how I'm doing in my classes. The lecturers are all very lovely, and know their stuff. But, most of them were very boring to listen to, and one of them was very bad at presenting the lecture in an understandable way.

Accommodation

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

Finding accommodation in Dublin is extremely difficult. I was approximately nr 400 on the wait list for on campus accommodation, and since there are so many scammers in Dublin we had to wait to find accommodation until we got to Dublin. We called so many landlords, it was a very hectic week. We ended up finding another flatmate and getting an apartment in Ballsbridge, which we had to take because there were no other options. Me and Rebecca shared a room. It was a decent flat, but the monthly rent, excluding electricity, is \$4885. The price for 3 people living in on campus residential halls was around the same, or more.

Money matters

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

My flight details aren't really relevant to NZ students as I flew from Norway, but it was surprisingly difficult to get from Stavanger, Norway to Dublin. Depending on what day you fly it ranges from \$140-\$607 one way. Accommodation was \$1628 per person, each month, and the electricity bill was around \$30 each month. No visa needed since I'm European. Food is not too expensive, spent around €50 every time I went shopping (every week-every other week). I used Europeiske if's insurance which was \$821 for a year. Since we had to take the bus to school, we had to get a bus card which cost €10 to get, and €20 weekly. So approximately \$418 was used on public transport.

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

I used my debit card during my stay, and paid the rent with my Norwegian bank account. Not sure what to recommend.

Visas & Insurance

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

Did not apply for a visa

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

They require that non-eu students have private health insurance.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

I joined a Dublin Erasmus Facebook page. I'm not sure if it was run by the school. They organised trips to places like Game of Thrones locations, Giant's Causeway, Galway and Cliffs of Moher. I can't really remember what they said about other after school activities at the exchange meeting, but there wasn't a whole lot. I don't remember thinking "Ooo, I should join that".

What was the university/ city like?

University is ok. Very crowded, so I usually went straight home after class. The city is great. I really like Dublin even though public transport is a hassle. Great music at great pubs. I haven't met a single mean Irish person.

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

I've heard Galway is great. Giant's Causeway is amazing if you're into nature. Same with Cliffs of Moher, and Glendalough. If you study geology, you should visit Loughshinny as it is a textbook example of Chevron folds. I visited Belfast in 2015, and I absolutely loved that city, and since it's only 2 hours away from Dublin, I would try to get there. In Dublin you can also visit Trinity College (oh how I wish you had that as an exchange option!) - it's a beautiful university and the old library was used in Star Wars as the jedi archives.

Any tips for future students?

I hope they chose to go to Dublin when the housing crisis has passed.

Overall Experience

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

Overall it was just ok, unfortunately. I'm very jealous of my classmates back at Otago, and kind of wish I would've stayed so I could have taken the Metamorphics paper which wasn't offered at UCD. I'm really not a city-girl, and it was a bit depressing not being able to go on a hike, as it took about an hour on the bus to get to a hill just outside the city. I am, however, grateful that I've been able to get contacts in Ireland, new friends, new experiences, and learn about the geology closer to home where I'll most likely be working in the future. It was also nice to get visits from my family - a bit easier to visit Ireland than NZ :)

