



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Host University</b>	University College Dublin (UCD)
<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b>	Semester 2, 2022
<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	LLB, BA (Politics)
<b>Major(s)</b>	BA – Politics Major

### Academics/ course load

*Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?*

<b>Course title</b>	<b>Language of instruction</b>	<b>Otago equivalent</b>
INRL30400 – EU Foreign Policy	English	POLS 300 level
LAW30300 - Criminal Justice and Penology	English	Unspecified Law points
ARCH20170 - Discovering Ireland: Landscape	English	ARCH 200 level
LAW30610 - Commercial Law	English	Unspecified Law points
LAWS30470 International Human Rights Law	English	Unspecified Law points

Total Otago credits gained:  54 points  72 points  108 points **30 ECTS = 72 Otago Credits**

*Any comments about these papers?*

They were all interesting. I would highly recommend taking ARCH20170 - Discovering Ireland: Landscape as it is a paper designed for exchange students. There are two field trips and on each trip we were taken to 3 historic sites which were all really interesting. It was amazing to be able to travel around the counties close to Dublin and visit places from 5000BC - very different to NZ! The assessment was one paper that was just a reflection on each site we visited it. I highly recommend this paper to anyone on exchange in Dublin.

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

These papers are all relatively similar to papers offered at Otago, however of course they follow Irish Law. INR30400 – EU Foreign Policy was all about negotiations between EU member states and I found it a good challenge having not studied relations between EU states before. The law papers were a relatively similar course structure, however the lectures were 1, 2 hour class instead of two 1 hours. In terms of difficulty, it is also relatively similar to Otago. The content in the law classes may have been easier, but the fact it was closed book exams made it more challenging when studying with limited time. The papers followed the same structure being a 2-hour exam at the end of the year or a take-home paper.

## Accommodation

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

I stayed in on campus accommodation in Merville. If you can, staying on campus is absolutely the best option. The commute to and from town is quite far. Be sure to be online ready and waiting when they come out as they go in minutes. UCD tell you a date but not the time, but they did release all the rooms around 9am Ireland time.

Merville is super central on campus – very close to the village with the Centra (supermarket) and the Bus stop which was nice for when walking home. Merville has 4 or 5 rooms in one apartment, with a kitchen. It's one of the only residences without ensembles but it doesn't matter at all. Having had friends in different residence on campus, I do think that Merville is the best option while also being the cheapest!

Accommodation is very different to Otago Halls as its all buildings with apartments on each floor. Every building, apartment and rooms are all locked and there is no common area or dining room, so it can mean meeting people in your hall is quite hard. The way to meet people is to go out to all the events and join the clubs. I can't say I met a single person in my building but I had lots of friends spread out.

## Money matters

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

My flights return were \$4000. My flight to London was \$1600 and flight home from Dublin was \$2400. I got home on Christmas eve which would have made my flights more expensive and it was just coming out of COVID when I was going over.

In terms of expenses, Dublin is an expensive city but so is all of Europe. I would say that eating out is the most expensive thing with most meals costing between 15-30 euro, around 25-50nzd. All pints are around 5-6 euro – 10NZD which is the same as NZ. The supermarket's are definitely so much cheaper – would really recommend the Lidl or any off campus supermarkets as the Centra on campus is quite pricey but really convenient.

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

I couldn't recommend a WISE card enough. Everyone I was traveling with had them. Instant direct debit from NZD credit card with a small fee or you can free manual transfer from a bank account. The fees are minimal and the exchange rate is fantastic. Everyone has WISE which makes transferring people super easy. Get a wise card – don't bother with a cash passport or foreign bank account.

## Visas & Insurance

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

You don't need a visa to enter the EU or UK so I could travel around freely before I started uni in Ireland. In Ireland you need to apply for a permanent residence visa if you are going to be there more than 90 days. I think I was there for 110 days, which was just over this time period. It is 300 euro to get the visa.

As I had applied for my Irish passport and I was only over staying by 20 days, I didn't end up needing to get the visa. I checked this with various Immigration staff and I would recommend enquiring with Immigration. As the appointment are hard to get, they give you an extra 90 days passed your original 90 days with no penalty, so a few of my friends from America didn't get it and there was no trouble leaving or staying.

I paid \$700 for all-inclusive travel insurance with House of Travel.

*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?*

There was an organised O-week at the start of the semester. Most of this is just orientation and tour – no organised events. The university told us to be there on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September which was 1 week earlier than all other students so campus was super quiet and there was not a lot happening. The actual O-week for freshers and welcoming all people back started the week after. I would recommend being at the university for that but it is not a big deal if you come after the date they say as there was really not much going on.

I met a lot of my friends on the pub crawl organised by the International Students Society so I highly recommend going to any events they put on. Also follow the Erasmus Student Network and all the UCD pages on Instagram as they are always posting about up-coming events.

UCD is big on Clubs and Societies. I joined the Law Society, International Students Society, Food Society, Surf Club and Sailing Club. The surf club is epic – I went on one surf trip with everyone up to Northern Ireland and it was so fun. I didn't have a lot of time to get involved with the others so I

would pick one or two that cost. Highly recommend the Law Society, International Students Society, Food Society that are basically free.

*What was the university/ city like?*

UCD is huge – there are two gyms, heaps of sports fields and a ton of on campus accommodation. It is about an 8km loop around the whole thing – which makes for a great walk. UCD is a bit further out of Dublin – 30 min on the bus. There is a bus – 39A that goes every 15 mins 24 hours a day so going into town is very easy in that aspect. Order a Leap card as soon as you get there – to tag on and off the bus for 1 euro otherwise it is \$2.20 euro cash.

Dublin is an epic city – highly recommend. The pubs are epic and there are amazing sites to see. Everyone in Dublin loves it because it's so close to the water and people swim all year round! Nothing like NZ beaches though!

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

This is a list I have compiled for friends that visited:

Activities:

- Main Centre is Grafton Street and across down in to Temple Bar area and the River Liffey.
- Across the Liffey is Henry St (shopping) and more bars etc
- Trinity College: highly recommend the long room/Book of Kells at trinity - tickets 14 euro
- Day trip to Howth on the train
- Day trip up to Skerries, North Dublin on the Train.
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- Kilmainham jail
- The Guinness Store House
- Phoenix Park (which is the biggest in Europe and has heaps of deer)
- Dublin Castle and St Patrick's cathedral etc.
- Do a trip outside of Dublin to another county like Wicklow or Kilkenny something as it's more like Ireland.
- Highly recommended going to the Loughcrew Cairns in County Meath - it's one of Ireland's oldest Stone Age megalithic cemeteries from 3000Bc.

Lots more to see out of Ireland in different Counties –

- Galway: if you can a car trip around the Wild Atlantic Way beautiful – visit Kylemore Abbey Castle and Cliffs of Moher
- Mayo: visit Down Patrick's Head Cliff (most beautiful place I visited)
- Cork

Food:

- Bread 41 Bakery
- Tang Café
- Ebb and Flow is a cute cafe for brunch
- Tiller + grain is great for lunch
- Zakura is epic Japanese - go here for dinner or BYO DRINKS

#### Pubs:

- Temple Bar is the main touristy bar - music  
The Church: highly recommend for cocktails and live music
- O'donohughes
- Gingerman
- Mulligans on pool beg st,
- The Stags Head and

#### Nightlife:

- Workman's
- Wigwam
- Xico's
- The Camden
- Copper Face Jacks

*Any tips for future students?*

Go and travel and meet people! It is what exchange is for. I found that I was either travelling Ireland or going to another country every weekend. Flights out of Dublin are so cheap as it is the home of Ryan Air – flew to Spain for 20 euro!

Ireland is a beautiful country and there is so much similarity to NZ. I highly recommend travelling outside of Dublin as much as you can as there is so much more scenery to see in other Counties.

## Overall Experience

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

My overall experience on exchange was incredible. I had the time of my life and learnt so much in the short space of 6 months. It found it amazing to be able to travel while also living and studying in a new country. Traveling around European summer with my best mates before I got to Dublin was definitely a highlight and all the places we got to see. I managed to get to 11 countries and loved visiting all countries my friends were on exchange in. A highlight was definitely Amsterdam! While in Dublin I met an incredible group of friends from all over the world and some that I will be friends with for life. It was also an amazing way to connect with friends, old and new, from Otago and come back with life-long memories and friendships. Travelling and being on the other side of the world from family and familiarity definitely had its challenges but it is all very worth it. If you are thinking about exchange I couldn't recommend it enough.