



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University College of Dublin
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 1 2019
Otago degree(s)	LLB & BA
Major(s)	Politics

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
Tudor England	English	300 Level History	
Ireland Uncovered	English	Arts any level (I think)	
Political Economy of the EU	English	POLS 300 level	
Irish Politics	English	POLS 200 level	
Sports Law	English	LAWS 400 level	

Any comments about these papers?

These worked out to be the equivalent of four Otago papers. I really enjoyed my papers – the Irish ones were great for learning a little more about the history and culture. My Tudor England paper was worth 10 credits, where the others were all worth 5 so there was a noticeable difference in workload.

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

It was fairly similar to Otago. You only need a 40% to 'pass' so taking five papers didn't feel any harder than taking four in Dunedin. There was also less hours involved because none of my papers had tutorials.

Accommodation

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

I stayed on campus and I absolutely loved it. It seemed expensive when paying the entire cost up front at the start but I don't think it would've been any cheaper to flat – Dublin is in the middle of a housing crisis. It was also so good in terms of settling into life in Dublin and meeting people. I would 100% recommend.

There is no real difference between halls so I would go for whatever is cheapest – it's not like halls in Dunedin in that sense. I was in Merville and loved it. I had friends in Belgrove (the other cheap hall) and it was good too, but Merville is closer to the bus stop etc. That would be the only real difference. There were more expensive options if you wanted your own bathroom, but sharing an apartment with four people was very easy.

Money matters

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

Flights were about \$1,500 return with flexible dates if needed. Accommodation was about the same as a semester in a hall in Dunedin – but because we are overseas students we have to pay up front so be prepared for that. Also important to note that the halls are not catered as they are in Dunedin, so living costs overall do end up being more expensive. Eating out is about the same as in New Zealand, it's all about finding the right places to go. Supermarkets were a lot cheaper than New Zealand, especially the budget ones. Insurance was about \$500, shop around though you might be able to get a better deal.

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

I had a cash passport and overall I did not rate it highly. Mine did not have paywave/ contactless so that held me back when travelling to other cities and they use their debit cards to get on and off public transport. I also found the fact that it took 3 days to clear funds transferred to my cash passport frustrating, you need to anticipate well in advance when you will need more money. As well as this the app did not update regularly so your account balance was a lot of the time out of date with your purchases. I ended up using my ANZ debit card at the end for small purchases to avoid large conversion fees – Would recommend looking into a Monzo card or opening a bank account to avoid the Cash Passport.

Visas & Insurance

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

Luckily enough I had an Irish Passport so I fully avoided this process.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes you must have comprehensive insurance to study at the university.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

The first couple of weeks they had a bunch of different trips planned that you could pay to go on. We did our own and it was super fun too. But they would've been cool to meet people etc.

What was the university/ city like?

The University was great – huge jump up in size compared to Otago, probably because the student number is double. Dublin is a beautiful city to live in. For a capital city in Europe it is much smaller than most, making it feel easy to navigate your way around. The public transport system is fantastic and the buses from the city centre to the university (10 minute ride) were very regular. The night life was fantastic, plenty of opportunities and locations to enjoy Jameson or Guinness and watch Rugby.

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

The Guinness storehouse tour is a must see – not just for the free Guinness but for the insight into Dublin's history. Another great Dublin must see is Kilmainham Gaol – one of Dublin's most famous historical sites. There are also lovely seaside parts of Dublin that are great to visit such as Bray and Greystones.

Any tips for future students?

Put yourself out there – especially with Irish people. They absolutely love kiwis and Rugby so they're more than welcoming. I would recommend avoiding the touristy/ gimmicky bars and getting to the authentic pubs that are full of Irish people. Ryan Air makes it very easy and cheap to travel within Europe and I had no real issues with them as an airline.

Overall Experience

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

As I was half Irish I had the advantage of knowing what to expect living in Dublin as I have visited many times before. I had an absolutely fantastic experience and made some great friends. It was extra special to have two girls from Dunedin also there and studying some of the same papers – we became very close friends. My only criticism was that I expected to meet and make friends with a lot more Irish people than I did when in reality we spent a lot of time with other International students. For five months in Europe, we made the absolute most of it and explored as much of Europe as we could!

