



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University College Dublin (UCD)
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2, 2019
Otago degree(s)	LLB & BA
Major(s)	Law & Sociology

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
AMST 30270 - Trump's America	English		18
ARCH20170 – Discovering Ireland: Landscape	English		18
LAW30190 – Media Law	English		15
LAW30730 – Public International Law	English		15

Any comments about these papers?

Trump's America was a really good paper – it was one lecture a week and mainly discussion based. Discovering Ireland was a great paper, as it was only two day-long field trips that got you into the more rural parts of Ireland.

Media Law is similar to the defamation component of Torts at Otago, but the Irish system is different so it was interesting to see the comparisons. Public International was interesting, but it requires a base knowledge of European treaties that I had to catch up on.

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

I only had three papers at Otago to finish, so I had a smaller workload than others, as most did six UCD papers. I would say I had a fairly relaxed workload. The papers at UCD are more internally focussed, so I often had small assignments throughout the semester but I only had one final exam.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in the Merville residences on the UCD campus. I would recommend staying on campus. Living in Merville meant I was a 5 minute walk from all my lectures. Plus, the campus is like a mini town. There is a mini supermarket, Subway, a movie theatre, Gym and more.

It's pretty similar to halls – so paying upfront is great because you can make the most of hot water and heating without stressing about bills. Dublin is expensive to live in, accommodation wise – so definitely get on campus accommodation if you're wanting to save money.

The only con I found was having to pay for a taxi home each night you went to town. The bus doesn't run after 11pm, but they were trialling some late night buses at the end of 2019, so that might change.

Money matters

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

Accommodation was about \$7000 up front. \$650 of that is a bond you get back after the semester is done (as long as there's no damage to your room or apartment). Flights were \$2000 return. Visa costs about \$500. I had comprehensive travel insurance which I think cost \$500 as well.

Dublin is just generally quite expensive – to bus into town and home each day was like \$8 NZ. A flat white or latte is about \$6 or \$7. Bottles of wine are about \$12 at their cheapest. I usually spent \$80 on groceries per week, and you can get the supermarkets to deliver right to your door which is handy.

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

I took over my NZ debit card, a credit card and a Loaded for Travel card. I used the Loaded for Travel card primarily. I could transfer money straight across with no wait period – I know that some cards make you wait two days for the money to come through. I would definitely recommend getting a LFT card.

It's also a good idea to take more than two cards – my NZ debit card got stolen, so my credit card became my only back up. Dublin is also quite cash based – lots of the taxis don't accept card and Uber is a rip off. It's always good to have a spare 20 euro with you at all times.

Visas & Insurance

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

I didn't have to apply for a visa before I went. I waited until I was in Dublin to register and get an appointment for a Residence Permit. The appointments are hard to get, and there is often a long wait period. I didn't get my Permit until three weeks before I left Dublin, but that wasn't a problem.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

If you get comprehensive travel insurance it covers UCD requirements.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There were lots of trips you could sign up for in the first few weeks. I just organised activities with the people I met from Merville.

I had a bunch of friends who joined Surf Club and loved it. They go away for weekend trips often and you get free surf lessons, and the people were really cool.

What was the university/ city like?

Dublin is a very cool city. It is smaller than I anticipated so it is quite easy to navigate and get your bearings. If you're looking for "Irish" people then probably stick to the suburbs, as the centre city is usually filled with tourists.

UCD is bigger than the Otago campus and also a very cool place to hang out around. There is heaps of places to eat, plus a bar on campus. There's also a good walking/running track around the perimeter of the Uni that is nice.

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

Get out and see as much of Ireland as you can. We had the best times travelling to all the small towns. Northern Ireland is wicked too, Belfast is a cool city. Hiring a car can be a bit of a pain and more on the expensive side, but our best weekends were the road trips we had around the country. Galway is a must do.

The Jamieson Storehouse in Dublin is wicked and great to take friends/family who visit. Jump on the DART train and head up Howth, or down to Bray or Graystones for the day. Temple Bar area is also great for pub hopping, but the pints are at tourist prices. Also the Happy Pear does vegetarian and vegan supermarket meals, and they have a couple of cafes around Dublin. It's delicious. Literally eat everything you can from them.

Any tips for future students?

Make the most of it – those first few weeks are always awkward trying to make new friends. But just say hello to as many people as possible, and sign up to a bunch of stuff even if you're doing it alone.

Keep an eye on RyanAir, the flights are super cheap if you don't fly on a typical weekend schedule. I flew London return for \$30 NZ, and Paris return for \$60. They also fly to some more obscure countries, so you can get out and see places like Latvia and Malta on the cheap – they're good bucket list ticks!

Overall Experience

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

I had the time of my life on Exchange. For me it was definitely more about the places I saw and the people I was with. You're going to have the best time regardless of where you go. I had never really been overseas before so it was so cool to get out and explore. Dublin is close to everywhere, and with flights so cheap you get to see so much of Europe. Save up as much money as you can!

