



ERASMUS+ STUDIES - UU Report 2018/2019

contact details	l.w.m.nooren@students.uu.nl
faculty/college	Science
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Biology

destination city & country	Cork, Ireland
name university abroad	UCC
start date	5 / 09 / 2018
end date	21 / 12 / 2018

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The process starts quite early, almost a year before study. I saw it as a benefit because then you have a good experience until it finally starts. Furthermore, you get emails everytime a step needs to be done, so you never forget anything. It was also quite easy. You know exactly what and when to do something.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The international office and the study advisor of Biology helped me a lot. They help you with all your questions. Also, you need to sign a lot, but that's done very quickly. They are also very helpful with choosing your courses at the receiving university. They accept almost everything.

academic preparation

I felt that I didn't know anything from the school system abroad before I left. The International office is there to help you with all the preparations and signs but they don't know much about your receiving institution. So, if you have specific questions, you should always mail the international office from the receiving institution.

language preparation

Before I went on exchange, my English was very basic but good enough to read and understand English. The biggest reason to go was therefore to improve my English and it definitely helped a lot. Before and after your exchange, you need to make a language test from Erasmus. This shows indeed that my English skills are improved. When you're abroad, your vocabulary and conversations are going better every week. For myself, I see unfortunately that my grammar isn't much better as before, unless you take classes in English there.

finances

Financially it was quite okay to go to Ireland. The tickets are cheap and also the living there isn't much more as in the Netherlands. The housing was more expensive than in even Utrecht (at least 500 a month), but you are good informed about that. The Erasmus grant is definitely good to have and you also don't need to forget the OV grant.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

You have to make your own study program. You have to shuffle a lot between courses and time schedules because they don't work with timeslots as the UU does. You get some more than a week to do this and I do recommend to start the last day. I had to make different changes to my first schedule because they caused overlap, weren't available anymore or I saw a better option. You also can switch between courses in the first 2 weeks. In the end, I followed 6 courses and had after 6 weeks only 2 days of college.



academic quality of education activities

The academic quality of education is lower than I was used to at the UU. I had a lot of free time because every course had only 2 or 4 hours a week (12 or 6 weeks programm) and almost no assignments inbetween. For some courses, I had a field trip or a gast speaker which made the course more interesting.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The international office of UCC was awesome. They gave a lot of information by mail and at the welcome meeting. Al the deadlines were well passed in advance and helped you were they could.

transfer of credits

Because most of the courses at UCC were 5 ECTS, I did 6 courses to get all the credits I needed for that semester. All the graded I got were in % but the UU transferred them into the Dutch grades. These were more positive than I thought.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The orientation programme took 2 weeks and was really nice. They offered lots of activities and parties each day to learn the city and other internationals. If you had any questions, they were very helpful.

accommodation

I had an accomodation offered by UCC but friends of my had to search themselves because they don't have enough places for all the incoming erasmus students. It's very helpful to get yourself on the waiting list as soon as your accepted on UCC. I lived in a international student accomodation with at least 150 internationals. We had a caretaker and security every night. It was around a 15 minutes ride with the bike to the campus.

leisure & culture

There was a lot to do in Cork. There were multiple festivities like culture night, Cork jazz festival, halloween parade and the winter fair. You should also do tours to other parts of Ireland. You definitely need to experience the pub-life, it's everywhere.

suggestions/tips

Join a club or society at UCC. You can join anything you like. I played in the international handbal team and trained 2x 2 hours a week and played multiple games against other universities. I also joined the Ultimate Frisbee Club and played weekend tournaments in all other parts of Ireland. This was also a good way to get to know the lokals, because at the lectures you don't speak much with them.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I whould deffinately recommend UCC. It's an awesome way to learn English, enjoy the pub-life and get your credits with less effort than at the UU. It's an experiance you'll never forget and it's great to your development in all different ways.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Go abroad and make friends from all over the world!



ERASMUS+ STUDIES UU Report 2017-2018

e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> liekeidavanmourik@gmail.com
faculty/college	Biology
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Minor studying abroad

destination city & country	Cork, Ireland
name university abroad	University College Cork (UCC)
start date	06 / 09 / 2017
end date	20 / 12 / 2017

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The exchange application process was very good organised. It was clear which documents needed to be submitted and all communication was clear.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

It was very easy to keep contact with the international office of the UU. It was personal and you could ask any question you might have. When something needs to be done, you will get an extensive e-mail with all the information. So, it is good organised.

academic preparation

I did not need any academic preparation. The level of education is, in my opinion, somewhat lower at UCC compared to UU.

language preparation

I did not need any language preparation. If you feel inconfident about your English, you could maybe practice this before, but I did not need it.

finances

It is good to be aware that Ireland is not the cheapest country. In many ways the prices are similar in the Netherlands. Furthermore, I think it would be good to have savings before going on exchange.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I chose the following courses; Biostatistics II, Introduction to pharmacology, Neuropharmacology, Molecular basis of brain disorders and Academic English. Most of these courses were good organised and information was given via Blackboard. However, it was somewhat strange that in the first week some of courses were not yet accepted by the UCC international office. There was a possibility to change the courses, but this made the first week a bit stressful. Furthermore, I think it was unhandy that all end of the year exams were together in one week, without any other assignments during the semester.



academic quality of education activities
Most of the courses had good academic quality. There was less variation in the methods of education, I had mainly lectures. Furthermore, there was less interaction between the lecturer and the students. However, most of the professors were good teachers.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The UCC international office was easy to communicate with. They could help you with problems you may have. Furthermore, the mandatory introduction period was well organised.
transfer of credits
This has not been done yet.

STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	This was nice and well organised. The committee showed us some nice pubs, a tour around the city and typical Irish movies to watch. It was a good opportunity to make friends, so I would really recommend you to join this program.
accommodation	I lived in Leaside, which was close to the city center as well as the campus. The place was good to live. However, it was quite expensive in relation to the support we got when something was broken. The contact with the owners was not very easy. I got this place via an e-mail of the UCC, which was handy.
leisure & culture	Cork has a nice, cute city center, with many pubs to have a beer and listen to live music. In addition, Irish people are really friendly and helpful.
suggestions/tips	I would recommend you to explore the city as much as possible. There are many places to have nice dinner and nice pubs to go out. Furthermore, the Irish experience tours organises nice and inexpensive trips to all sight-seeing places in Ireland.

CONCLUSIONS	
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain	Yes, I would definitely recommend this university to you. Cork is a nice place to live and the campus of the UCC is beautiful. It is a great experience to get to know yourself a little more and to go on adventure. Furthermore, the people are nice and the choice of modules is large.
do you have any additional advice or comments?	It is hard to find a room, so I would recommend you to start searching early. Furthermore I would recommend you to start preparing your exams earlier than you would do at the UU.



ERASMUS+ STUDIES

UU Report

2017-2018

faculty/college	Bèta Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Biology

destination city & country	Cork City, Ireland
name university abroad	University College Cork
start date	06 / 09 / 2017
end date	20 / 12 / 2017

PREPARATION

exchange application process

There are documents you need to submit before certain dates but this is not difficult. Both the international office of Utrecht and Cork responds very fast if you need them to sign documents etc.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

You can always send emails to the International Office or make an appointment with them if something is not clear, they are happy to help!

academic preparation

Since I planned on following mostly modules outside of my field (biology) I could not really prepare anything.

language preparation

I didn't really prepare because English is of course already our second language, but you do have to make an English test for the Erasmus+ organisation.

finances

I made a financial plan, as is required for your application. I saved some money but mostly relied on my student loan for my exchange.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

In the first week you can attend all the lectures of the modules you applied for, additionally you can attend lectures and information sessions of courses that you might think interesting. At the end of this week you make your final decision about the modules you want to follow. This was great because I learned there were so many interesting modules and not all the modules I wanted in the first place fitted in my schedule anymore.

academic quality of education activities

The lectures are of good quality, they give you a lot of information. For certain modules you also have seminars. The final exams are mostly in the form of in class essays. They will tell you what you need to know and what not so this makes it easier. The way the lecturers tell and test the material of a module is quite different from what I was used to in Utrecht, it's not per se very easy but it's just different.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad



The international office is always there to help you. They send you a lot of emails explaining everything you need to do.

transfer of credits

You will get your grades of the first semester in February. The university will transfer the credits. In UCC you only need 40% to pass and exam.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome programme of the first semester is two weeks long and I would really recommend attending this. They organise city tours, information sessions, film nights etc. You will already meet so many nice people before the classes even start and in those two weeks you have enough time to already explore Cork City and the area a bit.

In the second semester they don't have a welcome programme like this.

accommodation

I lived in Leaside Apartments which is not available for students anymore at the end of this semester. Finding accommodation can be really tough since housing is a problem in Cork City, so start early! (think April/May). The university will help you if you apply immediately for it. Some of the large accommodations (Eden Hall and Victoria Lodge) are pretty far out of centre, you'll need a bike, so think about that.

leisure & culture

Ireland is amazing!!! Cork City is really cozy with nice shops, restaurants and pubs of course. But in the weekends you can travel everywhere in Ireland. I did a lot of tours with Irish Experience Tours, I would really recommend this since the tours are for students only and the bus drivers show you amazing places and tell you a lot about the history. In Country Cork you can make day trips by yourself and make beautiful coastal walks.

suggestions/tips

I didn't do this much because I really wanted to go away every weekend to see Ireland with my friends, but there are a lot of sports clubs and student societies for everything you can possibly imagine (Harry Potter society, India society, History society etc.). Joining these is probably great fun (or great craic as the Irish say). I joined the Mountaineering society, that makes hikes on the most beautiful places in Ireland every weekend! A must if you like hiking.

Just make friends, go to pubs and enjoy live music as much as you can!

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes I would definitely recommend this university or just Ireland (Dublin, Limerick and Galway also have universities)

do you have any additional advice or comments?

- Buy a raincoat and umbrella. The weather can change 6 times a day so always be prepared for a bit of rain (it's no true though that it always rains in Ireland, most of the time I was there the weather was worse back home).
- Make sure you have enough money. It would be a shame if you have to miss out trips in the weekends because of money reasons.
- Don't worry about the Irish accents (as I did), the lectures are not hard to follow at all.
- Go and see Ireland when you're there. Don't wait for the International society to plan trips. You can easily go to places with public transport. Irish people always like to help with ideas of where to go!



ERASMUS+ STUDIES

UU Report 2015-2016

e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> l.jansen8@students.uu.nl
faculty/college	Science
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Biology

destination city & country	Cork, Ireland
name university abroad	University College Cork
start date	07 / 01 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	06 / 05 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Start early with this. Especially with your learning agreement: it took longer than I thought and had to change it several times before it got accepted by my study advisor and international office.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I found the Science International Office very helpful, they always responded quickly on emails and I could almost always pop in there anytime. Although I found out after my return that I actually had to receive approval for my chosen modules from the exam commission before I had left.

academic preparation

It was pretty hard for me to find modules that contribute to my major. I applied for two 4th year modules while I am a 3rd year student. Three weeks before I left to Cork I got an email saying I was rejected for these modules. I mailed the international office in Cork why I really wanted to do these modules and why I thought I could successfully pass them and finally I got accepted, but it took some time and stress to arrange it. So again, start early with choosing your modules.

language preparation

I didn't do anything to prepare for this. UCC doesn't require you to pass a TOEFL test; they simply assume your English is good enough when you're studying. I didn't have any difficulties with the language either; I expected it to be harder due to the Irish accent, but it was much easier than I thought.

finances

I got a student loan in addition to the Erasmus Grant. This was fine for me; Ireland is pretty much the same standard as the Netherlands. Be aware of the fact, though, that student accommodations mostly want you to pay the rent for the full semester or full academic year in one time and that can be a lot of money.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD



study programme (content and organisational issues)
Choosing modules was quite hard. You have access to the book of modules beforehand, but you get accepted or rejected just three weeks before the semester starts. They are willing to accept you when you send them a motivational letter, but it can be a hassle (see above, academic preparation). You can do an Academic English class, which is pretty popular so apply for this module early (you apply by email, see book of modules for visiting students).
academic quality of education activities
I found the academic level not as high as in Utrecht: I was very happy I followed 4 th year modules, because they were challenging. Furthermore, each module mostly has 3 hours of lectures per week and sometimes practicals and assignments, so you get a lot of freedom in planning your studies. All the final exams are in the last two weeks of the semester and they mostly make use of 'essay questions': you have to choose 3 or 4 topics out of 6 to write an essay on. I was not used to this kind of testing, so I practiced a lot with the old exams provided on the library site.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
UCC's international office is very helpful and does a lot for you if you ask for help. Furthermore, there is the Student's Union to whom you can go to if you have any difficulties (disability, homesickness, illness, questions about college, really anything!). This made me feel very welcome.
transfer of credits
You can simply get the Record of Transcript if you ask the International Office. I don't have my results yet, so I am still curious about the process too.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
I had expected this to be more elaborate, but it is just two days in which you get some practical information, a campus tour and a student club's and societies market. I was lucky to find most of my friends during these two days, but there are no real activities in which you get to know a lot of people (although the International Society organises a lot of parties).
accommodation
Start early! A lot of people had difficulties finding accommodation and lived in a hostel for more than a month. Especially if you go during the Spring Semester, because most accommodations are booked for the full academic year and can't tell you whether they have vacancies or not. I first found a room in Arcadia Hall, but due to international payment, they received my rent one day too late and so they kicked me out (this happened three weeks before my departure). Luckily UCC's accommodation service told me they knew that Leaside Apartments had some vacancies so I found another room in time. It was fairly expensive, my room was small and my view was on a parking garage (but I guess I was just unlucky, they have better apartments too. I think you can request them to assign you a room on the street side of the building), but it was very close to UCC and the city center. Arcadia Hall is cheap, but very far away from both UCC and city center. Other accommodations worth looking at are Abbey Wharf, Castlewhite (although quite expensive and far from city center) or www.daft.ie for privately owned houses.
leisure & culture
UCC offers a lot of student clubs and societies, which is a great way to meet new people. My advice is to check UCC's site on clubs and societies before you leave, get involved early and try to see as much activities as you can. I joined the Mountaineering club (which organises climbing trips and weekly hikes to beautiful places in Ireland. Bring waterproof clothes and good shoes for this, it is definitely demanding!) and the Olympic Handball club, but the possibilities are endless. As a student you can make use of the sport facilities (Mardyke Arena) for



free (including all classes and lessons). I booked a climbing course and found out later I could book in lessons for free as a student.

The International society organises a lot of parties and weekendtrips. I joined to Kerry and it was really nice to see so much and get to know a lot about the places you're visiting, but be aware of the fact that it really is a bustrip.

suggestions/tips

Get involved! The more you do it, the more energy you get back from it. Don't hesitate too much. Some places I found particularly nice are Cafe Mío (nice coffees, lunch, very welcoming and friendly staff), Cork Coffee Roasters (another nice coffee place), Shelbourne (nice pub North of the river), Fransiscan Well (very nice biergarten/brewery and delicious pizza's), the Crane Lane (when you're fed up with Justin Bieber songs in all the clubs; this place plays a bit more alternative music and often has nice live music), Liberty Grill and Sun of a Bun (both nice restaurants). Being a vegetarian in Ireland can be a bit hard, they really love meat.. There are some nice vegetarian restaurants but I forgot their names, you might want to google that.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes, I had a great time, the support is good, modules are nice if you take some effort to find some and Ireland is a very, very beautiful country.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Try to travel around. Ireland is a beautiful country, especially the West coast. If you are under 25 it might be hard to rent a car; you can only do this via www.dan-dooley.ie, located at the airport. They only allow this with full insurance and if you rent the car for more than three days.



ERASMUS+ STUDIES

UU Report 2015-2016

e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> louise1993@live.nl
faculty/college	Science
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Biology

destination city & country	Cork, Ireland
name university abroad	University College Cork
start date	02 / 09 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	18 / 12 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Application was not difficult, you just have to fill in all of the forms. To fill out your Erasmus Learning Agreement, google for "Book of Modules for Visiting Students University College Cork" and you can check out all the courses they offer international students.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

International Office of the Science Faculty was very helpfull.

academic preparation

I didn't really do this

language preparation

I didn't do any language preparation as I also did speak English fluently.

finances

Life in Cork is not much more expensive than back home in Utrecht. Rent is about the same and food is similar. But, of course you will spend more money because there are so many fun and adventurous things to do when you are on an exchange

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Biology

academic quality of education activities

Very good. I am a third year student and I did mostly fourth year courses and this was very doable. The courses are not too difficult, but you should do quite some additional reading if you want a good mark. Also, I did an extra course of 5 ECTS.



counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Also the International Office in Cork was very great. They are open every day and here you can ask all your questions. Also you have to go here to have your Certificate of Attendance signed.

transfer of credits

OK, I got 35 credits

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Perfect, you get to know a lot of cool people and everyone is super friendly. I highly recommend arriving a week early and join the welcoming program if this week, they also do some trips.

accommodation

It can be difficult to find a room in Cork last-minute, so reserve a place early!!

leisure & culture

Absolutely great. Cork is a great place with a lot of great pubs. Also, from here it is easy to travel around Ireland.

suggestions/tips

Make the most out of your studies, because they have many cool courses on offer. But also, travel as much as possible, visit a lot of pubs such as the Fransiscan Well and the Abbey Tavern on College Road, where is live music every Monday night. They have a great band then.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Absolutely! It is a great opportunity to improve your English, see a lot of new things and make friends all over the world. I was happy to be in Ireland because clearly, the Irish are the nicest people on earth.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Enjoy the beautiful country and don't forget to celebrate Halloween, which is traditionally from Ireland. :)



ERASMUS+ STUDIES

UU Report 2015-2016

e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> e.rip@students.uu.nl
faculty/college	faculty of science
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Bachelor Biology

destination city & country	Cork, Ireland
name university abroad	University College Cork
start date	02 / 09 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	18 / 12 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The exchange application process was quite easy, you can find all information and all the documents you need online. I also visited an Erasmus exchange information evening, which was informative because you can ask questions, but for the rest everything can be found online.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The international office and the study advisor reply very fast and give useful information if you have a question.

academic preparation

I did no special academic preparation, basic biology knowledge was enough to follow the courses in Ireland.

language preparation

There was no language preparation needed because they speak English in Ireland. The only thing you have to get used to is the Irish accent, which can be difficult to understand sometimes.

finances

Saving some money in advance is very useful, also you have to apply for the Erasmus grant. I worked and saved some money to spend in Cork.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

All courses can be found online, but I apparently checked the wrong study guide because there is a special one for international office and not all courses in the normal study guide are available for international students. It can be hard to fit all the courses you want in your timetable and I had to change some courses because not everything was possible. This is because they have more specific studies than I'm used to in the Netherlands, for example they don't have 'Biology' as a bachelor, but more specific bachelors.

The university offers courses specially for international students, I took two; 'Irish language' and 'Irish history



for visiting students'. These kind of courses are nice if you want to experience more of the Irish culture and there is enough choice.

The other courses I took were biological courses, these were; 'habitats and ecosystems', 'the environment and human health', 'microbial food safety', and 'adaptations to extreme environments'. The courses are all worth 5 ECTS.

Courses have about 2-6 h of lecture per week and there are not many practical classes in my experience. Most of the time there are just lectures where you sit and listen. There is not much interaction between the lecturer and the students although you can ask a question if you have one.

academic quality of education activities

The lectures are interesting and lecturers give good quality education. The information they give in the lectures can be difficult but they always explain it well. The exams are very different from the exams I was used to in Utrecht. In Cork you have to write an essay as an exam, where you can usually choose two questions/statements out of 5-7 questions/statements. Because you can choose and write an essay, you can really show your knowledge about a certain topic.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The international office is well organised and they reply fast via e-mail. It is also possible to visit them if you have any questions. Lecturers can be emailed and some reply fast, others don't so this differs per person.

transfer of credits

You get a conversion table for the national grading scales within the European community, so you can see what grade you would've got in the Netherlands. The number of ECTS is written behind your results.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome and orientation programme is very well organised. Before the classes start, there is a whole week with welcome activities for international students. First there is a welcome meeting everyday, after this meeting you can go on a city tour with students from UCU guiding you. This is very nice and you can meet many people here. In the evening there is always some kind of event and afterwards a party you can go to. It is impossible not to meet new people when you participate in the welcome and orientation programme. The students from UCU are very helpful and you can ask them anything you want to know about Cork and the student life there.

accommodation

Finding accommodation is very, very hard if you don't start in time. You should start looking a couple months/half a year before you go to Cork. The university has many student accommodations but these are filled immediately after you can apply for them. Luckily the university has a accommodation service, where they can help you find a room. They also found a room for me when all the other accommodations were full. Student accommodation in Cork is very expensive, rooms can be 500 euro per month but if you are lucky it will be around 350 per month. It is not uncommon for students here to share a room and usually these rooms can be found more easily than single rooms.

I stayed in Arcadia Hall, this is a student accommodation for internationals only and the prices are lower than the average room in Cork. The apartments are shared with 3-5 people and everyone has their own bedroom, the bathroom and kitchen/living room is shared. It is a 40 min walk to UCU and 10 min to the city centre but the train station is across the road so you can take a bus instead.

leisure & culture

Like every town of city in Ireland, Cork has at least one pub in every street. There are a lot of cultural things organised in Cork. For example, every year there is a Jazz festival that lasts for a couple days.



UCU has many societies you can join and these have their own activities. There is a international society that organizes a party every Friday and a couple of weekend trips as well. Other societies organise film nights, or language exchange nights. If you want, you can do something every night so no need to be bored.

suggestions/tips

Start in time with the search for a room!! Otherwise you can end up in a hostel for a month. And be aware that accommodation is much more expensive than in the Netherlands.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would definitely recommend University College Cork as a destination to go abroad. The university itself is very beautiful and Irish people are very nice and helpful. The classes generally are interesting and it's not very hard to get good grades so you will have enough time to do other things but study as well. Ireland is a beautiful country to travel around, with lots of great nature.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

The gym is free for all UCU students, and you can usually take free courses in the gym. All the sports clubs at UCU are free as well, I think this is really good. They have all kinds of sports clubs so you can definitely find one that you like.



ERASMUS+ STUDIES

UU Report 2014-2015

e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> r.j.veenhof@students.uu.nl
faculty/college	Science
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Biology

destination city & country	Cork, Ireland
name university abroad	University College Cork
start date	08 / 09 / 2014 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	19 / 12 / 2014 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The process was easy to follow and the website provided very clear instructions on how to complete the application process and of all the important deadlines. Almost everything could be done online, that made it easy to apply

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The studentcounselor of the bachelor Biology, Isolde den Tonkelaar, was always available for questions and replied immediately on e-mails. This also made the application procedure easy and quick

academic preparation

I did not really had an academic preparation. As it turned out, the level of courses in UCC was slightly lower than what I was used to in Utrecht, so I didn't really needed it. It might be a good thing to give though if one is to go to an University with a higher level than University Utrecht

language preparation

I didn't follow any language preparation, I thought my English level would be sufficient. This was indeed true, also thanks to a lot of experience in English reading and writing. Fluency in speaking English came quickly once I arrived in Cork.

finances

I subletted my room so that I would not pay a double rent, and thanks to the Erasmus grant and my parents I had no problems with finance.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study programme in UCC is very varied. The fun part was that you did not immediately needed to confirm your schedule; you were free to attend as many classes as you like in the first week, and after that make the final choice. This came in handy because the courses I chose beforehand turned out to have a lot of timetable



clashes. Due to the first week I was able to find other subjects of interest and adjust my timetable so everything would work. It was a big puzzle to make everything match but in the end you really know what kind of courses you are about to follow and there is less risk you will fail your courses. As an Erasmus student there is a wide variety of courses, and UCC even offers special courses for exchange students on subject such as Irish folklore and language. These were highly popular but I chose not to take these courses because I thought it would be more fun to mingle with Irish students.

academic quality of education activities

I am in the third year of my bachelor and I did several fourth year courses. These were easy to follow for me, and the third year courses were maybe a little too easy. The level of education is lower at UCC, but thanks to the wide variety of subject it still added something to my academic experience. The biological subjects had less practicals than I was used to in Utrecht, but fieldtrips are more ordinary. That was a fun part of the educational programme; actually visiting protected areas and national parks (I did subjects on conservational Biology). If one is interested in these kind of subjects, UCC is great for field trips and gaining field experience.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The International Office at UCC was open five days a week and worked really well. UCC receives a great amount of international students so they are experienced and the International Office is well organized. Also, there is a great deal of attention for mental health, counseling and, in case of international students, culture shock. All of this is explained during the orientation programme in the first week and it is made very clear that one should not hesitate to contact any of the facilities, if you would encounter problems of any kind during your stay at UCC. This made it easy to make use of one of the supporting facilities.

transfer of credits

The exams are at the end of the period (December), and the results aren't released until February. This means you have to wait a while before knowing for sure you have passed all your courses, but the transcript of records is sent to you and your home university automatically, so you don't have to put a lot of effort in the transfer of credits. UCC uses the ECTS system as well. Their grading system is different (under 40% is a fail, above 70% is rare) but they are experienced in transferring grades to other systems.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The orientation programme involved a great deal of information, spread out over three different meetings. These were obligatory and was helpful for all the technical issues, especially concerning timetables. Apart from these meetings, UCC organized a very large welcoming programme which you could attend if you wanted to. Every day there were coffee meetings to make new friends, tours of the campus, cultural activities, parties and even a trip to a village near Cork. This was really helpful in meeting new people and making new friends. Also, all the international students were divided in mentor groups, so there was also a small group of people where you had the opportunity to make new contacts. The welcoming period is very busy but very fun and it leaves you with tons of new friends.

accommodation

I stayed at campus accommodation, Castlewhite Apartments. Most international students I knew made use of campus accommodation, but it is also possible to look for student accommodation yourself: there are plenty facilities close to campus or the city centre. I enjoyed my stay in Castlewhite; very close to campus and also well-organized. It might have been a bit expensive considering the rooms one stayed in, but the wardens were very friendly and helpful. Castlewhite is an accommodation only for first years and exchange students, so if you are placed in an apartment with only other exchange students you have a risk of completely submerging in 'the Erasmus network' and never actually getting in contact with Irish students. Lucky for me, I had four Irish roommates and we had a lot of fun together. But if you would like to seek more contact with Irish people, I



would recommend to stay at one of the other student accommodations than the ones provided by UCC.

leisure & culture

Student life gets a lot of attention in UCC. The Students' Union had its own great building on campus, including a bookstore and a bar. There's loads of societies (for leisure) and clubs (for sports) you can join and this is something that is encouraged a lot by UCC; during the orientation programme you will hear the sentence 'Get Involved!' more than any other. This makes for a very lively campus and student culture, with loads of activities, parties and sport. The Mardyke Arena is UCC's gym, free for all students. It's a very new facility and if you're into sports, I would really recommend UCC.

Furthermore, the Irish culture is a very welcoming one, so you feel at home very quickly in Cork. The city centre is always crowded and if you somehow failed to make new friends in all the clubs, societies and other activities UCC has to offer, you only need to walk into a pub during one of the many live music sessions and you will find new and interesting people to talk to in no time.

suggestions/tips

UCC is a big university and welcomes a lot of Erasmus students every year. The welcoming programme is so good that it is easy to get lost in the Erasmus network and never actually make Irish friends. My tip is to make sure your accommodation is with Irish students, this is the easiest way and the funnest way to really get to know the culture. It can get a little lonely during the weekends, as Irish students are used to traveling home every weekend, but soon enough you'll get invitations to join them and stay a weekend at with their family, that's something I would recommend!

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes, very much. I enjoyed my time at UCC very much. I have a broad academic interest and UCC offers so many different courses, there is something for everyone. You get complete freedom in the courses you would want to follow, which makes it a fun experience. Also, the university is really experienced in receiving foreign students, so everything is well organized. The student network is active and it's easy to meet new people, as Irish people are friendly and welcoming.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Make sure to travel around during the weekends; Ireland is beautiful and making trips with fellow students is fun. Also, get there as early as possible. I arrived one day before the orientation programme started, but the welcoming programme starts a week earlier and this way it's still possible to make some trips with the welcoming programme and settle in easily before the lectures start.