



University College Dublin

2018-2019

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	Make sure you do not start at the last moment! The application process takes some time, because parts of it require some effort and thinking. For example, in your study plan you make a plan for the two upcoming college years, so you have to figure out which course you want to follow. Other parts of the application take time as well. The application process can sometimes be a little complicated, so do not bother to ask the International Office of the UU for help.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	Although the UU provides some meetings to gain information about studying abroad, I would recommend to read documents about studying abroad on the students.uu website carefully. As I already mentioned, you can always contact the International Office for questions.
academic preparation	My university here in Dublin did not ask for any academic preparation before arrival, so I do not have any experience with this.
language preparation	Erasmus+ requires you to complete a language test upon arrival on your destination, but this is purely to test the level you possess for the language you are going to have to use at your destination. They ask you to do a similar test when you come back home to compare with the previous test.
finances	As an Erasmus student you will receive a grant for 4 months, not longer (even if you stay longer). The amount depends on your destination, which can be found on the UU website. It is important to know that this grant is not enough to make a living during your exchange!

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	My study programme contained mostly courses on politics, one course specifically for exchange students about Irish culture and history, and one about the 2008 financial crisis that struck Ireland severely. In comparison with my courses at the UU, you were required to listen a lot to professors instead of interactive classes. I only had lectures, apart from one course that had a seminar.
academic quality of education activities	I had to read academic texts for every course, the quality was good. I could understand most of the texts.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	I don't have experience with this, so I cannot give feedback on this part.
transfer of credits	The transfer of the credits is not done yet, but I received my final marks of my semester at the end of January.



STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
The orientation program in Dublin is quite extensive, so there is a lot to do in the orientation week, which is the first week, and the freshman's week, which is the second week. During these weeks, you are able to join societies, such as the Food society, film society or international society.
accommodation
I stayed on accommodation on campus. Unfortunately, accommodation is very expensive in Dublin and it is not easy to find accommodation. For my accommodation on campus, I paid 950 euros per month. It is possible to find cheaper accommodation in Dublin, but prices on campus are high. The accommodation itself does the job, but you should keep in mind that the accommodation is empty upon arrival, so plates, cutlery, pots, pans etc. are not included, so you still have to buy those.
leisure & culture
The societies I mentioned early organise a lot of activities throughout the semester and it is cheap to join them. The more societies you join, the more activities you will be able to visit. Apart from campus life, the Irish culture is very welcoming and there are loads of good pubs and clubs in the city centre. Even though it's quite chilly in Dublin, the city has a lovely atmosphere that makes you feel at home.
suggestions/tips
Many people start looking for accommodation early when they are still at home, but I would advise against that. It takes a lot of time looking for accommodation on the internet and unfortunately people get scammed on a regular basis. I would recommend, when you are not able to get accommodation on campus, to book a hostel/airbnb in your first weeks in Dublin and start searching for a room from there.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would definitely recommend Dublin and UCD to others. UCD provides good education and leisure activities. As well, there is a gym, a supermarket and a bar on campus, giving you the possibility to have a full abroad experience. Personally, I visited other cities such as Cork, Galway and Belfast as well. Irish nature is very beautiful and impressive and perfect for hiking.
do you have any additional advice or comments?

2017-2018

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The application process was quite easy. Both Utrecht University and University College Dublin communicated very clear. The information about the application process was clear and I always knew what they expected from me.
counselling & support at Utrecht University



The counselling and support at Utrecht University is excellent. There are very clear guidelines and the important deadlines are summarized. Furthermore, there was a meeting for students with more information about the exchange. And the university sent a lot of e-mails with extra information or deadlines. Besides, if I had questions I could go to or e-mail to the international office, they replied within a few days.

academic preparation

My academic preparation for the exchange was not very good. I did not know what to expect of (the level of) my courses. I think there is not really a way to prepare academically.

language preparation

I paid for a course at the 'Babel institute', the course 'academic writing in English'. In this way I prepared myself to write essays in English on an academic level, because I never did this before.

finances

Although Dublin is quite an expensive city, the costs weren't really high. The financial plan helped me to make a clear overview of my finances. In this way, I knew I had to lean some more money to prevent money problems.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The registration for the courses / study programme was only 3 weeks before departure. The courses I wanted were already full by the time I could register. In this way, I had to choose different courses which was quite last minute. However, you could still change your courses if you really wanted to at the international office of UCD.

academic quality of education activities

UCD has a high academic quality of education activities. It wasn't really different from Utrecht University.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The counselling and support at UCD was very well. The information and guidelines were always very clear, even before my departure. I received several guidelines and instruction videos. During my time at UCD the communication was always very clear. They also had a really nice orientation week for international students. During this week I learned where to go when I had problems. Besides, they showed me around on Campus and in the city and there were several activities to meet other international students.

transfer of credits

The transfer of credits have not taken place yet. This will take a few more weeks. However, the grading system is totally different so this could lead to problems.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome and orientation programme was amazing. UCD organized a lot of activities for international students. Besides, they gave a lot of information before my departure about the orientation programme. In this way, I knew what to expect. UCD is an excellent host-university, they



even pick you up from the airport. Besides, the first week was full of activities with other international students, so you could fully focus on making new friends (because college did not start yet). The orientation programme is based on meeting other international students, get to know Dublin and get to know UCD.

accommodation

It was really hard to find an accommodation in Dublin. I was on the waiting list for a campus accommodation. However, there are not enough spaces so I had to find my own room. Dublin has a big rent problem, so the prices of student accommodations are extremely high. However, after searching for hours, I finally found a room. But this was in a house with the landlord in it, which is pretty common in Dublin. I was very lucky that I found the room, a lot of international students stay in hostels for the first week(s). Furthermore, the public transport in Dublin is not so good, so it is quite nessecary to find a room close to the campus.

leisure & culture

UCD offers a lot of sport and student societies. Besides, most international students went on weekend or day trips to see other parts of the country. In this way, I learned a lot about the Irish culture and I spent my leisure time with friends.

suggestions/tips

I would really recommend to join the international student society, they take you on trips in Ireland.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would really recommend this university to others. First of all, Dublin is a lovely city with a lot of pubs and cute old buildings. Irish people are very friendly. All the citizens speak English and they are always in for some small talk. Besides, UCD is an exelent university. They have very clear communication so you know what to expect, they have a very large range of courses. Furthermore, they try everything to help international students and they organize an orientation week for international students. Finally, it is only 4 months (so you are done with christmas) which seems perfect to me.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

There are a few things you should know before you go. First of all, Dublin in an expensive city, so be (financially) prepared. Second of all, the public transport in Dublin is quite bad. Thirdly, finding a room is really hard so try to start and search early!

2017-2018

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Het application process was a little bit unclear at the beginning. But after getting in contact with someone from University College Dulbin (UCD) they were more than happy to help you. It is not too hard to get into UCD. They don't have language tests because they expect students from Utrecht University too be fine. The process went quite smooth and it was easy to finish my application. They are very welcoming.



counselling & support at Utrecht University

I was one of the first students who went to UCD, this is the reason why the counselling and support from Utrecht University sometimes did not know everything. This made me a little bit uncertain if I would be fine. But they were very friendly and helped where they could, at the end they helped me a lot to find out everything I did not get at the beginning.

academic preparation

I didn't really had a academic preparation. I was interested in Social Science courses with quite specific topics (like migration, ethnicity and racism). I didn't need to prepare for that. I do advice to speak to students from UCD when you arrive about the courses, they will have useful tips and can tell you what the best way is to prepare and follow your courses. This can be very different from Utrecht University.

language preparation

I was afraid my English would not be good enough, but when I arrived I discovered you will be fine. After a week you forget that you speak English instead of your own language. I did read some english books before I went to Ireland, but that's all. I had no problems with laguage when it comes to reading, speaking or writing. You will get used to the language very easily.

finances

Dublin is more expensive than what I was used to. Everything is slightly more expensive so try to save extra money if you go to Dublin. The rent will be more expensive. You will receive a scholarship from erasmus which together with savings will be enough.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I followed courses within the Social Science field. I am very positive about this courses. This are acurate and international important topics, which made me very interested. I followed courses about racism, ethnicity, migration, economics en social policy. I also followed a course about Ireland and its history and culture. Very nice to get to know more about Ireland. You learn things that you will recognise in your daily life in Ireland.

academic quality of education activities

The courses were very interesting. I was in Social Science, the courses were sometimes a little bit vague but at the end I learned a lot. I wrote essays which really changed my way of writing and thinking about some topics. The level of the courses was fine.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The counselling and support was good. They are very willing to help. Sometimes it could take a long time to fix something because the University is very big. But they always want to help and if you want personal attention there are Buddy programmes and mentors to help.

transfer of credits

The tranfer of credits is not complete yet. Pretty soon you receive your grades which give an indication of your scores.

STUDENT LIFE



welcome & orientation programme

The introduction week was very helpful. You will meet lots of people so I would recommend to go there. There is also the possibility to sign in for societies. They have a lot of sport and other societies. You can join different kind of societies which is nice to get to know different kind of people and learn about some topics and sports.

accommodation

It is very hard to find a nice accomodation in Dublin. The chance of living on-campus, this is more common for first year students and you must be very lucky to get a room on-campus. For me, I didn't want to stay on-campus because I believe you see so much more of the city of you live off-campus. The campus by bus takes you at least half an hour (you can also go by bike). I was very happy to live more far away in the city, even if I had to travel more to go to University. There is a difference between The Northern part of Dublin and the South part. These parts are splitted by the Liffey (a river). The South is a more posh part, but much more expensive. I lived in the North part of the city center. It was less decent than Utrecht but you will see 'the real people' of Ireland. The public transport is fine in Utrecht so you will be fine in the North.

leisure & culture

I believe that the Irish culture is one of the most beautiful cultures in the world. Their culture is open, easy going and extremely friendly to other people. Their culture influenced not only buildings, music, food and daily life, but also the way people treat each other. I've met a lot of friends who I still talk to these days and I got the opportunity to mix with 'the Irish'.

suggestions/tips

My tip would be to join a society to explore more about sports and cultural activities or countries. You have plenty of time in your semester, use it to do more than just your courses.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definetly recommend this university. The willingness of the students and teachers to help, teach and know more about you is amazing. UCD is a very 'international' Universuty. People from all over the world from Asia, Africa, America or Europa come together to learn more about each other en enjoy a inspiring time in Ireland. There is a wide range of courses you can take, and they offer not only courses focussed on academic skills or knowledge, they also have courses to learn about Ireland and its culture but also courses to develop yourself.

Besides this the city Dublin offers lots of pubs to meet new people, beautiful undiscovered places, views and cultural activities. From Dublin it is also easy to go to other cities or surrounding countries. It is a very compact city that has a lot to offer, I'm sure you will feel home easily.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

My advice would be to go on tours and trips. There's a lot of beautiful nature in Ireland like the Cliffs or the country side. The other cities in Ireland will show you more and more about the Irish culture and you will be surprised about the nature. One of the best trips I did was a surfing weekend in Sligo (Northern side of Ireland).

