



University College Dublin

2023-2024

PREPARATION
exchange application process
All in all I would say that the exchange application process was fairly simple. The Utrecht University (UU) website has a very easy to follow step by step guide on how to apply for your exchange. The exchange application process can look quite daunting at first but if you follow this step by step guide you will find that it is not as difficult as it might seem. This step by step guide also contains all the deadlines you need to take into account when applying for your exchange.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
The counselling and support was very good in my exchange application process. As Dublin was a faculty destination the International Exchange Office - Faculty Law Economics and Governance was my main point of contact. They organised a meeting to which all students who were going to a faculty wide destination were invited. In this meeting they provided us with a manual for exchange that contained very useful information. On top of this they would respond to e-mails very quickly, mostly within two days. I also had a meeting with my student advisor, who was very helpful when I was selecting courses for my study plan.
academic preparation
I did not do any academic preparation for my exchange
language preparation
For applying to UCD I did not have to hand in any proof of required English language proficiency as part of my application.
Finances
It is good to know that living in Dublin can be very expensive. To prepare for this I started saving money from around June 2022 to help me pay for my expenses. I applied for two separate grants to pay for my living expenses. The first grant I applied to was the Erasmus grant which provided me with €390 per month as Ireland is classified in group 1: countries with higher living expenditures. On top of this I applied for a grant provided by DUO which gave me an additional €120 per month for not using my student public transport card while I was abroad. But be sure to save up some money as you will go through your savings very quickly. In the end I got a great deal for my rent but living on campus for example can be very expensive but I will discuss this in more detail in the student life section.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
All the courses I followed in UCD were courses provided by the school of Politics and International Relations. The reason for this is that I was only allowed to follow courses at this school because I chose a faculty destination. It is possible that this might be different for future exchange students. Be sure to check the UU website that deals with the destinations for exchange as it states what courses you are allowed to follow. I chose four different courses: Introduction to European Union Politics, Foundations in Political Research, Deliberative Mini-Publics and The Politics of Organised Crime. When signing up for my modules in early August I encountered some organisational issues. Module registration at UCD works with a first come first serve basis.



Module registration, however has different time-slots for different students. The time slot for picking modules will open first to students who are doing a full degree at UCD. Erasmus students are allowed to pick their modules in a later time-slot. A consequence of this is that most courses will already be full by the time you can pick your modules as an Erasmus student. This meant that I was only able to pick one of the modules I had put down in my initial study plan. However, do not be too discouraged by this. The social sciences department, of which the school for Politics and International Relations is a part, does provide you with a form that you can fill in if you did not get the modules you wanted. They will try and fit you into a module even if this might be full when you try and register. This might be different if you want to follow courses from different departments, but be sure to e-mail the course coordinator for these departments as they might be able to place you in modules that show as full during module registration.

academic quality of education activities

UCD uses three levels to qualify their courses just as the UU does. Level 1 courses are introductory courses and are most likely first year courses, level 2 courses are intermediate level courses and level 3 courses are advanced courses. I did two level 3 courses, one level 2 course and one level 1 course. I would say that the level of difficulty would be quite similar to that of the courses I have followed at UU. The major different for me was the amount of time I had to study for my final exams. All of my exams were on the 18th and 19th of December. My classes ended on the 26th of November, which meant that I had a lot of time to study for my exams than I would have had at the UU.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The counselling and support at UCD was very good. My main point of contact was the exchange office at UCD. They provided very informative lectures before and during my exchange. The exchange office provides something they call a 'padlet' which was very helpful. This 'padlet' is a website used by the UCD exchange office to provide you with all the information your need. If you can't find the information you need on the 'padlet' you can just e-mail the exchange office as they were very quick to respond. Another important point of contact was the social sciences department for incoming exchange students. They really helped me with module registration. They provide you with a form you can use if you have not managed to get the courses you wanted. They will try and sort you out a place in courses that might be listed as full during module registration. On top of this they have drop-in hours you can attend if you have any questions regarding module registration.

transfer of credits

As of yet I have not completed the transfer of credits. However, as UCD also works with ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) and level 1, 2 and 3 courses, just as the UU does, it was fairly intuitive to get a grasp of how credits gained at UCD would transfer to my studies at the UU. In order to transfer your credits you need what is called a transcript of records that contains all the grades you got during your stay abroad. UCD has a very easy system to get hold of your transcript of records. Instead of having to e-mail the exchange office you simply log into your UCD account and download your transcript of records onto your own computer.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

UCD has a two week orientation programme, which is a great opportunity to meet fellow international students and make friends. There are campus tours, a welcome speech, social mixers and pub crawls. One thing that is important to note, however is that these activities are organised by different organisations. For example there is the UCD erasmus student network, Dublin Erasmus student network, UCD reslife, UCD exchange office and the different departments that organise different activities. Be sure to follow all these different organisations on Facebook or Instagram as you will miss a lot of great activities otherwise.



accommodation

Getting accommodation in Dublin is very tricky. Your best bet is to get housing in UCD. There are two major disadvantages to this however. The first one being that it is very expensive. Expect to pay atleast €1000 per month to stay in UCD housing. The second one is that accommodation for international students is not guaranteed and registration is on a first come first serve basis, which means that if you do not register fast enough you will not be able to live in UCD accommodation. Even though I was very fast to sign up I still did not manage to get into UCD housing. This meant that I had to find off-campus accommodation. I tried to get off-campus accommodation for about four months but did not manage to get anything. In the end I got very lucky as I decided to join a hockey club there and one of my teammates could provide me with housing. Overall I would say that if you do not manage to get on-campus accommodation try and go to Ireland a bit before university start as it is definitely easier to find off-campus accommodation when you are in Ireland than if you are trying to do it from home.

leisure & culture

I would say that one of my favourite things while I was in Dublin was watching sports with my friends. Irish people are really into their sports, especially rugby. I did not know that much about rugby before I went to Ireland. I got really lucky however, because in the time I was there the rugby world cup was being. Every time the Irish team played I would round up some of my friends and we would go and watch it in a pub that was close to the university. The atmosphere in the pub during those games were absolutely amazing. Even if you do not get the chance to watch a rugby world cup while you are in Dublin I would definitely recommend going to watch a game in the RDS. The RDS is a rugby stadium close to UCD and is the home ground for the biggest rugby team in Dublin. It is a great night out and the tickets are not very expensive. Another great way to spend your time is by going on hikes in and around Dublin. Glendalough and Bray cliff walk are both amazing hikes that spring to mind.

suggestions/tips

Make sure to follow the UCD-reslife Instagram or Facebook account. UCD-reslife is organisation that organises activities for students living on campus. As most international students will be living on campus the activities organised by UCD-reslife are a great way to make new friend. As I did not live on campus I did not know about these activities at the time as they are mostly aimed towards students living on campus. This does not mean that if you do not live on campus you are not allowed to join them. For this reason I would definitely recommend following UCD-reslife on Instagram even if you are not living on campus. They will post updates about the activities and where to sign up on these accounts.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend going to Dublin and attending UCD. I think overall UCD is a very inviting university that takes great care for their international students. Everything is neatly organised and if you have any questions or run into trouble there is a lot of support to help you out. There is a large international community there so it is a great opportunity to meet new people and learn about their cultures. UCD offers a wide variety of courses so you will always be able to find something that fits your interest.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

One of the things I would definitely recommend is joining a local sports team if you are into sports. I played hockey on a team in the time I was there. I even ended up living with one of my teammates which was great fun! As we played games outside of Dublin it is also a great way to explore different parts of the country. It's also a great way to connect with Irish local people. I would say that the Irish are very welcoming and hospitable. I found this out because I was part of a hockey team that only contained people with an Irish nationality. My



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teammates would invite me over to all their favorite pubs and café's and would even have me over for dinner with their families. I would say that joining this hockey team made my studying abroad experience that extra bit special. Especially because my teammates would take me to places that I would have never have been to visit if I was not on their team.



PREPARATION

exchange application process

The exchange application process went smoothly and without any issues both from the side of UU and UCD. It is very important to keep track of the deadlines and have all necessary documents at hand.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

UU provided a great amount of information on the website, through emails and lectures. The communication regarding signing documents and responding emails went smoothly and quickly.

academic preparation

I did not do anything particular for my academic preparation. The first two years of my three-year bachelor were enough.

language preparation

Since my study programme in Utrecht is already in English, I did not do any preparation.

finances

Dublin is a very expensive city and thus also considerably more expensive than Utrecht. I applied for the Erasmus Grant, used my own savings and got contributions from my parents.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The whole application process to choose the preferred module happens quite late, i.e. around 2-3 weeks before starting the course and it is first-come, first-serve. However, since every student is allocated a specific time slot where one has to choose the courses, it might happen that all preferred courses are already taken and thus I highly recommend looking into many different courses beforehand.

I had 5 courses: one level 1 at 5 ECTS (INRL10020 Foundations of Intl Relations), three level 2 at 5 ECTS each (INRL20160 Introduction to European Union Politics; HIS21320 Sport and the modern world; ECON20080 Economic Policy Analysis), and one level 3 course at 10ECTS (POL30640 Deliberative Mini-Publics).

academic quality of education activities

In general I found the academic quality to be lower than what I was used to at UU. Personally I would not recommend to take the level 1 courses, as I was fairly bored during the one I had and I did not feel particularly challenged by it, neither did I learn anything particularly new. However, the difficulty of different modules of the same level varied, so some courses might be easier than others.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

While there is counselling and support at UCD, I did not make much use of these services, and so I cannot say much about them. I only reached out for documents regarding the exchange and nothing beyond that.

transfer of credits

Currently, I am still waiting for all of my grades. Therefore, I cannot say anything on the process of transferring credits yet.



STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The university had an orientation programme the week before courses started and the first week and organised plenty of events for exchange as well as new international students. Events included campus and city tours, events to get to know University societies and other uni organisations (Student Union, sport clubs etc.), events to get to know other (exchange) students and events catered specifically for on-campus students (trip to IKEA, free household goods, etc.).

I recommend to attend as many events as possible especially if you do not know anyone yet. Personally I met most of my friends during these weeks, so for me the orientation programme as a whole was worth it, even if not every event was really interesting or worth it.

accommodation

UCD offers on-campus accommodation for both exchange and non-exchange students. Although it is very expensive (from 1000-1600€/month or more) I do recommend to look into it and apply for a spot. However, it is not given that you will get a place. This happened to me and I had to look for housing off-campus. Although UCD gives some information they are not helping you find anything, and you are on your own. I recommend looking on Daft.ie, Facebook and other sites which are also recommended by UCD (but be very careful of scams). I also recommend to start looking early. I started at the end of July (more than 1 month before going to Dublin) and that was too late (however: you only find out if you are on-campus at the end of June).

In the end, I went on [Hostingpower.ie](http://hostingpower.ie) to find some place to live. That is a service which connects students/renters with people/families offering a place to live at their homes. Although this was not my preferred option it was better than nothing. In the end I paid slightly less than on-campus (but still slightly more than €1000). I would recommend to use this as a last resort, since it also is not cheap and not what most people have in mind (for example: I lived with a lady in her 60's; the room was good and I had everything I needed, but it really was not what I wished for). Still many others have also found housing there, also on a very short notice.

leisure & culture

The university has a number of sport clubs and societies which students can join. The cost to join student societies is 2€ and you can join as many as you want. Personally, I did not sign up for any in the beginning, but throughout the semester I signed up for some because they had events I wanted to go to. So in the end I joined 3 student societies (but I have heard of others who have joined 8 or more). In addition, there are many options for sports clubs with great facilities which are however more costly (depending on the sport).

Outside of uni, Dublin offers many pubs (obviously), many parks and museums. In Dublin the national museums are free for everyone and they are well worth visiting. And since Dublin is also a very big city there is also something for everyone!

suggestions/tips

In Ireland I really recommend going on trips to see the nature of Ireland.

At the beginning of the semester, there are events organised by UCD Global for international and exchange students (trips around Ireland: bike tour at the Atlantic Coast, surfing,). Even if I could only attend one, I really recommend doing them, since I heard only good stuff about it, and you will see the beautiful west coast of Ireland (and its free, spots are limited though and you need to sign up in time).

Other (one-day) trips are Howth (fishing town and peninsula in the North of Dublin), Bray and other fishing towns in the south of Dublin. Not only are they really nice, but also there are great walks/hikes around them with great views. Additionally, I can really recommend a hiking trip to Glendalough and the Wicklow mountains.



CONCLUSIONS

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

I had a wonderful time in Dublin and at UCD. While the university is not the most challenging academically, it still is a good place for a study abroad, since the university really makes an effort to accommodate exchange and international students (and with less academics also more time for friends!). Furthermore, since everyone speaks English, there is no language barrier, which makes communication, and things like looking for housing easier.

Furthermore, the country is also really, really beautiful and definitely worth a visit.

In the end, for me the people I met there and not the city or the university which made the exchange so great and a truly unforgettable experience. While Dublin has a lot to offer, I did not fall in love with the city and have no plans to visit it in the near future.

So to conclude: While I would not necessarily recommend Dublin and UCD as a destination/university, I would also not go as far as discouraging anyone from going there.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

As someone who lived off campus I can only recommend to try to get on-campus, it will save you a lot of frustration on stress before leaving for Ireland, and during your stay (since public transportation is really not great).

If that doesn't work, try to get good connections with the bus to campus and city centre (and if you value night life also connections that go the whole night and don't stop at 23.30).



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PREPARATION
exchange application process
I started my application after my classmates started talking about it. I then started to explore if studying abroad would be something for me. It was quite easy to do and the information given was very clear.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
At my faculty we had a study abroad meeting during the study abroad weeks where the focus was on the option to follow subjects abroad during your third year. I also got to have a meeting with our education advisor to help me with picking the subjects I would like and which would fit with my future plans.
academic preparation
I did not do any academic preparation.
language preparation
Since I went to Ireland and all of my classes would be in English, I did not do any language preparation as well, only the obliged tests for Erasmus.
finances
Dublin was an expensive city and living on campus is very expensive as well, even though it is cheaper than living in the city. I have a loan and I saved some money before going. My parents also helped me when needed.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
I did not follow a specific study programme, but I picked subjects from different programs. The subjects I chose were Gender, Race and Media, Child, domestic and sexual abuse, Digital judgement and Introduction to Sociology/
academic quality of education activities
A few of my courses were first year courses, they had a lot of new information but were easier than I was used to. There were less deadlines and papers that I had to write so there was more room to engage with the literature during lectures instead of working on papers that I will never read again.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
I had some email contact with the receiving university and they always responded fast. During the first week there were a lot of introduction activities that made me feel comfortable with this new temporary university.
transfer of credits
In Ireland they work with a system where your grades go from A to F, instead of 1-10. The website made it very clear what grade would be sufficient for you in order to pass your course

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
As said above, there were a lot of introduction activities, however I found it a bit unclear that you had to sign yourself up for those, so I did not go to a lot of them. But the ones my and my friends went to made me feel at ease with all the new locations there.



accommodation

I lived on campus with other students. I lived with five roommates, all of them were also just here for a semester abroad. The accomodation was nice and I had my own bathroom, but we had to buy our own cutlery and dishes.

leisure & culture

I went to different cities in Ireland and the beautiful nature surrounding it. I also went out to pubs, bars and museums with my firindgroup. Especially in the first week when we did not have any lectures yet, we took a lot of time to explore the city.

suggestions/tips

I would suggest going to the cliffs that Ireland had and to try to do something every night, because it is over before you know it and then out of nowhere there is no time anymore for all the plans you had.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would really recoment this university, they were very clear with their lectures and timetables and everything was neatly organised. I would say that the level of education is a bit lower but a pro is that the university had a lot of niche courses that you would not follow in the Netherlands. Also Dublin as a city is worth spending your time. There is a lot to do and the people are really friendly.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Sign up for residences early as they are quickly to be full.



PREPARATION

exchange application process

There are a lot of steps you have to take in order to go on exchange, but it's all very well explained on the UU site so you don't have to worry about that.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support at Utrecht University was good, they helped me with the support I needed.

academic preparation

I found that the academic level in Dublin is lower than in the Netherlands, the courses were doable and academic preparation was not necessary.

language preparation

I didn't prepare myself, but I experienced that with the English skills I already had, I could express myself quite well.

finances

Dublin is really expensive, so save up before you go and be aware that you will be spending a lot of money. Accommodation is especially expensive, but so are groceries and drinks in pubs.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I took 5 courses in Dublin. You have to register for these courses and this was a big issue for me. Many courses I wanted to take were already full when I was able to register, so be aware that you may not be able to take all the courses you want.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality was good, however I experienced that the academic quality is better in the Netherlands. I found that the courses were much easier to pass than in the Netherlands.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Support at University College Dublin was very good. They respond very quick if you have an issue and they inform you on everything you need to know.

transfer of credits

The credit system in UCD is the same as in UU. I took 5 courses worth a total of 30 ECTS.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

In the first week there are orientation activities, however I didn't do a lot of these. I explored the city with my flatmates and other people I met in the first days.

accommodation

I stayed in a student residence on campus. I highly recommend this. It was really fun living there and easy to make friends. It also gives you the real experience of campus life which I found to be very exciting. However, there are not many places available so you have to be ready to register when it opens to get yourself a place to stay. The accommodation is really expensive, on campus most residences are 1150 or 1330 euros a month. I have heard that finding a residence in the city is really hard and also expensive.



leisure & culture

Dublin is a beautiful city with a lot of fun pubs and clubs. I spent a lot of time there with my friends and it was one of the things that made Dublin so fun. The city itself is also so fun and there is a lot to explore: beautiful museums, nature parks and other attractions.

suggestions/tips

I arrived on the first of September, which I highly recommend. This gives you the opportunity to settle and explore the city with the people you meet there before classes start.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend Dublin for an exchange. I had a really fun time there and I made friends that I still see now that I'm back. I also highly recommend the University itself, it is very well organized and there are many very interesting courses.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you have any doubts about whether or not to go on an exchange: just do it! It will be so fun and it's an experience you don't want to miss and will never forget about.

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The exchange application process can be quite overwhelming and confusing at times, because there are so many different steps. Be prepared to spend some extra hours every month to carefully complete the process. You will have to read many instructions, mail many people to have them sign documents and upload said documents in Osiris before the given deadline. I advise you to make a clear overview to keep track of everything.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Counselling and support at Utrecht University is quite good. That the application process is overwhelming and confusing is no problem as long as you know who to ask for help. For counselling you can email the study advisor and for support you can email the exchange office. Both were always very supportive and responded really swiftly to emails. Also, several study abroad meetings were organised where we could ask questions and hear experiences from prior students, this was really informative as well.

academic preparation

No academic preparations were necessary whatsoever. I believe that there is only one requirement and that is that you have a minimum average grade of 6.5 but this is a very general requirement that most students meet without even trying. The only thing that I needed to provide was an Academic Transcript from my current study programme with all my modules and grades so far, that I requested from my study advisor.

language preparation

Students from Governance were not required by University College Dublin to pass any language test or provide any language certificates. I only needed to provide my high school grade list to show that my final English grade was 7.0 minimum. From that and the mere fact that you are enrolled in this study programme, they assume that your English is sufficient. Moreover, in highschool I did an English exam at C2 level. I am confident in English and I did not feel the need to do any language preparation. But University College Dublin provides several extracurricular English language courses for students who would like to improve their skills. You will receive more information about this from University College Dublin once they have accepted your application.



finances

Dublin is one of the most expensive cities in the world, so be sure to apply for every grant and compensation that you are eligible for. The most important two are the Erasmus grant and the public transportation compensation from Duo. Some students may want to find a job and work during their exchange. However, most students that I met were unable to find a suitable job. Moreover, the exchange is only four months and you do not want to spend your spare time working. Instead, you want to enjoy the beautiful country that is Ireland and have fun with your new friends. Hence, I would advise you to save up money by working prior to your exchange. You should be able to get around with 1500 to 1700 euro per month in total.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Module registration was quite stressful, because it was on first come first served basis. Beforehand, I spend much time to look into modules and carefully compiled a list of number one modules and back up options so that I could quickly select them during registration. These were my modules: Foundations of Political Theory and International Relations, Theories and Concepts in International Relations, Introduction to Sociology, History of Modern Europe, Individuals and the State, International Human Rights Law. Most level 1 and 2 modules are 5 credits and some level 3 modules are 10 credits. Because two level 3 modules of 10 credits that I liked were full, I had to choose 6 modules for a total of 30 credits. The way University College Dublin organises in person exams is fairly cumbersome compared to Utrecht, but there were no organisational issues. And the people from the international exchange office were always very helpful to answer any questions about the study programme.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality of education is comparable with Utrecht University. Some modules were of little bit lower quality and some were of little bit higher quality. Level 1 courses were obviously on the easier side, but the level 2 and level 3 courses were of good difficulty. For me, the quality of the module largely depended on how well the professor or tutor explained to content, which varied a lot. Overall, I would say that the academic quality at University College Dublin is a little bit lower. However, keep in mind that they need to complete 30 credits in a trimester of 15 weeks, whereas at Utrecht University we have 2 periods of 10 weeks to complete 30 credits. Thus, the academic quality might be slightly lower, but the increased study load compensates for that.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

University College Dublin is very much concerned about the well being of their students. During the welcome meeting of the international exchange office, we received extensive information about all the counselling and support services. I never made use of any of these services, except the international exchange office, but they made sure that everyone knew where to find help in case we needed to. There is counselling and support for students with medical needs or mental issues and they strongly promote diversity and inclusion. The Students Union is very visible on campus and your first point of contact for any problems you may have.

transfer of credits

I cannot provide a detailed description of my experience with the process of the transfer of credits, as I have not received all my grades yet. But University College Dublin also works with the European Credit System. Therefore, the credits do not need to be converted and the transfer should be quick and easy. Good to not is perhaps that University College Dublin works with letter grades. Your grades will not be converted to our 1 to 10 scale and do not count for your average grade, you simply receive the credits for the passed modules.



STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

On certain days and times, members from the international exchange were welcoming students at the airport, who would show you the way to the Aircoach bus that would drop you off at campus or in the city centre. Then there is an extensive orientation program during the two weeks prior to classes. This is a great opportunity to meet other students and make new friends. For some activities you need to be registered, so be sure to do that in time before everything is full. Examples are campus tours, other informational meetings, pub crawls and game nights. I would like to encourage you to take part in as many activities as you can. It is a lot of fun and I met most of my close friends during these two weeks of orientation.

accommodation

Unfortunately University College Dublin does not have enough accommodations to house all international students on campus. Like half of the other students that I met, I was not able to secure accommodation on campus. It was full within half an hour after the registration opened. Most people that I met stayed at host families. There are many websites to bring you into contact with them, such as Hosting Power and Homestay. However convenient living on campus may be, realise that there is a chance that you will not be able to get a room. This means that you will still have to find private housing in mid June after registration and that is quite late. Start to look for accommodation better sooner than later. With the housing crisis at the time, I should have started looking six months before my arrival, which would have been early March. Because not only does it need to be affordable, it also needs to be close to campus. Dublin is large city and the public transport is not as reliable as in the Netherlands, so you do not want to make a two hour commute every day. Eventually I stayed in two different private studios that were ridiculously expensive. Now I would suggest that if you do not have a room before your arrival, to rent an Airbnb for the first week or two and then look for accommodation from there. It is easier and cheaper to find accommodation if you meet other students.

leisure & culture

Ireland has a rich culture. For instance, there is the Irish language and the traditional Irish Dance. People are very welcoming and friendly in my experience. What I also really liked was the pub culture. This is not just for students who merely want to get wasted. Instead, grandpa and grandma also hit to pub on Friday at midnight to have a large pint of Guinness. Pubs are cosy and there is often live music. I never used to go to bars in the Netherlands and I am not much of a drinker, but I really loved going to pubs in Ireland. Dublin is a big city and there is a lot to see and to do. Moreover, Ireland is a country with beautiful nature. You can even see the Dublin mountains from the city centre. There are national parks, mountains and lakes, which makes it the perfect country for hikers. Overall, you will have no trouble enjoying yourself in your free time.

suggestions/tips

During the orientation week you will be able to join university societies. I would like to encourage you to join as much societies as you can. Since it is very inexpensive and you will receive a lot in return. The sport clubs allow you to practice your favorite sport or try out a new sport. The other societies organise weekly meetings and events, often with free food, which is great for us poor students, and they take you on trips in Dublin and around Ireland. You will also meet other students and make new friends here. Another tip is to make use of the cheap public transport in Ireland. For instance, the beautiful towns called Bray and Howth are close to Dublin and only a 1 euro busride away. Trains are relatively inexpensive as well. One 2 hour return ticket to Belfast in Northern Ireland is only 20 euro. We also visited Cork and Galway. Overall, the advice is to go on as many trips and tours as you can. And do not be afraid to do the touristy stuff.



CONCLUSIONS

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

First and foremost, I chose University College Dublin because they have a wide variety of modules to choose from and they offered modules that I liked. What stands out for me personally is that it is a very international university. That is to say, about half of the students are international students and they come from all over the world. As a person of color who always sort of stands out at Utrecht School of Governance, it is nice to meet so many other international students. More generally, students and teachers are very kind and always happy to help. I imagine that the strong promotion of diversity and inclusion also fosters community feeling and an open and friendly attitude towards others. It felt like home and I am sure you will feel at home before you know it.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

In conclusion, I would definitely recommend going to University College Dublin. Studying abroad in general is an educational experience that is valuable for your personal and academic development. I had the best time of my life over there. Take that opportunity with both hands if you are in a position to do so. My choice for University College Dublin was based on the following considerations: interesting modules, large campus with many good facilities, the fact that they speak English in Ireland, which is my favorite language, and the fact that Ireland belongs to the European Union, which just makes paperwork easier. My additional advice: take your studies seriously, but do not spend all your time on that. Instead, also learn to know the Irish culture, make new friends, take tours to explore Dublin and go on trips to explore the rest of Ireland. It may be expensive sometimes, but just do it if you can afford to. As the Irish would say: it will be grand!



2021-2022

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The exchange application process is two-fold. First, you sign up at UU for an exchange destination. After you have been selected, the UU nominates you at the exchange destination. From that point on, most of the application process takes place at the host university, which is UCD in this case. At UCD, the application process went very smoothly. The exchange office of UCD organised monthly webinars with all the information for the required application phase, as well as the latest information regarding Covid-19. All of this information could also be found on a special website, on which they also uploaded questions they received from students. The only part of the application process which did not go as I would have liked it to, was the enrolment for modules. Instead giving everyone the opportunity to enrol at the same time, they made groups which got different times at which they could enrol. In my case, most of the modules I wanted to take were already full at the time I was able to enrol. Overall, however, the application process went as smooth as one could wish for.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
There are plenty of opportunities to get counselling and support from different people at UU. Personally, I had one meeting with the student advisor of USBO before deciding on an exchange and destination. Later on, whenever I had a question on the application process for instance, I could send an email to the International Exchange office of REBO. Later on with the Erasmus grant process, there was a little more confusion as the IEO had many delays in providing the different agreements and the first part of the grant itself.
academic preparation
Other than completing the first three years of the bachelor degree, there was no necessity for any academic preparation in my case.
language preparation
In high school, I did bilingual education in Dutch and English. My level of English was therefore already on the required level, so I didn't do any extra language preparation.
finances
Dublin is not the cheapest city (around the same price level as a big city in The Netherlands). In the months before departure, I worked quite some hours in the week to save for the exchange. Eventually, together with the Erasmus grant, the public transportation compensation from DUO and a contribution from my parents, it was financially doable. To give a rough overview: on return I calculated that I have spend an average of €1600 per month, which included rent, groceries, tuition fee, nights out and trips in Ireland.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
UCD works with two semester system, which means that during the 4 months of studying in Dublin you have the same modules for the entire period. You can take modules of two different amounts of ECTS; at level 1 and 2 the modules are worth 5 ECTS and at level 3 they're 10 ECTS. Personally, I chose four modules: Deliberative Mini-Publics, Political Risk & Foreign Direct Investment (both of 10 ECTS), Global Social Policy, and Policy-making, implementation & evaluation (both of 5 ECTS). During the week, I had two hours of lectures from each of the modules. Due to Covid-19, there were no seminars. With the exception of the module of Political Risk & Foreign Direct Investment, there were also no exams due to Covid-19 but only essays or written assignments instead.



academic quality of education activities

During the semester, I noticed there was a big difference in the level of education between the level 2 and level 3 modules. In the level 2 courses, many topics that were being discussed had already been covered in courses I had in Utrecht. The level 3 courses on the other hand, covered more new topics and were therefore much more interesting. The general level of the modules and assignments is just a tad lower than at USBO in my opinion, but overall, I did enjoy the modules. They fit well with the courses of USBO, but do also cover more international and political topics.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

At UCD, there were also plenty of counselling and support opportunities if you need to use them. I personally only used the Exchange Office to ask some questions about the application process or when a form needed to be signed. Furthermore, whenever I had a question concerning one of the modules, I could always turn to the professor of that specific module. They were always happy to help.

transfer of credits

At the moment of writing the report, not all marks have been published by UCD. Therefore, the process of the transfer of credits has not been started yet.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

As stated before, the Exchange Office of UCD organised a monthly webinar from May onwards. In these webinars, they told us that they would also do some (physical) activities in the orientation week (which is held the week before the teaching term starts). However, the Exchange Office did not organise a single event that week except for one more webinar. There were events organised by an organisation called "UCD ResLife" (they have an Instagram page), whose activities are focused on the students living on campus. I lived off-campus, so I only discovered their existence halfway during the orientation week. Luckily, they also welcomed UCD students living off-campus, so I was able to attend some of their events that week. These included a trip to Howth, Dun Laoghaire and a walking tour through the city centre of Dublin. In the first few weeks of the semester, there is also something called "Freshers week", during which the student associations and sport clubs introduce themselves. There is a market, as well as activities which you can attend. UCD has a lot of associations and clubs, including special ones for international and Erasmus students.

accommodation

UCD has an enormous campus with a lot of student accommodations. The thing with the student accommodations is that they are really expensive. The cheapest rooms are around €1000 to €1100 a month. You would then have an en-suite bedroom and a shared kitchen and living room with 5 to 7 other students. Personally, I chose to live off-campus mostly because of financial reasons. I travelled to Dublin together with fellow student from USBO, which happened to be a very good friend of mine. On campus, we both would have needed to pay the €1000 per month, but off-campus we could share a room and split the rent. That is what we did, but that was not an easy task. There is a housing shortage in Dublin and the rents are still quite high compared to The Netherlands. Eventually we found a place through a website called "Homestay" and paid on average €672 per month per person. On Homestay, you rent a room in someone's house. Our accommodation was in Bluebell, on half an hour cycling from UCD. In our case, the landlord lived somewhere else so we shared an entire house with 4 other people. We couldn't have wished for a better place to stay for the 4 months we were in Dublin. We had everything we needed, our landlords Richard & Marylin were the nicest people and with our bikes we were in the city centre in 20 minutes and at UCD in just half an hour.



leisure & culture

There are plenty of things to do in Dublin and Ireland when it comes to leisure and culture. Dublin itself is a large city, so there are a lot of interesting things to do and see. There is Temple Bar, Dublin Castle, the Guinness Storehouse, O'Connell Street with the GPO and the Spire, Phoenix Park, Kilmainham Gaol, Grafton Street, St. Stephan's Green, Merrion Square, the Docklands and Poolbeg Lighthouse. A good thing to know is that the national museums (which are the National Gallery and the National Museums of Archeology, Natural History and History & Decorative Arts) are free to visit. On practically every corner in Temple Bar is a pub with live music which are great for nights out. Another nice cultural event to attend is a game of one of the two national sports, Gaelic Football and Hurling. Futhermore, even though Dublin is a big city, you find nature and nice, little villages within just 20 to 30 minutes from the city centre.

suggestions/tips

I have two pieces of advices. The first one is to quickly decide wether you want to live on campus. I would suggest to choose this option if you are travelling alone, because it is then easier to make friends and have people around with whom you can do activities. When that is not your cup of tea, or when you are travelling with someone, I would recommend to look for an accomodation off-campus. That requires a lot of researching, however, so the quicker you know where you want to live, the easier you make it for yourself to find an accomodation. The second piece of advice is to not only explore Dublin, but also as much of Ireland as possible. It is a truly beautifull country. Close to Dublin are the wonderfull cliffs of Howth, as well as the coastal towns of Dún Laoghaire, Malahide and Killiney Hill. An hour to the south of Dublin are the Wicklow Mountains. There you find the beautifull Powerscourt Estate and gardens, as well as one of the highlights of Ireland; Glendalough. An hour to the north is the only Unesco World Heritage site of Ireland, Knewgrange (travel via Drogheda). I can also recommend to visit the westcoast of Ireland. Cities like Galway and Cork (with nearby Cobh), Limerick and Sligo are worth a visit, as well as the Cliffs of Moher and Killarney National Park. A trip to Belfast is also easily doable. All these places are conveniently reachable with the perfectly organised Irish public transportation system. There are a lot of companies who offer bus routes to different places in Ireland, as well as the train services of Irish Rail.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend University College Dublin to other students. The period of the exchange were truly one of the best 4 months of my life. UCD offers a great study experience with many other international students on a large and modern campus. And then there is Dublin, which is just a wonderfull city. Even though the city is quite big (1,5 million citizens), it is compact and has a nice atmosphere. It also has beautifull buildings, interesting musea and very cozy pubs with live music. But it does not stop there; while Dublin is a great city for living and studying, the real highlights of Ireland lie beyond Dublin. And even tough Ireland is bigger than The Netherlands, everything is easily reachable. Some highlights don't even take longer than 30 minutes to an hour from Dublin. I would definitely recommend to visit these places, because Ireland is a really stunning country with a lot of variety in scenery. There are cliffs, mountains, valleys, lakes, the Atlantic Ocean, vibrant cities, many churches and castles and a lot of greenland. Furthermore, the Irish people are super friendly and are willing to help whenever something's wrong. All in all, if you're looking for an exchange destination that has a great university in a vibrant city and a stunning country with friendly people, stop looking and go for University College Dublin.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I hope this report helped in making the decision for an exchange destination a bit easier, and that my experiences and tips were of help when Dublin is the destination you are going for. The most important thing I



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University**

can advise you is to fully enjoy the adventure when you're on exchange. Those 4 months are over before you realise it. While studying, passing the modules and obtaining the credits are important, the most important part of the whole exchange is the experience how it is to live in a foreign country. So, I would say: savour the culture, explore as much of Dublin and Ireland as possible, make new friends, but enjoy the adventure most of all!



PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application was an organised process. It is, however, important to keep an overview by making something like a to-do list and keeping all the required documents organised.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support at the UU was good. They were always happy to help you out with all kinds of questions. The webinars were also really helpful for the preparations before studying abroad.

academic preparation

There were no academic preparations whatsoever. The only requirements for studying at UCD was the application process.

language preparation

I did not need to prepare myself for studying abroad when it came to language. My English is already sufficient for understanding the academic literature, writing papers and exams, understanding the professors and socialise with the Irish people. Irish folks are very kind and often try to help you in any way they can, so it will never be a problem if your English lacks from time to time.

finances

Before I travelled to Dublin, I submitted the required forms for the Erasmus Grant. Besides that, I already had some saving that I could use for my time abroad. Living in Dublin is quite expensive. The rent can be a really big amount per month (at least 1.000 euros per month for living on campus), but there are some more affordable options. I stayed in a HomeStay, which I really recommend because of the social and financial advantages. Besides that, you can make your time abroad as expensive as you like.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I attended three courses; three 10-credit courses: International Justice (International Relations), Electoral Systems and Parties and Party competition (Politics). The courses were a good reflections of the overview that was already published on the UCD website. Important: make sure that you select your courses in advance, including some alternative courses. It can occur that some courses are unavailable.

academic quality of education activities

The courses I attended were level 3 courses; the highest level for bachelor students. The level, however, was a little lower in comparison to most courses at the UU. I would therefore recommend to not select any level 1 courses, because you'll probably get bored during class.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I haven't used any counselling or support at UCD. Most professors, however, offered a helping hand for those who needed it. Extensions for deadlines, with a valid reason, are most of the times an option. Professors do have office hours in which they are also more than happy to help you.

transfer of credits

At this moment in time, I haven't received all my grades yet. It is therefore not possible for me to provide a proper description of the process of credit transfers.



STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Due to Covid, the orientation programme was mostly online. I don't like online meetings, so I did not attend any. There were, however, some welcome and orientation programmes that weren't officially UCD's. Student societies and Instagram pages such as "UCDResLife" offered campus tours and additional activities, which I would certainly recommend to start your period at UCD off properly.

accommodation

As I mentioned earlier in this file, I decided to stay in a HomeStay. The accommodations on campus started from 1.000,- per month. For this fee, things like pots and pans are not included. Moreover, you have to share things like an oven with a lot of people (how many depends on the rent per month). The place I stayed was a HomeStay, which normally means that you'll stay at the house of someone who rents one or more rooms. This saved me a lot of money (it was almost the half of the rent for living on-campus). I would definitely check it out.

leisure & culture

In my weekends I tried to discover as much of Ireland as possible. I made little trips with the student from the UU that accompanied me in Dublin. In addition to the weekend leisure I met up with other students and used to drink pints (Guinness of course;) from time to time. As I mentioned before, the Irish and international students are really nice and you'll have no problem fitting in.

suggestions/tips

You need to check out the live music in the pubs at night. You cannot miss them and you should not want to, it is a really good experience.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes I certainly would. As I mentioned, Dublin and the rest of Ireland has a lot of beautiful places to visit. What is more, there is a really nice pub culture, everyone seems really relaxed and the Irish folks are the most lovely people I have ever met. In addition to the cultural aspects, UCD provides a nice place to study abroad. The professors are really helpful and the accommodations are also not bad.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

In my semester, I was really lucky with the (lack of) Covid restrictions. You should, however, take the possibility in to account that Covid restrictions can trouble your stay in Dublin.



PREPARATION

exchange application process

Communication with UCD went very smooth, but of course there are many things you should arrange before leaving.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I didn't receive much support from UU, but I also didn't ask for it. Signing documents and responding to my questions went smoothly.

academic preparation

I already finished the entire bachelor Bestuurs- en Organisationswetenschap before going on exchange, but this would not have been necessary at all. Studying at UCD is also possible when you didn't finish an entire bachelor.

language preparation

I started with C1 English level and finished with C1 as well. Even though this level stayed the same, I'm sure I improved a lot during my stay.

finances

For me, living in Dublin costed way more than the maximum amount you are able to lend from the Dutch government when you're a student. It was therefore required to use money from other sources.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I couldn't follow the courses I wanted to follow in the first case, because there were limited spots. The courses I followed in the end were quite interesting though, but not very challenging. The content was different than what I was used to in The Netherlands, but that wasn't a problem for me at all. Teachers were friendly. Education was not very adapted to international studies. You study together with all the Irish people and the teachers use mostly examples from Ireland, which makes you feel a bit like an outsider.

academic quality of education activities

The education in general was quite low quality in my opinion. I only followed lectures with large groups of people and there was almost no interaction at all. There is a large and comfortable library where you can study.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

In the beginning it was unclear for me who to contact with what issues, but later in the process I knew who could answer my questions and sign my documents for example.

transfer of credits

The transfer of credits is simple and easy, because UCD works with a system of ECTS.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There is an orientation week at UCD where you can get to know campus and other students. Partly because of COVID19, not many activities were organized as far as I know.

accommodation

It is extremely hard to find housing in Dublin. The rooms available are usually more than thousand euros per month. I rented a +/- 8 square meter room on campus for 1045 euros per month.



leisure & culture

Culture and leisure in Dublin is amazing. There are lots of museums and other fun things to do. Also, there are many traditional Irish pubs.

suggestions/tips

I would recommend to look for a room as soon as possible and you can't find anything, you can sign up for campus recommendation as a backup plan. It is important to book a room directly after they open the bookings, because within half an hour everything was booked.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Even though I had an absolute amazing time at University College Dublin, I wouldn't recommend studying at UCD if you're a student from The Netherlands. In my opinion, the education is very low quality compared to The Netherlands and not really challenging as well. Also, it is almost impossible to find housing in Dublin. Living on campus is the most accessible option and even here you pay at least a thousand euros per month.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

No



2019-2020

PREPARATION
exchange application process
There are several steps to follow in the application process, which are required to be nominated at the university.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Utrecht University is providing support by mail and lectures with information. There is also the option to speak in person to people about the exchange.
academic preparation
All the study material is provided by the university in Dublin, so I did not have to buy anything in advance.
language preparation
The language is English, so it is helpful to be aware of that.
finances
Living in Dublin can be quite expensive, so I recommend to save some money for the semester.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
I took courses at the department of Politics & International Relations. The rule is that students have to take at least four courses at their department. The other two courses could be chosen out of other departments.
academic quality of education activities
In my opinion the academic quality of education activities is a bit lower than in Utrecht. The way of educating is the same as in Utrecht, in particular with essays and exams.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
There is a tutor who can help students with problems.
transfer of credits
Every course is worth 5 ECTS. There are courses at level 1, 2 and 3. The marking is in letters instead of numbers.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
There is an orientation programme during the first week. This is a good opportunity to meet other students.
accommodation
The campus is quite big and everything is well organized. Every department is located on campus and most of the courses are at your own department building. In addition there is a library and a small grocery store.
leisure & culture
Students can join sports clubs and societies. The clubs are mainly to practice and the societies are to relax. Students have a free subscription for the gym on campus.



suggestions/tips

I suggest to join some clubs and societies, because this is an easy way to meet fellow students. In addition, it is quite helpful to go to many activities during the orientation week to get familiar with the campus, the city and of course with other students.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would recommend the University College Dublin to others. Everything is very well organized and the city of Dublin is well suited to have fun.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If an incoming student has the possibility to live on campus during the semester, I strongly advice to take this possibility. Maybe it is a bit more expensive, but it is easier to get in contact with other students. It also reduces the stress in advance of the semester, because there is no need to search for a place to live.



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?