



**UU Report form - Erasmus 2021-2022**

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

destination city & country	Limerick, Ireland
how did you travel to your destination?	By plane
name university abroad	University of Limerick
start date	30 / 08 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	03 / 12 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

exchange application process

For me personally, the exchange application process took a lot of time: choosing a destination, making sure that I had all the needed documents, finding an accommodation, et cetera. However, Utrecht University and University of Limerick both provided clear lists with things that I needed to take care of. My advice is to start early and to write down all of the deadlines for the application process and all of the things you need to do. This saved me a lot of stress, at least.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The counselling and support I received from Utrecht University was excellent. The International Office was always available to answer all of my questions, and they usually responded on the same day or the day after I emailed them. The staff of the International Office was also very patient and genuinely interested in how I was doing. I am very satisfied with the counselling and support I received from Utrecht University.

academic preparation

I needed to choose 5 modules for my exchange to University of Limerick. The University has a clear module booklet with all the modules you can choose from. I had to pick 5 modules for my Learning Agreement, but I ended up changing some of them when I got to Limerick. It was mandatory for me to choose 3 Psychology modules, which I found quite hard because I already followed most of the modules earlier at Utrecht University. However, I did end up finding 3 Psychology modules. You register for your modules when you're already at University of Limerick, you don't have to do this before you go there. I didn't prepare anything before the start of the modules.

language preparation

The main language in Ireland is English. I understand, speak and write English pretty well so I didn't have to spend much time on language preparation. I only took an OLS language assessment before and after my exchange since this was mandatory for receiving an Erasmus grant. Some host universities want you to take a test to prove that you sufficiently master the language, but Utrecht University provided a language proficiency statement saying that I'm on B2 level. For University of Limerick, this was enough proof, so I didn't have to spend money and time on a language test.

finances

I made a budget plan with the amount of money I expected to have during my exchange and all the expected expenses. I saved up money myself and my parents financed a part. I received an Erasmus grant and a public transportation compensation (OV-vergoeding). I also used my student loan (Duo) to finance my exchange. I



eventually spent less money than I expected, which was nice, but I think it's safe to try and save up as much money as you can so you don't have to worry about money too much. And a practical thing to mention is that they often use cash or creditcard in Ireland. I couldn't get a creditcard, so I always made sure I had enough cash on me in case my regular bank card wouldn't get accepted.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

#### study programme (content and organisational issues)

I followed 3 Psychology modules and these modules contained some material I already studied before at Utrecht University. However, I enjoyed that I had a recap of information. I also followed the module LGBT and the Law in Ireland, which I found super interesting. This was a more difficult module for me, because I didn't have a lot of experience with Law modules. Finally, I followed Introduction to Irish Folklore. I really liked this module because it taught me more about Irish culture, the content was interesting and the lecturer was very passionate about the material. The covered content and enthusiasm of the lecturers determined whether I really liked a module or not. Most of my lectures were in person, some were online because of COVID-19. I don't remember experiencing any organisational issues, but making my schedule was a bit of a puzzle. You make your own schedule at University of Limerick, so you have to make sure you don't choose modules that have overlap. You can also pick the tutorial/working group times that suit your timetable, so this was nice.

#### academic quality of education activities

Overall, I experienced the modules at University of Limerick to be less difficult than the ones at Utrecht University. I followed a Psychology module for fourth-year-students that's offered to second-year-students in Utrecht. I only had one multiple choice question exam, the rest of my deadlines were all papers, essays or other written assignments. Even though I found the modules to be a bit easier, I still spent much time on studying because I got a considerable amount of deadlines to work on. Thus, I didn't get bored at all during my exchange.

#### counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The counselling and support I received at University of Limerick were very good. There was one person responsible for incoming Erasmus students, and she answered all of my questions very fast. She was also very patient so I never felt like a burden. University of Limerick also has a medical centre, I never had to make use of that but it was good to know that there were people there to help me if needed.

#### transfer of credits

In general, one module gives you 6 ECTS, so you have to follow 5 modules to obtain the 30 ECTS for 1 semester. I don't have all of my results back yet so I have to wait for that before my credits get transferred.

### STUDENT LIFE

#### welcome & orientation programme

University of Limerick offered an online global orientation programme during the last week of August. I wasn't able to attend the online sessions that week, so I don't know what those were like. The week after that, there was an online introduction week. This would usually be in person but because of COVID-19, they had to plan that online. I really liked this introduction week. Some meetings were mandatory to attend because they contained important information about the exchange, others weren't. During the sessions, they provided a lot of practical information, for example about registering for modules. Other sessions contained information about the library and the medical centre. There were also more relaxing and fun sessions, where you could do yoga or play bingo. In my opinion, University of Limerick really invested much effort in fun and useful welcome and orientation programmes for international students.

#### accommodation

University of Limerick has multiple student accomodation villages you can choose from, both on- and off-campus. Student accomodation is not guaranteed, so make sure you are in time for the deadlines if you want



to live in a student village. I chose to live on-campus with 5 roommates in Thomond Village, which was a 10 minute walk to the university buildings. I really liked Thomond Village: I had enough space in my bedroom and I had my own bathroom. I shared the living room and kitchen with my roommates. The living room was spacious, but the kitchen was a bit small: we were able to cook with 2 or 3 persons at a time, but there was not enough room to cook with more people at once. I lived with other international students and we got along very well: we became super close and did a lot of stuff together. Another thing I liked about Thomond Village is that the staff at the reception and the maintenance people were very kind and helpful. When there was a problem, if we didn't have warm water for example, the maintenance guys would come to fix it the same day or the day after. The only less positive thing about Thomond Village is that the rent was really high: I paid 800 euros each month. This also included a membership for the gym on campus. You have cheaper options in other villages, like Plassey Village, where you share a bathroom with your roommates. I don't know how expensive it is to live outside of the student accomodations, so I honestly couldn't tell you if that's cheaper, more expensive or comparable to the rent you pay in the student accomodation villages. I recommend Thomond Village if you are prepared to pay more for your apartment and want to have your own bathroom.

leisure & culture

There's enough to do on campus! You can go to Scholars Club or Stables for coffee, food and drinks from Monday until Friday. On Fridays, it's International Night at Stables: mainly international students attend those nights and there's a DJ. The university and village reception also organized events and activities. You can join clubs and societies as well, I joined the International Society and Dance UL. Nightlife in Limerick city was okay: there are mainly pubs, there aren't many nightclubs.

Culture wise, I didn't have a big culture shock, there were just a few things that stood out to me. I was really impressed by how kind and helpful Irish people are. How Irish people dress is also different from how Dutch people dress, so this was funny to see. Finally, nightlife and drinking starts earlier in Ireland than in The Netherlands, so it took me some time to get used to that.

suggestions/tips

Save some money to travel through Ireland if you want to! It's a beautiful country and there are some places you definitely have to see. University of Limerick teamed up with a transportation company and organized trips to popular places in Ireland each Saturday for the first few months. This was a very easy and relatively cheap way to see a lot of stuff. And for public transportation, you can apply for a Student Leap Card, which gives you a student discount for each trip.

**CONCLUSIONS**

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

Yes, I definitely recommend University of Limerick! I had a very positive experience there, there were lots of other international students, the campus was beautiful, accommodation was good, student life was very fun and Ireland is a beautiful country to go to.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Going on an exchange was the most special experience of my life, I really encourage everyone who's interested to do it. Don't worry about making new friends, you'll easily find them: all international students are looking for new people to hang out with! You'll learn a lot about the world, yourself and others on an exchange, so I really recommend doing it. Even during COVID times, I enjoyed my time abroad.



**UU Report form - Erasmus 2021-2022**

faculty/college	Faculty of Social Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Pedagogical Sciences

destination city & country	Limerick, Ireland
how did you travel to your destination?	By plane
name university abroad	University of Limerick
start date	29 / 08 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	19 / 12 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

exchange application process

I found the application process to be easy. I applied in December 2020 with a motivation letter and a top 3 of study abroad destinations. The University of Limerick in Ireland was my first choice, and halfway through January I found out I was selected there! After that point, I attended the pre-departure meeting offered by the International Office which gave great insights into the steps to make the exchange official. In April I got an email from the University of Limerick to officially apply as an international student. For this, I had to pre-select 10 modules (the name the University uses for their courses) which I would be interested in taking, and I had to submit a couple of documents (language proficiency statement and a transcript of records from Utrecht University, which I received through the International Office). After this, I received official confirmation of enrollment in May 2021, and started to apply for accommodation and the Erasmus grant. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, a lot of things about our exchange were still unsure. Utrecht University decided to set a specific date for each exchange, usually 6-4 weeks before departure, to look at the travel advice. If the advice was green or yellow you could go on exchange, and if it was red or orange you couldn't go. Everyone therefore also made a Plan B, but luckily halfway through July I heard my exchange would be approved!

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The International Office was great throughout the whole process. I had a lot of questions and certain things weren't clear to me, and they would usually respond within a day. A lot of documents had to be signed by both Utrecht and Limerick, which required some back and forth emailing. Both International Offices were quick though, so most were fully signed within a few days to a week. During the summer vacation, I had to get many documents for the Erasmus grant signed, and the International Office was just as quick with responding as usual. Next to this, the pre-departure meeting cleared up a lot of difficulties with applying, and I received a handbook with a lot of information about our exchange which was helpful as well.

academic preparation

I didn't have to do a lot of academic preparation, as module registration took place after arrival (there is a one-week period to try out the modules without any obligations). I only had to pre-select 10 modules before going, which was a bit difficult at first because not a lot of information was available about which ones would be running during the semester.

language preparation

As one of the main languages in Ireland is English, I didn't have to do any language preparation. The only preparation I did was the English test provided by the EU before going and I looked up some Irish slang, which



proved to be useful. Also, don't worry too much about the Irish language. Most people speak English, so the most you will come across it is on signs and buildings (everything is indicated in both English and Irish because Irish is the official language).

finances

I knew that I wanted to study abroad for a long time, so I already had some savings prepared for it. However, as I hoped to do a lot of travelling and other fun things, I took on more shifts at my part-time job during the summer vacation for some extra cash. As well as this, I applied for the Erasmus grant and it got approved. This was a big help in living costs. With all of this plus my savings I was able to cover all my costs. It could be helpful to make a financial plan for yourself so you can see how much money you're going to spend. Do keep in mind that you will probably spend more money in Ireland than you do in the Netherlands, because of travelling costs and other fun expenses such as going to pubs.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study programme at the University of Limerick is different from Utrecht University. Everyone takes five modules, each worth 6 ECTS, during the semester. Before going, I had to pre-select 10 modules that I would be interested in taking. Not all information about the modules was known at that point, so when I arrived in Ireland I found that two of my preferred five modules from that list weren't running that semester. However, this was easily fixed because during the first week of the semester you could try out all modules without any restrictions or obligations. I went through the list of modules again and with some recommendations from friends I chose to try out six modules during this first week. Because I could to try them out, I was able to see which modules I enjoyed most, and I think this is a great feature that the University of Limerick offers! The only thing that you do have to watch out for is the timetable. You have to make it yourself, so you have to check if nothing clashes. If a course you are taking has tutorials, you can pick which one suits your schedule best. Because I was going abroad as a psychology student (pedagogical sciences doesn't really exist abroad), I had to select three psychology courses as well. In the end, I chose four modules from the psychology department: Psychology of the Personality, Social Psychology 1, Applied Psychology and Psychology and everyday life, and for my fifth module I chose Introduction to Irish folklore. I ended up enjoying most of my courses. The psychology courses were very interesting, especially Psychology of the Personality and Social Psychology 1 taught me many new things. Introduction to Irish Folklore was amazing, and probably my favourite course out of all of them. The course was interesting, the teacher was very good at telling stories and the assignments were fun to work on. It's also very nice to learn about Irish Folklore while studying in the country itself as you can relate your studies to places you're visiting, so I highly recommend taking this course. I would also take the opportunity to explore different fields if you are interested in them. Because three out of five modules have to be from psychology, you have two other spots to fill in as you would like! In terms of contact hours, I had about 10 hours of lectures and 2 hours of tutorials, and had no lectures on both Tuesday and Friday. This does depend a lot on which courses you take and whether they have tutorials/labs. I was very happy with my schedule as I had a lot of time to work on my weekly assignments and to hang out with my new friends and roommates!

academic quality of education activities

Personally, I thought the academic quality at the University of Limerick was similar to Utrecht University, but I feel there is a difference in how this could be observed. In Utrecht, there are two blocks each semester with two very condensed courses, giving it a very big workload in a short time. In Limerick, there is a half-year long semester, in which you take five courses at the same time. This means that you have more time off throughout the semester, as most of your deadlines will be in December (which is great for your exchange as you have more time to hang out with friends and travel!). I only had a graded quiz every two weeks for one course, a weekly blog for Irish Folklore and two other weekly assignments (one I could actually finish in class). My first big deadline was halfway through November, and my exams and final assignments were all in December. These two weeks in December will be very busy because you are working on five assignments at the same time.



However, it was very doable and most of my assignments were actually nice to work on. For example, I had to write a personality profile for myself using questionnaire data, an essay about fairies in Irish folklore and I had to analyze a movie through social psychology. I also had a lot of good times with my roommates during those two weeks as we were all studying in our living room and chatting in between. So, I feel that Limerick and Utrecht are similar in terms of academic quality, but in Limerick you have more time for your courses and I liked the assignments a bit better as they're more creative.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The International Office at the University of Limerick was great. They're very easy going and friendly, and respond quickly to all questions. The International Office also sends a lot of general FAQ emails on important topics, such as module registration, certificates that have to be signed, student cards, and more. As well as this, they're very helpful if you need some more personal advice. For example, they organized meetings for people who didn't get on-campus accommodation to advise them with where to go. The International Office was also very informative in the orientation week, as they organized sessions about important topics every single day. I would recommend going to all of these as they discuss module registration, student ID cards, entering the library, online services, et cetera. While the International Office was great, I had some issues with my academic coordinator for the psychology department. She was incredibly slow to answer emails, and when she did she would send me to someone else who in turn would send me back to my academic coordinator. However, halfway through summer another academic coordinator for psychology was added, and he responded to all my emails within a day! He was also great with the module registration process after arrival in Ireland and was very helpful overall. Therefore, I suspect that in coming years this won't be an issue again.

transfer of credits

The process of transferring credits was organized well. I have received my grades from my courses in Ireland, and I have passed all five modules! This means I will receive the full 30 ECTS that I need. The University of Limerick sent my transcript directly to the International Office at UU, and within a few days my grades were added to Osiris.

**STUDENT LIFE**

welcome & orientation programme

The orientation programme was fine. It ran for two weeks in total, the first being the week before leaving for Ireland. The first week had a lot of (online) introductory meetings about campus services and Q&A sessions about enrolment and academic prep. They also organized some mixer sessions, which were fun because you got to know some friendly faces before you even arrived in Ireland. I met one of my closest friends in one of these meetings, and we hung out a lot once we were both in Limerick. The second week was what the university calls 'week zero', the first week of the semester where only international students are on campus as Irish students are due to arrive the week after. The meetings during this week were mostly focused on module registration and getting to know the campus. There was only one mandatory session each day, so you had a lot of free time to explore the campus and get used to how things work in Ireland. Unfortunately, because of COVID, all orientation meetings had to be held online. This was sad, but there was still a lot to do outside my dorm room! Me and my roommates took this time to get to know each other, explore the city and go to the pub on campus to try Guinness. There were also some parties organized by students that week, so it was easy to stay busy! I would recommend attending all mandatory orientation meetings so you don't miss out on any information, but also to make sure to go to as many social events as you can. I met most of my close friends in this first week, because all internationals want to make friends!

accommodation

I stayed in on-campus accommodation, and I would highly recommend you to do the same. The on-campus accommodation is divided into different 'student villages', each offering different types of housing. Do keep in mind that just like Utrecht the accommodation is expensive. If you want your own bathroom or want to live with less people, you have to pay more money for it. However, I would still recommend on-campus



accommodation, as it makes your life abroad a lot easier and fun! People who didn't get on-campus accommodation ended up living in family homes, where you have a room in the house of an Irish family. These houses are often far away from campus, so money you save on rent you'll use for public transportation, and the family house tends to have rules about inviting people over and going out. Other people lived in apartments in the city centre, but these can be about as expensive as on-campus accommodation and are far away from the university, so all things considered: go for on-campus!!!

I was offered a room in Thomond Village, and it was absolutely perfect. I chose to live in a six-bed house, meaning I shared a kitchen and living room with five roommates. All rooms in Thomond Village have their own bathroom. The room itself was very big, had a double bed, a big desk and tons of storage space. The kitchen and living room could easily fit six people and there was a lot of storage space as well. The only issue we had was that the fridge and freezer filled up easily, so at times fitting all our groceries needed some rearranging of our shelves. I also really enjoyed my roommates. We all hit it off immediately and became good friends! We often cooked together, studied in our living room or just had nice chats when seeing each other. I think this really is an advantage of living on campus and being in a house with five roommates, as they are the first people you meet when you arrive and you will see each other every day. Another advantage of living on campus is the village reception. Each village has their own reception where you can go if you have any issues or questions. The people at reception were always happy to help, and any issues I had with my room were resolved within a day. Also, Thomond village offers free bike hire. This is great, because the supermarkets are a bit further away from campus (10 minutes biking to Aldi, 15 to LIDL and SuperValu). Whenever it was time to go grocery shopping, I could just hop on a bike and go! The biking routes are safe and I would recommend biking to Aldi, because it's closer and a lot of the route you are supposed to bike on the right side of the road (opposed to the left which is usual in Ireland). Another added bonus is that Thomond Village is really close to campus. I walked to the main university building and the library in about 10 minutes or so. Also, my friends and I would hang out a lot in the university's courtyard or at Stables (the university's pub), so I never had to worry about travel times or catching the last bus in the evening. The only thing I would say wasn't great about Thomond is that they did some maintenance works unannounced. For example, they came to change our mattresses one day without any advance notice. Almost everyone was home that day as it was the beginning of the semester, but I would have liked to know they were coming. Other than that, everything was perfect. All on campus villages are great, but I would highly recommend Thomond Village, as you have a lot of room for yourself and your housemates, the reception is great, the village itself is really nice and close to campus.

leisure & culture

There is always a lot to do in and around campus. Stables and Scholars, the on campus pubs, are always fun to go to. Stables offers International Night every Friday, as this is the day that many Irish students return home. This night is filled with fun, loud music and dancing, so I would recommend to go there with your friends! There are also a ton of clubs and societies you can join: clubs range from ultimate frisbee to Gaelic football, archery, and surfing, and societies from games to comedy, musical theatre, astronomy, and many more. Clubs and societies are a great way to make friends and explore your interests at the same time, so I would recommend joining a few. I joined the crafts society and the games society, which offered weekly meetings. You can also attend certain events organized by other societies without being a member, such as pub quizzes and music nights. The student union, UL student life, also organizes free events throughout the semester. For example, they've organized multiple markets with gifts for home, entertainers and more. The student union also organized trips around Ireland. I would highly recommend to go on these! They are the cheapest and easiest way to explore Ireland, because the travel is organized for you so you don't have to worry about public transport and travel times. Limerick is a great place to travel from, because it has a central location in Ireland. It doesn't take too long to reach bucket list places such as the Ring of Kerry, Galway, Dingle, Cork, Connemara, and more. Dublin is a bit further away (2.5 hours by bus), and reaching Northern Ireland without a car means you have to travel to Dublin and then change to the train to Belfast. However, both these journeys are very doable if you go on a full weekend trip and not a day trip! Also, going for walks into Ireland's nature is worth it, it's absolutely beautiful. There are a lot of great nature spots, such as the Cliffs of Moher, Connemara, and Giants Causeway. So, main recommendation: travel as much as you can in your spare time! Limerick is not the



prettiest city, though the three bridges walk around King John's castle and the cathedral is very nice. The atmosphere in the city is great, and there are many shops to get gifts, things for your dorm or products from home you're missing. There are also some good pubs and restaurants in the city, but try not to stay out too late. If you miss the final bus home (if you're living on campus or close to it), you have to take the taxi.

Irish culture and Dutch culture are quite similar, so I didn't really experience culture shock. However, there are a few things that are a bit different. For example, Irish people are really kind. They will offer their help to you unannounced if it looks like you need it, e.g. for directions. They are also very social, so you can expect to have long conversations with them (especially in a pub!). Irish drivers will almost always stop in front of zebra crossings if you're near them. The grocery store might not have the things you're used to at home, but they have a lot of great alternatives that I miss now that I'm back in the Netherlands. Also, Irish drinking culture is something to take note of. They usually start quite early compared to the Dutch, you can already see people in the on-campus pub around 2-3pm, and nightlife ends earlier as well (around 12-1am). When you ask for a drink, you will be served a pint. Pints are half a litre, so you're probably fine with ordering just one for a night in a pub. Other than this, there were small differences in terms of shops, academics, leisure, etc., but nothing really caused a culture shock! The atmosphere on campus and in Ireland itself is amazing and very welcoming!

suggestions/tips

- Clubs and societies are a great way to explore your interests and make friends! It's only a few euros to join a club/society, so go for it!
- If you want to hear Irish music and see Irish dancing, go to the Locke bar in the city centre. It's a very popular pub where you can have drinks and listen to great music at the same time. Students at the Irish World Academy on-campus also used to perform Irish dancing and Irish music, but this year it wasn't possible due to COVID.
- Go on the trips provided by the student union, they are the easiest and cheapest way to explore Ireland! Also make sure to plan your own trips if there are any bucket-list items that you have to see before going back. My recommendations: Cliffs of Moher, Aran Islands, Belfast & the Giant's causeway (Northern Ireland, the UK!), Dingle and Dublin. Public transportation in Ireland is not great but you can easily reach the big cities, usually for about 20 euro (return trip). Also try to explore Ireland's nature, it's worth visiting.
- Follow all UL social media channels (the main ones: the university itself, the student union, UL accommodation if you're living on campus). They post often about events/pub quizzes/give aways/other fun things.
- See if you can secure accommodation on campus, it makes your life abroad a lot easier.
- Try to celebrate holidays you usually don't celebrate! Halloween is a traditional Irish holiday, so it's considered a big deal. I also celebrated thanksgiving, which I had never done before. This was a really great and cosy experience with my friends.
- The river Shannon runs through the campus, and there are walking routes around it. These are great to take if you want to go outside to take a break from studying. If you feel like it, you can even walk to the city in about 40 minutes. In the weekends, a lot of Irish families walk along the river route, which is fun to see.

**CONCLUSIONS**

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

Yes, yes, yes! Choosing to study abroad has been one of the best decisions I have ever made in my life. The University of Limerick is a great choice for your studies abroad. They have an active International Office that's quick to respond to queries, they have good quality education and fun modules, and due to there being one whole semester you have more than enough time outside your studies to explore Ireland, go to pubs and have fun! The on campus accommodation is well-organized and accessible. The university and its student union offer a lot of events so there's always something going on, and there are so many clubs and societies that you will find something that you'll enjoy. Also, you don't have to worry about not being understood and you can blend in easily. The university, Limerick and Ireland itself have a great atmosphere and offer tons of opportunities to enrich your study abroad. I loved my experience so much and had more fun than I could have imagined. So: go for it, you will not regret it!





do you have any additional advice or comments?

- When you arrive abroad, say yes to as many things as you can. Go out to party, go to a pub, meet up with other internationals and Irish students, go to society meetings! Those first couple of weeks are going to be very tiring, but do as many things as you can. Everyone is looking to make friends, so being social during the first weeks can give you many friends for life!
- If there are any pre-departure social meetings the university offers, go to them. I met one of my closest friends in Ireland through one of these meetings, and extra information to ease the things that might be worrying you are always helpful.
- Travel as much as you can! I went on day trips around Ireland pretty much every weekend, and a big 6-day trip at the end of my period abroad to Dublin and Belfast. You want to see as much of the country while you're there, so make sure to do something similar!
- Take a course in Irish folklore, Irish music and dance, Irish history, Irish literature, or something similar. It's truly an amazing experience to learn about Irish culture while you're studying in the country itself! You might even pick up some words or sentences of the Irish language.
- If you want to live on campus (which I would fully recommend), make sure to apply as soon as you hear you've been selected to go to Limerick! The on campus accommodation is very popular, but they always have rooms reserved for international students. However, this is not a guarantee so make sure to apply on time!
- And finally: If you're doubting about studying abroad in Ireland or anywhere else, do it! I worried about many things before going, but my time abroad was absolutely worth it.

### UU Report form - Erasmus 2019-2020

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

destination city & country	Limerick, Ireland
how did you travel to your destination?	By plane
name university abroad	University of Limerick
start date	01 / 09 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20 / 12 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

exchange application process

I applied for my exchange in December '18 by uploading a top 3 with destinations, a motivation letter and a studyplan in Osiris. This required a lot of research about the different universities, because I wanted to make a good choice. In January, I heard that I was not accepted at one of my top 3 universities. There was a list with "leftover destinations" and I could make a new top 3, but I didn't have to write a new motivation letter or studyplan. This list was still quite long, so I was happy with the options. The University of Limerick was my second choice and in February I heard that I got accepted there. In the following months I enrolled online at the university and I went to the pre-departure meeting.

counselling & support at Utrecht University



<p>The presentation about studying abroad in november was very informative and useful to me and there was an opportunity to ask questions. The online information about the whole process was clear, but you have to put some time and effort in looking up and reading all the information. Whenever I had questions, the International Office answered them quickly by email. The pre-departure meeting was also useful and prepared us well for the possible difficult aspects of studying abroad, like culture shock and homesickness. In summer, I had to prepare my learning agreement and I needed some information and signatures for this. The International Office helped me with this and they answered my questions even though it was during the summer vacation.</p>
<p>academic preparation</p>
<p>I decided what modules I was going to take after I arrived at the destination: there was an introduction period in which you could pick the modules. I had made a plan in the learning agreement before, but I changed some of the modules later. My academic preparation consisted of selecting the modules, but I didn't prepare for the content of these modules.</p>
<p>language preparation</p>
<p>The spoken language at the receiving university was English and I felt like my English was already sufficient, so I did not have much language preparation. However, I looked up some Irish words and slang because I wasn't used to the Irish accent. There is a mandatory language test before the exchange and my score was a C1, which made me feel confident enough about my English. It took some time to get used to speaking English, but I didn't experience many difficulties concerning the language.</p>
<p>finances</p>
<p>I didn't save up much money before my exchange, but I received the maximum amount of student loans (DUO) every month so I figured that would be enough. The provisional Erasmus grant that I received in September was a nice extra amount of money (+- 1000 euro). If you want to stay on campus at the University of Limerick (recommended!) it's important to know that you have to pay all of the rent in advance, this is in July. This is a lot of money at once so it is important that you have this in your savings. The rent of the on-campus accomodations is higher than the average rent in Utrecht: for me it was about 550 euros a month including the facilities on campus. Life in Ireland is about just as expensive as life in the Netherlands if you look at groceries, going out, etc. However, I went on a lot of trips on the weekends so it is important to save some money for extra costs of the bus, hostels, restaurants, etc.</p>

<b>STUDY ABROAD PERIOD</b>	
<p>study programme (content and organisational issues)</p>	<p>The system at University of Limerick is different than the one at UU. There's one semester in which you get 30 ECTS, which is the same as two blocks at UU. This semester lasts about 12 weeks and you take 5 modules at once. Each of these count for 6 ECTS. The amount of contact hours was similar, because each module had 1-2 lectures/tutorials a week. For me, attendance wasn't mandatory, but for some other modules it was. The content of the modules was definitely interesting and fun. We had no books, but we had online articles that belonged to the modules. I had to do different kinds of assignments than what I was used to, like writing blogs or designing an infographic. In my opinion, the differences are definitely good for your academic and personal development. My exams had essay questions, so I had to prepare a few topics very well and write an essay about those on the exam. I wasn't used to this kind of system because you only focus on a few topics, like 2 out of 10, instead of studying a whole book.</p>
<p>academic quality of education activities</p>	<p>The education was different, but not that challenging. I still have to get some results back so I am not sure how well I did yet. However, I felt like the assignments were less academic than the ones at UU and it reminded me of a university of applied sciences (HBO). I was happy that the content wasn't very difficult because I had to get used to the system, the country and the language. It wasn't boring because I learned a lot of new skills by doing the assignments there. If you want to get challenged, you can also pick a sixth module so I would not let the</p>



academic quality stop you from studying at University of Limerick. However, this is very personal. For me, some of the assignments were harder than what I was used to because I had to be more practical and creative.
<b>counselling &amp; support at receiving university abroad</b>
Everybody at the university was really nice, supportive and helpful to the international students and they did so much for us: orientation activities, parties, presentations, counselling services, etc. You should not be scared to ask for help or support because there are a lot of people whose job it is to help you. Before I arrived, I emailed my academic coordinator about my learning agreement and he responded quite slow, but everything worked out fine in the end. In Ireland, everything is a little bit less official and strict. You have to get used to that, but don't worry if there is a problem because they will help you fix it. They also send a lot of emails, like 10 everyday. Some of these are useful. There is a "mental health monday email" every week with some advice on mental health issues like stress, homesickness, etc. Some emails were really irrelevant, about lost items or flashing car lights.
<b>transfer of credits</b>
I still have to get my results back so I don't know my grades yet. I will receive the grades as a A, B, C, etc, and it will be transferred to a pass or fail grade at UU. If I pass everything, I get 30 ECTS. The exact grades don't matter. My transcript of records from the University of Limerick will be sent to me and to the International Office of the UU soon (January 2020).

<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>
<b>welcome &amp; orientation programme</b>
I arrived in Ireland on the 1 <sup>st</sup> of September and the first week was orientation week. There were no classes yet and most of the Irish students weren't there yet, so this week was focused on the international students. There was a program with tours around campus, presentations, parties, trips to the city etc. It was a great way to make friends! I would recommend to be there the whole week and attend as much activities as possible.
<b>accommodation</b>
I stayed on campus at University of Limerick. There are several "villages" on campus where you can live. I picked Plassey Village because this was the cheapest option. I lived with 7 other international student and we shared a living room and kitchen. The location of Plassey Village is really good, it's a ten minute walk to all of the university buildings, the pubs and there is a Spar right next to village. It cost around 550 euros a month and this was a lot. You also get a membership for the gym and pool automatically, though. I feel like the money was worth it because it would have been really difficult to look for off-campus accommodation by myself. But, don't expect too much of Plassey Village. It's alright, but the bedrooms were small and the walls were really thin and the rooms didn't look very nice. We shared one fridge with 8 people which was a challenge. Also, there are no washing machines in any of the houses on campus: you have to go to a laundry room and pay for that. I liked living with 8 people because it was easy to become friends with some of my housemates and we hung out a lot together, which is a positive aspect of living on campus. Another positive aspect is the village reception: they can always help you if something is broken, you lost your key, you have a question, etc. There were some rules on campus and there was security that stopped us from making noise at night etc. This could be annoying, but it wasn't very strict. In conclusion, I do recommend living on campus because it's good for your social life, the location is good and it's easy to get the accommodation. Do this on time! I applied for a room on the first possible day and I got my first choice. The other villages like Kilmurry and Dromroe are a little bit more expensive, but the houses are nicer and there are more options like living with 4 or 6 people, having your own bathroom, etc. If you have the money I would recommend picking another village than Plassey.
<b>leisure &amp; culture</b>
The on-campus life is really fun. The atmosphere is good and the other students and staff are always friendly. They organize a lot of parties. pub quizzes, etc and I recommend going there, especially in the first few weeks. There is a student union called UL Student Life. This is for all students and everybody is welcome. Almost every



Irish student and international student is part of this. UL Student Life has clubs and societies with sports, games, hobbies, etc. There's even a "tea appreciation society". The clubs and societies are an easy way to get to know more people, also Irish students. There is also an international society that organizes trips around Ireland on the weekends. I highly recommend going on these trips! The international society organizes an international party in Stables (the pub on campus) every Friday as well. You can also volunteer at a language school where international students teach each other their own languages. You will probably also be busy with settling, studying and traveling, but I had enough time to join 3 societies and go to movie nights, parties, etc. I went on weekend trips around every 2-3 weeks, sometimes with the international society and sometimes with a smaller group of friends or housemates. I'm happy I got to see more of Ireland than just Limerick, because Limerick is not the nicest city (locals called it a shithole, not my words). Traveling is a great way to get to know more of the culture. The cities are nice, but it was also really impressive to go on hikes in nature. About the culture: Irish people are really fun in general. Try going to some traditional pubs with live music and chatting with some of the locals. they were always really nice and interested in internationals. They do drink a lot and they start drinking early! Pubs close around 1am, so the nightlife is earlier, so you have to go out earlier as well. I had to get used to that.

suggestions/tips

- Follow the UL channels on social media, like UL student life and the international society so you don't miss any events.
- Don't worry too much about dressing well, Irish students go to lectures in their sports clothes and everything is really casual, nobody cares.
- It might seem like a short time, but a semester is quite long so make sure you have all the stuff you need and buy it in Ireland if needed. Looking back, I regretted not buying extra pillows and an extra charger. You will have to leave stuff behind when you leave, but you can leave it in your house and it will be donated to the homeless.
- Look up local events, like music festivals. I went to a jazz festival & traditional festival nearby.
- If it's an option, take a course about Ireland like Irish Folklore, Irish Language or Irish Music and Dance. Many internationals do this, and you will learn more about the (very interesting) culture.
- Look up the module book at the UL website, you can probably find the one from last year. You can see the available modules there. For psychology, there were not that many options and some were similar to UU modules so I couldn't take them because the modules have to be approved. Check this on time!

**CONCLUSIONS**

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

Yes! Ireland is a great country and the culture shock was not that big. I had a really good time in Limerick and I highly recommend the destination because the campus is really big and has good facilities. However, I think any destination is good because you will make good friends and travel and that's always a good experience. So, I recommend going abroad in general but Ireland (and Limerick) was a good choice for me and I was happy I could blend in and speak English.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Don't worry too much about having all the information. It's all a little bit more casual in Ireland and everything will be fine. Focus on making some good friends in the beginning and try to travel as much as possible! If you want to get to know more about the culture, don't be scared to talk to Irish students or locals because they are all very proud and happy to tell you about Ireland.



**UU Report form - Erasmus 2018-2019**

faculty/college	Behavioral Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Pedagogical Sciences
destination city & country	Limerick, Ireland
name university abroad	University of Limerick
start date	03 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 12 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

exchange application process

I found the exchange application process to be pretty easy. Once I went to the pre-departure meeting everything became clear for me. I started quite early with the whole process of choosing which university I wanted to go to and if things weren't clear to me I could always email the International Office for advice.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Like I said in my previous answer the International Office at UU is very supportive and they are always willing to help you where needed. I also found that they replied very fast if I sent them a question by email.

academic preparation

I had to choose five courses at the University of Limerick which I found to be quite hard, because three of those had to be in the Psychology Department. Not all of the modules were available to international students, but in the end I ended up with five modules that I felt happy about

language preparation

.As for language I didn't really do any preparation because I found that my English was at a high enough level to commence my studies in Limerick.

finances

Before I left, I had already made a financial plan. This plan helped me to organise my financial situation in my head. It turned out that I had saved up enough money to cover for my expences, but you definitely have to keep in mind that you are going to spend more money there than in the Netherlands because of trips you are going to make.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)

When I started I had selected five modules that I wanted to take during the semester. The first week is an introducton week, which was very helpful to me because to way that the university is organized takes some getting used to. In the second week you get the opportunity to go to lectures of the modules that you are interested in. After this week you have to hand in your final study plan. Some of the modules ended up to be not like I had expected and some were not available after all. This meant that I had to change most of my study plan, but at least I knew that these were modules that I was going to enjoy. I ended up with four modules instead of five and I could also choose two modules from the Psychology department instead of three so they were very flexible. What I found the most difficult was the fact that we had to make our timetable ourselves and make sure there weren't any clashes. It took some time but it wasn't too bad, I just was used to UU making



our schedules for us.
academic quality of education activities
I found the level of education at the University of Limerick to be lower than at UU. For some modules there were no tutorials at all and the lectures weren't mandatory which mean you really had nothing to commit to. The lecturers I had were pretty good over all, but some were definitely worse than I'm used to at UU. The exams were a lot easier than at UU as well.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The counselling and support at the University of Limerick were really good. This was something that really stood out to me. In the first 7 weeks there is extra support for first years and internationals which I found really comforting. Everything you needed is available on campus, even a doctor or therapist if you need it.
transfer of credits
I have not received my credits yet, so I don't know yet how they will transfer this to UU. The modules are 6 ECTS each so I expect this to be transferred just like that.

<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>
welcome & orientation programme
The first week of the semester was orientation week for international students. I found this week to be very helpful because I learnt a lot about the campus and facilities. However, I was very tired after this week because there were so many activities and all the new people I met. I do recommend going to a lot of these activities though, because this is where I met most of my friends for the semester. There was also the opportunity to sign up for clubs and societies. There are a lot of things to choose from but the International Society is something I would recommend to sign up for!
accommodation
I found accomodation on one of the on compus villages. The process of finding a room was quite easy to me. However, you have to apply very soon to make sure you get a place on the list as there are more students than rooms. I lived in Kilmurry Village and I became very good friends with my roommates which was nice.
leisure & culture
The Irish people are really kind and are always willing to help. This was something I had to get used to because this is not always the case in the Netherlands. This was a very positive experience. The Irish students don't really tend to hang out with internationals, but they are very recognisable as they wear sportswear a lot and the guys all have the same haircut. And as expected they are a beer-drinking nation, and they look very confused if you ask for a glass of beer instead of a pint.
suggestions/tips
My main suggestion is to stay on campus during your stay at the Univerity of Limerick. I didn't go into the city centre that often and I didn't need to because everything is available on campus. Another suggestion is to really take your time off to explore the country. Everything is easy accessible by bus or train and you get a student discount. The country is so beautiful and you really don't want to be stuck in one place if you have the change to travel around the country. Also keep an eye on the Ryanair flights from Dublin as they are extremely cheap. I flew to Portugal for 10 euros for intance and the possibilities are endless!

<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
My conclusion is that I would definitely recommend University of Limerick. Not only is the campus is very nice and organised, the country is truly beautiful and the sights are breathtaking. I would recommend Limerick over Dublin because you get a true Ireland vibe as it is not a big city.



do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you are in doubt right now, I would say: Just do it! I was very nervous before going as well, but this has been the best experience of my life. I have seen so much beautiful places and have made a lot of friends all over the world and I would do it all over again if I could.



**UU Report form - Erasmus 2018-2019**

<b>permission to publish contact details**</b>	<i>optional; only if you allow students preparing for study abroad to contact you (directly)</i>
	my e-mail address <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: j.vandenhout@students.uu.nl my weblog <input type="checkbox"/> yes: my Facebook account <input type="checkbox"/> yes: other (social) media <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: jolijnxx (instagram) <b>or</b> <input type="checkbox"/> my contact details cannot be published on the UU webpage, but I do give the International Office permission to forward my e-mail address to individual students interested in my host university abroad:      @
<i>See end note for * and **</i>	
faculty/college	Social Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Psychology

destination city & country	Limerick, Ireland
name university abroad	University of Limerick
start date	03 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 12 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

exchange application process
The application process went rather smoothly. The university of Limerick responded very quickly and was very helpful with any of my questions. I messed up by applying twice, and within a day they had fixed it for me.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
I would suggest that, if you are interested in studying abroad, you go to the information night where students speak about their experiences. The extra information evening before your departure was also very helpful. Make use of the available information!
academic preparation
There is no real need for academic preparation. Have a close look at the courses, know what you want to do, know why you're going. But the level will be lower, the education will be easy if you are used to Dutch standards.
language preparation
Make sure you know how to follow a course in English. Be aware that not only the literature, but also all of the lectures and practicals will be in English. As far as accents go, most of the professors were American. But you could still prepare yourself for the accent a bit (by watching movies) to make sure you can understand people in the grocery store.
finances
Ireland is more expensive than the Netherlands, for sure. Because of the level of education, I was able to travel around quite a lot. Which obviously makes it even more expensive. I was prepared for that due to my savings.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**





study programme (content and organisational issues)
I loved their course selection. There were some courses we do not have at UU. So take the opportunity to learn about different fields. For example, I followed organizational psychology, social psychology, economic psychology, sport psychology and sociology all in the same semester.
academic quality of education activities
If you want to be challenged academically, then I suggest you look into Trinity college or another country. Limerick is not hard or challenging in that way.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
I really enjoyed the contact with the Univeristy of Limerick. Very easy going, very helpful. The Irish are honestly way too nice, so if you have a question: don't be afraid to let them know.
transfer of credits
You follow 5 courses of 6 ECTS, instead of 4 courses of 7,5 ECTS. But one semester, is 30 ECTS.

<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>	
welcome & orientation programme	Very nice! There is a great week set up for you with all of the other EU internationals. It's a shame that you are seperated from the Irish and non-EU, but it gives you the opportunity to become more of a unity with other internationals, which will help you throughout your stay.
accommodation	Overpriced. But, Ireland is expensive and the campus accomodation is very easily accesible with their online application system. I paid 2700 for four months, which is crazy. But even people I spoke to who lived off-campus paid around 2500. Prepare yourself for these costs.
leisure & culture	Culture shock? Not really. You can prepare yourself for fattier food, less options in the grocery store, pints (568 mL) instead of 250-300 mL glasses while going out and awfully nice people!
suggestions/tips	Travel! Ireland is wonderful. Limerick is located on the west coast which is gorgeous. But the DublinCoach gets you in Dublin for 20 euros (return) in 2,5 hours (single). We even went to London for only 50 return. Also, get yourself a creditcard. You will need for all of your payments online (think booking bus and train tickets to reserving your cinema tickets).

<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain	It totally depends on your personal challenges/goals. I was able to improve my writing in English, but because I hang out with mostly other internationals, I don't feel like my ENGLISH itself improved that much. The education is nto that challenging, but I did become more independent when it comes to travelling. I recommend the Erasmus experience for sure, but know what you want to achieve that semester and then search for the best fitting location.
do you have any additional advice or comments?	Just do it.



**UU Report form - Erasmus 2017-2018**

faculty/college	Behavioral Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Psychology (Cognitive and Neurobiological)
destination city & country	Limerick, Ireland
name university abroad	University of Limerick
start date	28 / 08 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	15 / 12 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

exchange application process

Before applying for my study abroad, I did some research on possible countries I would like to go to and made a top 3 for myself. The website of the international office has a very clear document showing possible destinations. It is important to write down all the deadlines of the international office in advance and to make sure you are well prepared and on time when applying for a study abroad. You can find these on the website as well. Also, if you can, go to the pre-departure meeting from the international office and gather all the additional information you need for your application. Preparation can never start too early in this case.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The international office is really supportive and always prepared to help you out whenever necessary with pretty much any question. Like mentioned earlier, the website is very informative as well and very much speaks for itself.

academic preparation

My academic preparation mainly consisted of reading the book of modules the host university offered and to see if there were courses offered that I was interested in and would fit my study programme.

language preparation

I didn't do any language preparation, since Ireland is an English speaking country.

finances

When applying for a study abroad, you are required to submit a written financial plan as well. I used the format provided by the international office to see what my monthly costs would be. In this case, it is important to know how much income you receive from different parties a month (parents/grant/government etc.) and to also take into account that you will spend more money than you would do at home, because of trips and maybe even the cost of living is higher in the country you're going to. So make sure you calculate that in into the financial plan as well and also give yourself the financial opportunity/freedom to spend more money, if possible, to fully enjoy your experiences abroad.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study programme at the university of Limerick was quite a difference compared to studying at UU and took some getting used to. We got more than 10 e-mails a day from the university throughout the semester and the whole organisational structure of the university was very chaotic (teachers arriving too late in class, insufficient



powerpoints etc.). We had a two-week introduction in which we could follow pretty much every module to see what we would find interesting. In that periode I also found out that half of the modules I wanted to register for before I came to Ireland were not available anymore and I had to quickly find another solution. After that period you had to officially register for 5 modules (6 ECTS each) to get the full 30 ETCS. So by then, you had created your own personal schedule. I did 3 courses in psychology, 1 additional cultural course about Ireland and a course in sport science, which had great overlap with psychology. University of Limerick is known for having the best sport science faculty in the country, which made it interesting for me to do a course in that as well.

academic quality of education activities

The acadamic quality of the courses were a step back compared to lessons at UU. We did not have to read books for instance, articles given in class were enough to pass exams. Also, some classes consisted only of written essays without exams. Nevertheless, I can say I did learn a lot but in a different way than at home. I put more energy in the essay writing than I normally do and also to write everything in English and to be able to perform in English in every single aspect, was really something I learned a lot from.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

University of Limerick was really helpful in every single way possible and their international office was really good.

transfer of credits

Ireland has a different grading system than the Netherlands and at this point I don't know yet how credits will be transferred into Dutch grades.

**STUDENT LIFE**

welcome & orientation programme

The orientation programme of university if Limerick was really good and they also put a lot of energy in making the internationals feel at home. We had a two-week orientation programme with academic information (where to find buildings, rules etc.) and there were also a lot of parties and other opportunities to get to know a lot of people. After the orientation every international pretty much knew each other.

accommodation

The students accomodations were great. The university had several student villages all over the university campus and some off-campus as well. It was expensive compared to prices in Utrecht to rent a room, but the facilities were very good. Most of the rooms were completely refurbished and everyone lived in small houses/flats, a little bit comparable to a holiday home.

leisure & culture

We had a lot of time for leisurement activities and Ireland has a very vibrant and welcoming culture. The months consisted of travelling around the country with roommates and other people we got to know there. Ireland also has a very beautiful nature which some people could never get enough from.

suggestions/tips

My main tip is to apply for a student accomodation with as many people as possible. I lived with 7 other people, which at first I found quite a lot and I was unsure if I was really up for it. But I quickly learned that those people are the way in to get to know as many people as possible and to make yourself feel really at home and have a lot of fun. We all became very close and the best of friends. It is also very handy to have connections all over the world when working internationally in the future for example. Some people I knew that lived in smaller accomodations with less people, did not have such a nice experience at all.

**CONCLUSIONS**



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

Yes, I would recommend this university to others. Eventhough the academic quality was not as good as UU, it did teach me to become more creative and to adjust to new situations easier, which is very important skill I can use in many situations. Also, I got to expand my network immensely due to the nice facilities this university offered with a great orientation programme that really connected people.

do you have any additional advice or comments?



**UU Report form - Erasmus 2017-2018**

faculty/college	Utrecht University Psychology
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Pedagogical Sciences
destination city & country	Limerick, Ireland
name university abroad	University of Limerick
start date	28 / 08 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	17 / 12 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

exchange application process

To apply for an exchange the university requires several documents from you. I found it to be pretty easy to apply for an exchange. The hardest parts were probably choosing the universities for my top 3 and writing my motivation letter.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The International Office was very helpful with any questions or inquiries you had during the process of application. For instance, I had trouble with translating some of my studies onto my Curriculum Vitae in English.

academic preparation

As for the studies, I found it quite hard to select the courses I wanted to take at UL. I needed to take 3 courses at the psychology department and the other 2 courses were completely up to me. There weren't as many courses to choose from and since I'm not a full psychology student in Utrecht, I wasn't sure which courses would fit into my program. In the end I managed to select 5 courses that I felt happy about.

language preparation

I didn't do any language preparation, I thought my level of English would be high enough to be able to understand my classes. And since Ireland has English as a main language, I didn't need to learn an additional language.

finances

I made a budget with my applications and I picked up some extra hours at work to save up some money. I also didn't go on holiday myself but went with my parents instead. That saved me a lot of money as well.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)

During the semester I had to take 5 courses that would count up to 30 ects. 3 of those courses had to be within the psychology department and the other 2 could be of any department. I ended up taking none of the courses I selected at home. Some of the courses I had selected weren't available, others didn't fit within my schedule and others I just didn't like. So in the end I did; Educational Neuroscience (very similar to my studies at Utrecht, but more of a biological perspective), Biological Basis of Human Behaviour (pedagogical sciences doesn't cover a lot of biology, so I figured I would take my chance now), Psychology of the Personality (just sounded interesting and something I hadn't done before) and Social Influence and Attitude Change (this was the post-grad module and it also sounded really interesting), these 4 courses were all from the psychology department. Then for my 5<sup>th</sup> course I decided to do Irish Folklore because I wanted to learn something about Ireland while I



<p>was there and it fitted nicely into my schedule. We had to pick all our courses ourselves and make up our own timetable and make sure none of the courses clashed with each other. This took some puzzling but you had the first 2 weeks of the semester to attend lectures and make your final decisions. So in my first week I attended 7 lectures to select which courses I wanted to take. This was very handy because the first lecture always gives an overview of what to expect from a course.</p>
<p>academic quality of education activities</p>
<p>The level of education at the University of Limerick is considerably lower than it is at Utrecht University. You only have lectures and there are some tutorial groups, but these are more used as mini-lectures than time that you can actually get to work with the theories and other information you heard about in the lectures. The way of teaching is also different in that it is a more passive way of teaching. You are not triggered to think critically about the materials covered in class. However, I took one post-graduate course and there was an German lecturer who also teaches at Utrecht sometimes. So he had a more active way of teaching that is more similar to the teaching style used at Utrecht.</p>
<p>counselling &amp; support at receiving university abroad</p>
<p>There were a lot of oppurtunities for counseling and support available at UL. They had a first 7 weeks program for both international as first year students to get to know how to get around campus and what was available to them. There were also a lot of emails that let you know when there was writing tutors available to help you with your assignments for instance. Overall the university had a lot of support to offer whenever you needed it. Everything was available on campus, even a doctor.</p>
<p>transfer of credits</p>
<p>Because this was an Erasmus exchange my credits were all in ECTS and will be transferred directly.</p>

<p><b>STUDENT LIFE</b></p>
<p>welcome &amp; orientation programme</p>
<p>The first of the semester was orientation week for international students. We were the only ones on the campus and none of the Irish students had arrived yet. We had a very full programme with lots of different activities. I found it very easy to get to know people during those events and some of my closest friends during the semester I've met during the first week. Because it was such a full week and you were flouded with new experiences, I also found it quite exhousing. Some of the activities included drinking coffee on Monday, going grocery shopping and other stuff on Tuesday, an irish dance and music performance on Wednesday, drinking some beers on Thursday, and the first of many to come TGIF International party at the campus bar The Stables on Friday night. And then on Saturday there was the first trip of the semester to the Cliffs of Moher and the Burren. During the week we also had a lot of information sessions and a tour around the campus etcetera. There was also a big drive where you could sign up for the different societies on campus. There are a lot of societies and almost everything you can think of, there is a society for it, even a tea appreciation society. Joining a society is a good way to get to know Irish students because it can be very hard because you hang out more with internationals.</p>
<p>accommodation</p>
<p>I had a room in one of the 5 on-campus accomodations. I found that most International students did the same thing because it is by far the easiest way to get housing. You do have to be quick with applying for this and it can be quite expensive. I am very happy I did this and I chose Thomond Village, which was a very nice village. Most of my friends lived in the same village or were my roommates, so you could just go across the main square of the village when you wanted to hang out which was super convenient.</p>
<p>leisure &amp; culture</p>
<p>The Irish people are the most warmhearted lovely people I have ever met. They are kind and are nothing is too much to ask. I got a lift from the Aldi (which was a 30 minute walk from my village) on my first day! A thing we</p>



did find strange were some of the clothing choices the students made. Don't look up if someone comes to class in their sportswear, around 70% of the Irish students does this, including all of the girls. And then they dress up in their high heels and short skirts for a night out. Early drinking is also a common thing, the Stables has students with beers in their hands all day round.

suggestions/tips

If you are going to the University of Limerick, do get your housing on campus. I found Thomond Village to be really nice and it had a nice mixture of Irish and International students. I had 3 Irish guys and 2 American girls as my roommates. But there were also some apartments that had only International students in them. You can join the International Society and they organise a lot of trips for a little money. You also get to know a lot of people through those trips, but I didn't like the tight schedule you are on when you do those big trips so I preferred to go on my own trips with just my friends.

**CONCLUSIONS**

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

Yes I would absolutely recommend Limerick. Ireland is one of the most beautiful countries ever, every piece of the country has a different landscape and a different atmosphere. The university itself is really good organized and provides for everything. The level of education might be lower but that also makes it easier to do all of the fun stuff throughout the weeks! I am really happy with my choice and I've had the time of my life.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you are thinking of going abroad, just go for it! Be prepared to make a lot of new memories and friends for life. Of course it is going to be hard, but as long as you are open to new people and experiences, everything is going to be fine. Remember everybody there is in the same exact situation. We are all looking for new friends! And yes it times it can get lonely, but you get through that as well. This was the best decision I've ever made and I'm said that I couldn't stay for another semester.



**UU Report form - Erasmus 2017-2018**

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

destination city & country	Limerick, Ireland
name university abroad	University of Limerick
start date	29 / 08 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	17 / 12 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

exchange application process

The process of application went very easy, the university sent me all the necessary information a month before the start of the semester. All the information was very clear as well.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support I got from Utrecht University was great, whenever I had a question I received an email back in 2 days max.

academic preparation

I did not prepare any academic skills beforehand.

language preparation

I did not prepare any language skills beforehand.

finances

I experienced studying at UL to be cheaper than UU, I did not have to pay for studybooks for example. I payed most out of the erasmus grant and the money I received from the Dutch government every month. I also had saved some money and I ended up spending around 800 euro's of my savings.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)

We got to try all the courses in the first 2 weeks, which gave us a great oppurtunity to choose the best-fitting courses. We had to make our own timetable, which worked out very well.

academic quality of education activities

I enrolled in 3 psychology courses and 2 sport science courses. There was a big difference in quality between these two programmes. Sport sciences was very well organised, the lectures were of a high standard and so were the tutorials. Psychology on the other hand was of much lower standard, the level of education was very low and the the teachers were not very motivating.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I have not experienced any problems with counselling & support at UL.

transfer of credits

I have not experienced any problems with the transfer of credits.





<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>
welcome & orientation programme
I arrived too late to enroll in the orientation programme.
accommodation
I lived on-campus, which was a great experience. I lived with 8 people in total, which all were internationals as well. Living on-campus really improved my study abroad experience.
leisure & culture
I went on a trip almost every weekend with some of my roommates, we drove around Ireland and also visited Northern Ireland and Schotland. Nature in Ireland is amazing, the vibes in the pubs are great and most of the people were very friendly.
suggestions/tips
Say yes to everything, go on every trip, make friends, do everything you're scared of doing, it's all worth it.

<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes, it has been a great experience, but if you really want a high level of education, UL may not be the right university for you.
do you have any additional advice or comments?



**UU Report form - Erasmus 2017-2018**

faculty/college	Social Scienced
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Psychology

destination city & country	Limerick, Ireland
name university abroad	University of Limerick
start date	28 / 08 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	16 / 12 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

exchange application process

This wasn't really hard. It was clear what you had to fill in and by what time.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

This was good. They responded quick on your emails and there were many possibilities to make an appointment as well. For personal problems as well which might influence your study abroad they really helped looking into this.

academic preparation

Since we didn't have to do so much for preperation it felt kind of far away. The only thing they needed was a photo of yourself and that was about it. Choosing courses happened in the first two weeks in Limerick.

language preparation

I didn't do any language preperation.

finances

When you'll live on campus you have to pay the whole amount for the semester in one time so this took some preparing as getting a creditcard which I'd recommend anyways and save enough money for this But this is also nice because you won't have to set money aside for rent monthly which makes it easier to spent more money on trips!

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)

They are really laid back, also in this you'll see this. The only thing you had to make sure was handing in your course form on time after two weeks of following classes.

academic quality of education activities

Not as good as Utrecht. Irish students are pretty unmotivated so they are kind of corresponding with this fact which makes it sometimes really easy. The classes I took were interesting especially creative writing since it was something completely different.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

This was a lot, it sometimes felt like too much with an overload of emails from UL but I'm sure that it is good for people who'll need it.



transfer of credits

This was well done. The grading system in Ireland is really different and somewhat confusing so it was a surprise what kind of marks I got back.

## STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

This was a nice week with not too many activities. Since they have 4000 incoming students from abroad every year it was hard as well because there are so many people to meet.

accommodation

This was good. I stayed on campus in a renovated house and we had a reception so when anything was broken they'd come and fix it which was really handy it also felt like a little village which was cool. They also organized some activities as well. But Plassey was kind of their first year student village which made them really strict about curfews. This meant that your house had to be quiet around 10 pm.

leisure & culture

There are many clubs you could join which I highly recommend. I joined the hockey and surfclub and I enjoyed this very much because it gives a good opportunity to blend in with Irish students but also to have some irregular cool activities like surfing.

suggestions/tips

More activities for international students during the week. This was not really the case and the city was very far away from campus.

## CONCLUSIONS

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

I do, but you will need to find your own way a lot, socially. I would have preferred a smaller amount of international students with a little more international community than Limerick had. But Ireland is beautiful and because of all the cool clubs and stuff you can do I really enjoyed my time here!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Don't go for particular classes you can follow but choose Limerick because you like Ireland and want to know more about campus life.