

Travel Report

GENERAL INFORMATION

What was your semester abroad like?

I agree to the publication of the report and attached photos (there are no third parties rights to these photos)	Yes
New outgoing students sometimes ask us for a way to contact former outgoings. Are we allowed to pass on your contact details in case of inquiries?	Yes
My stay (this information will not be displayed if the report is published)	
Academic year	2022/2023
Start semester	Herbst/Fall 2022/23
Duration in semesters	1
Study program at EUF	BA European Cultures and Society
Subject 1 (only applicable to teacher training students)	
Subject 2 (only applicable to teacher training students)	
Subject 3 (only applicable to teacher training students)	
Host country	Ireland
Host university	University of Limerick

YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

How did you prepare for the semester abroad? What should be organized in advance?

First, I made sure that I was able to select courses which sounded interesting to me. After this made sure is the partner universities to where I applied part of the Erasmus+ program or do I need to travel as a "free mover". In my case, Ireland was part of Erasmus+, so I did my semester under this specific exchange program. After these aspects I checked what paper work I needed to get for myself (possible visa, vaccinations etc.) and for the EUF (e.g., Learning Agreement). Beside paper work I needed to search and buy flight tickets and transport from Dublin airport to Limerick. Before leaving I asked my colleagues, who I knew had been in Limerick in previous semester(s), what should I pack with me.

Where did you live and how did you find your accommodation (self-organized/provided by host university, dormitory/private etc.)?

I lived in one of the student dormitories offered by University of Limerick (UL). Once I got the letter of Acceptance from UL, they send me emails about accommodation. Place in the student dormitory in UL is not guarantee, therefore I am lucky that I got a place in one of them. The UL also offered links for students to website(s) where from student can also find a private accommodations. For student dormitories I needed to an application. In this application, I put all the dormitories I would want to live in. After that I just waited and when the place in dormitories was offered I accepted it via student housing portal.

Did you participate in events for exchange students? How did you establish social contacts in other ways?

Yes I did. I took, for example, part on a Body Positivity-project among students. Then I attended to almost every trip (the 1st seven weeks) organized by the UL. The UL also organized International Evening in every Friday at the Campus. Time to time I took part to this event with my friends as well. There was also some other events (e.g., Christmas Ball or Movie evening at the Concert Hall) which I took part in. I also made some trips and sports together with my friends. The trips I made with my friends, were organized by ourselves. Besides the trips and parties, I took part into a Archery club and Out Door Pursuit club. Both of the clubs organized trainings and trips time to time.

How satisfied were you with the host university (facilities, staff etc.) and the course offer (workload etc.)?

The workload at UL was a bit more than at EUF. However, I was able to manage everything with good time management skills. The courses themselves were really well organized and taught. The staff at UL was great! If I came across a problem I could just send them an email or visit the office hours or visit the international office. The lecturer and professors were really approachable and willing to help students.

Did you learn the local language? How important was the language for your stay?

Unfortunately, I did not learn the local language, which would have been Irish. Tho, I used English all the time: during my studies, with my friends, and doing normal everyday tasks like grocery shopping.

What intercultural experiences/skills have marked your stay?

I picked up a local accent to my speaking. I learned as well more about this 'small talk'-culture and how it is normal to talk with strangers (e.g., randoms at the bus stop). Also, the lunch break culture is a bit different: it is longer in Ireland than in Germany. Irish are also serving potatoes in every meal.

Which perspectives on your host country/home country have changed - and why?

I think Ireland as a country is kinda similar to my home country. However, I think nowadays I am more open-minded because e.g., many times I found myself in a situation where I am talking to randoms at the bus stop or at the shop. People in my home country do not do small talk.

How was your everyday life (leisure, shopping, transportation, inclusion etc.)?

I spent my free time doing sports at the university's sports arena with my friends. The UL is offering different kinds of clubs and societies. I took a part in the archery club, where the training was once a week. Other than doing sports I did some traveling with my friends. We visited e.g., Dublin and Galway. There are some shops in the city center. From the UL to the nearest grocery shop there is circa 2km. On the outskirts of Limerick, there are a few bigger shopping centers. I could easily reach all the shops by bus.

How did you manage financially? How much did you spend on visa (if applicable), travel, accommodation (per month), living expenses, leisure activities, other expenses (books etc.)?

Ireland itself is rather expensive. However, I did not have to pay semester fees or a visa. And for studying I could just borrow a book from University's library for free. I lived in a student dormitory, which was expensive as well (850€/month). In Ireland, you could get a student bus card, which gives you a discount on the tickets. The sports at University were cheap: the sports clubs were 5-10€/semester and if you were living on Campus the sports classes and gym were included in the rent. I was traveling quite a lot with my friends. But we usually traveled by bus, since it was cheap (7-20€/ticket). But I would say that if you balance your budget well, you are able to manage a semester in Ireland! I received 450 euros of Erasmus money for 4 months during my stay in Ireland. For me one month's Erasmus money was not even enough to pay my rent. Thus, in my opinion that is not enough to cover all the expenses during the stay in Ireland. Therefore, students who are going for Erasmus need to have some other savings as well. Also, I found it quite unfair that students who are going to their Erasmus this year onwards are getting Erasmus money than students before.

What was your best/worst experience? Is there anything else you would like to share?

The worst experience for sure was the amount of paperwork I needed to do before, during, and after Erasmus. Also, organizing and looking for an apartment for one semester in Ireland was rather difficult and unpleasant. The best experience was the atmosphere at the University of Limerick and the city of Limerick itself! People were friendly and I could easily reach some other places, such as Galway or Killarney National Park, by bus. Also, the number of international students made it easy to make new friends.

Would you recommend a semester abroad at your host university? For what reasons?

Absolutely yes! Throughout my whole stay at the University of Limerick (UL), everything was well-organized and well-functioning (e.g., staff members answered quickly, the Buddy program). Besides these "boring aspects", UL organized different kinds of activities, like day trips somewhere or parties at the campus for every kind of student (international, exchange, Irish students, etc.). These activities were helpful for me to get to know new people and see a different part of Ireland.

PHOTOS

In this section, you may upload some photos that represent your stay abroad. When selecting the photos, please bear in mind that the pictures will be visible online if you have given us the permission to publish your report.

Photo (1)

Photo (2)

Photo (3)

Photo (4)

Photo (5)

Photo (6)

Here you have the possibility to enter descriptions/explanations for the photos