

Exchange experience National University of Ireland, Galway, Fall 2018

Study period: **1st semester**

Start date study abroad: **01.09.2018**

End date: **22.12.2018**

Period of classes: from **10 September until 30 November 2018**

Examination period: from **01.12.2018** until **22.12.2018**

Did you follow a language course: **No**

Courses completed at the host university:

- 1. Contract Law**
- 2. Applied Legal Theory**
- 3. International Protection of Human Rights**
- 4. Irish Legal System**
- 5. Evidence Law**
- 6. Media Law**

I did my exchange in National University of Ireland, Galway. The city is truly a hidden gem in Ireland. With its beautiful landscapes and nature that surrounds it, to the narrow streets filled with cafes, restaurants and pubs. The people are quite welcoming and eager to help in any kind of situations. Galway is a vibrant student city and a wonderful place to be as a student.

However, what the students need to take into account is that the weather in Ireland is very harsh and often unpredictable. Living in Netherlands, I thought I was equipped to handle rainy weather - but turns out it is much colder in Ireland, rains more often and every now and then you will receive a news that an apparent mild storm is coming your way.

I took a total of 6 courses in Galway which also needed a bit of getting used to. In Groningen, we usually have 2-3 courses per block and consequently, 2-3 exams. In Galway, I had 5 exams in the end of the semester which was overwhelming. Even though I believe that content-wise the courses in Groningen are more difficult than those in Galway, having 5 exams (each every day) is not an easy task. Therefore, I would advise the students to choose courses which have continuous assessment - meaning that they will not have to take the exam to pass the course. The

only course I had with the continuous assessment was Applied Legal Theory and in the end, I regretted I not choosing a second course with the same format.

The exams take place after the study period is over and students are given a week to revise the content. I would advise you not to leave all the revision until the last week and to get the work done before the exams. It must be considered that since Ireland is a Common Law country, the system and the way the law works is quite different from what you've studied in Netherlands. On that note, I would advise the students to choose the course "Irish Legal System" by all means. Not only will you be educated in the legal system of the country you are living in, but also this course will ease your way into other courses that you'll take - therefore, I believe it is essential.

The next important topic is the housing situation. It is quite difficult to book a place in Galway before you've actually arrived there. The Erasmus staff from the university will also advise you not to pay for anything unless you have seen it. In my case, I saw my room in a facebook group for renting out rooms and fell in love with it. I paid the deposit for my room in advance and I actually arrived to a nice room at a nice place near the city center. However, after seeing my friends struggle with housing crisis I realised I just got lucky. By sending my deposit to my landlord, I had no guarantee that the place would be as good as it was in the pictures or if it was real at all. Therefore, exercise immense caution when finding a room and start looking as soon as you receive the invite from the university, maybe you will be able to book a student dorm.

Living in Galway is a wonderful student experience. Although it might be slightly more expensive than Netherlands, it is worth it. There are wonderful places to visit which are near Galway such as Connemara, Kylemore Abbey, Aran Islands. The city itself is small, but very full of life. The university student union offers a number of societies for people with different interests and I would suggest you join them to meet new people. To sum up, be ready for the new experiences, take a lot of winter clothes, start looking for an apartment as soon as you can and be sensible with the type of courses you choose. If you plan well, you might have one of the best semesters of your education.