

## **Exchange experience Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, Autumn 1018**

### **Courses completed at the host university:**

- Jurisprudence: LA3463 (10 ECTS)
- European Human Rights: LA3436 (10 ECTS)
- Refugee and Immigration Law: LA3466 (10 ECTS)

### **Study Programme**

As I was there as an exchange student and for the first semester, I did not have access to all courses taught in the law school but there was still a broad spectrum of courses to choose from; including freshman and sophomore modules. All the modules available were worth ten or five credits so I found no difficulty in acquiring exactly the amount required to satisfy the 30 ECT requirement. The modules I took were Jurisprudence, European Human Rights and Refugee and Immigration Law. As they were all ten credit courses, the courses had – more or less – the same structure; roughly three hours of contact weekly and two written assignments. I did not have any exams owing to my selection of courses, however I found that the word count for the papers were higher than we are used to in Groningen so not having an exam did not necessarily translate to less work (whilst I did not, I heard that if you indicated that you were an exchange student and unfamiliar with the workload or style, the lecturer may be so kind as to take this into consideration). I think I preferred this method of assessment because although it was more labour intensive (you cannot avoid reading a lot) it gave me greater control over my time – so I had more time for activities, and greater control over the final output in comparison to an exam setting. The language of instruction is English and considerable emphasis was laid on spelling, grammar and writing; this is not an issue if you leave a little time out for editing. It is also worth noting that you may or may not need to hand in the final paper in person; this is important for when you are deciding when to leave Ireland. The courses themselves were all interesting from the description and in person, the only issue I had was that I started late, and the lectures were structured differently so often I struggled a bit to catch on. Some courses had a higher demand than others, so I would advise signing up early just to be safe; also bear in mind that not all modules available for exchange students are accessible in the Michealmas semester.

### **Finance & Other Conditions**

Accommodation was more difficult to secure than it was in Groningen; it was expensive, and most landlords wanted prospective residents to visit in person, stay for at least 6 months or a year and be willing to share a room in some cases. Also, housing was not provided specifically for Erasmus students by the university because they prioritise first-years and students staying for the entire year. They had some spaces available with other establishments (they were also costly) but they were all rented out relatively quickly. I ended up staying with a family friend, it was a pleasant experience, but they lived about an hour away from the city centre and the bus connections were not very frequent (except for in the mornings and evenings, during rush hours) so this was a bit problematic. The poor housing situation in Dublin is a widely-acknowledged issue and starting early may help but the best approach is to go in person ahead of time. Finding housing is an inconvenience worth noting when considering this university. The cost of transport was also higher than I anticipated, I travelled by bus every day, so to minimise costs I bought the student 'rambler' (€120 for 30 days) every month. Regarding feeding, I found that there is something for every budget if you ask around or just explore the shopping centres. One thing to look forward to in Dublin is the wide variety of food available, I especially enjoyed trying

new things out – including the local cuisine at pubs with live music. There were minor costs involved for becoming a member of a society, getting your student card, leap card and others but none were excessive. I am a third country national, so I had to apply for a visa, this was costly in terms of money, time and effort. I found the process tedious and unnecessarily expensive; this was influenced by the late response from Trinity that meant I had to apply in my home country because I had already left for the summer (it would have been easier in the Netherlands). Considering all these factors, it is obvious that the Erasmus grant is a little bit helpful but nowhere near enough to rely on. Dublin is expensive and it is important that students who wish to go to this destination are prepared to spend more than they typically would in Groningen.

### **Preparation & Contacts**

After the nomination, sending in the application and other first steps were quite straightforward and there was enough information available on the websites. However, after the initial stages I found that the process became unnecessarily prolonged because the university would often give delayed responses. The international office is usually bombarded at the time of the year when applications are assessed, so I would advise following-up emails with a phone call to get quick responses. I had to apply for a short-stay study visa; the process was tedious, and it arrived later than I expected so I had to resume at the university later than others. The university was particularly helpful with this; adjustments were made, for example I could register remotely for courses. Regarding guidance or reception at the university, I arrived a little later, so I wasn't able to fully partake of the welcoming events, but I was of the impression that they were organised well (especially social events) and Celine (the Erasmus coordinator) was very helpful.

### **Outside the Classroom at Trinity**

I found my experience of Trinity to be very pleasant. The campus is very beautiful and is conveniently located in the centre. The classrooms, library (including the 24/7 access study building) and other facilities were also of a very good standard. There were a number of societies to join and a number of them were very active. I enjoyed being a member of 'The Phil' the most and would highly recommend it; whilst I was there, guests ranging from Alt-J to Jeff Weiner (CEO of LinkedIn) spoke to us. There were also career-orientated opportunities I would advise any student attending to take advantage of; I volunteered at 'The Good Summit'; this was a great opportunity to develop interpersonal skills, network and learn a lot.

### **Dublin**

Dublin is very rich in culture. I enjoyed immersing myself in the culture and activities. There was an endless list of things to do with my free time. My favourite hobby in Dublin was trekking within the city and learning about the cultural significance of monuments, landmarks and others. I did not do much travelling outside of Dublin as I spent most weekends trekking or doing activities within Dublin; if I could do the experience again, I would travel more in my free time especially as the good transportation system make it easy.