

Report Form Exchange period Abroad 2019-2020

Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Study period: Michaelmas term (first semester)

Start date: 2nd September 2019

End date: 12th December 2019

Period of classes: 9th September – 2nd December 2019

Examination period: 2nd December – 13th December 2019

Did you follow a language course: no

Courses completed at the host university:

- a. Legal Philosophy
- b. European Human Rights
- c. Media Law

My first choice for doing the Erasmus+ exchange was Trinity College in Dublin (TCD) due to its prestige as a university and due to the surprising and interesting culture that Ireland offers. Although the country offers many more than that (in terms of activities, opportunities, nice people, landscapes, etc.), a thorough preparation is necessary in advance to ensure that your stay there is wonderful. By far the most concerning issue is the accommodation. The university has some places for students within its campus, yet the price range is not the most affordable (around €250 per week). It is always a good idea to start looking for accommodation as soon as possible and don't be too surprised if a single (and quite small) room will cost you around €750. However, a good option might be to opt for a double room which can be rented for €500 (sometimes even less), the drawback being that you don't have that much privacy; on the other side, you might find that an experience like this can turn out to be very pleasant and that you can make a friend for life. I believe there is also a cheaper option, that is to be accommodated in a house with a family that rents one of their room, but those are usually a bit further away from the city centre (where TCD is located).

Although the housing situation seems extreme, I must admit that there are very nice places to live in Dublin. Personally, I was accommodated in a house that offered temporary rooms for periods between 3 and 5 months (perfect for an Erasmus+ student). The house was almost at all times occupied by 25 individuals (!), but the atmosphere was extraordinary. What

might seem as an overcrowded house was in fact like a huge family spending lots of time together cooking, watching movies or drinking a beer, in addition to weekly trips around Dublin. Nevertheless, don't expect that landlords in Ireland give too much attention to the wellbeing of their tenants, so it would be preferable to find an accommodation that at least has tidy and clean tenants. As a matter of fact, I reckon that the housing situation in Dublin is the biggest problem, yet I also reckon that for me it was also the biggest surprise. Living on a daily basis with 20+ people coming from 20+ cultures can **never** be boring, and I believe I have made life-time friendships in this period. One of the first things I have been told by the tenants when I arrived was that: "You're going to hate the house, but you're going to love the people". This couldn't have been closer to the truth!

Trinity College Dublin is arguably the most prestigious higher education institution in Ireland. Although the overall experience at the university was according to my expectations, there were some small things that bothered me. The staff of the university and the lecturers are quite helpful and friendly. The only thing is that not all the information is given or available to you, so you have to ask for it. They don't take more than a few days to reply to your emails, but make sure you make your inquiries in time and that you respect all the deadlines. Another problem was that the university makes no effort to integrate the Erasmus+ students with the Irish students and they, being accustomed with the system, don't always take time to explain matters to visiting students. In my opinion, much more could be done in this regard in terms of taking measures to better integrate the visiting students in the university life.

Regarding the courses, it is interesting that you can choose whatever you prefer from quite a nice range of law courses. I have chosen Legal Philosophy, European Human Rights and Media Law. With the exception of the third, which was in my opinion a little too focused on Irish Law, I was very satisfied with these subjects. The courses are quite challenging, so make sure you choose something you really like, as studying a difficult topic that you don't enjoy might seem frustrating. An exchange in Dublin will almost certainly improve your writing skills, as lecturers at Trinity College are keen to writing assignments and essays (especially regarding Erasmus+ students). In fact, all my assessments were written, while only two courses had a final exam (a written essay as exam).

In terms of free time, Dublin is again a fun choice. The Irish are well-known for their drinking habit and you can find a pub almost on any corner of a street. Although the ones in the city centre are the most sought after, there are interesting small locals around the city. Dublin also has museums (some of which have free entrance), nice parks and some historical

monuments. If that isn't enough, you can go to the ocean at the Howth peninsula near the city, or choose a trip to Belfast, or to Galway and the Cliffs of Moher (an extraordinary natural landscape with sea cliffs) for affordable prices.

To sum up, studying at Trinity College was an unforgettable experience. Finding the perfect place for an exchange is impossible, but visiting Dublin offered me an opportunity to try a new way of studying, to witness a new way of life, and to meet new people. I believe this experience is overall very valuable and although not perfect it's well worth the trouble. Despite the fact that it's not good to take for granted other people's experiences, as one man's trash is another man's treasure, it is fair to say that I have enjoyed it and I recommend it to anyone who finds it appealing.