

## Exchange experience report NUI Galway, Ireland, Autumn 2019

### Study programme

Galway offers a variety of courses for LLB students, a list of courses is available online, though slightly out of date. The Erasmus coordinators were very helpful in ensuring that the first part of the Erasmus grant was as accurate as possible in pointing out which courses were no longer available. I took International Protection of Human Rights, Contract Law I, Legal & Business Ethics, Company law, Environmental law and Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Overall all courses were enjoyable and educational, in hindsight I would recommend taking 'The Irish Legal System' as some Irish approaches do differ greatly from what we are used to in Groningen, and other Erasmus students who did take it found it helpful.

The most enjoyable course for me personally was 'International Protection of Human Rights' as it was a perfect addition and in depth look at some of the issues that we discussed in Groningen. As for the level of study, I would compare it with the courses here, the exam was essay styles questions, with a slightly smaller focus on problem questions, no unexpected surprises were in the exam. In all of the exams students got to choose from a number of questions and were able to decide which ones they wanted to answer, the options and amount of answers required differed from module to module. I would recommend this course to anyone with an interest in Human Rights/ International Law.

Legal & Business Ethics was equally interesting and a different approach to what we usually do. A significant focus was put on the concept of 'Corporate Social Responsibility' and how it can affect laws and the law-making process. This course was a mix of theoretical and technical examples and gave an interesting view on the thought process of companies. As for difficulty, personally I found this course to be comparatively easy, the workload was reasonable, and I found it very interesting. The examination was an exam with essay style questions, mixed with a few problem questions. I would recommend this course to students who are interested in Company law or philosophy.

Contract I was not my favourite course but still interesting, I decided to take this course because I had liked the private law courses in Groningen. It was definitely different than what we did in Groningen. This course was one the few where I believe taking 'The Irish Legal System' would have been helpful, that is not to say the course was impossible without taking it, but you will get more out of the course if you do. The general principles of Irish contract law were discussed in this course, for example what is required to form a legal contract, what forms an exception and the like. As for the difficulty I would say it's also among the easier courses that I took, though you definitely have to keep up with the reading. The lectures in this course were accompanied by tutorials, which were similar to working groups in Groningen. Once again this was an essay style exam, with a few problem questions, in addition there was in class test worth 20% of the grade. I would recommend this course to people who are interested in private/contract law, but keep in mind that this is very much focused on the Irish system.

Company Law I was enjoyable, it started with the history of the company in Ireland and then went into details about a number of issues such as liability, separate legal personality and responsibilities towards shareholders. This was one of the more difficult courses because the concepts discussed are slightly more complex and there is a comparatively larger workload. This was the only other course that had accompanying tutorials, again these were similar to working groups in Groningen. I would recommend this

course to students with an interest in company law, it was slightly dry at times, so it helps when you are actually interested in the topic. Since the course is structured in a way that general concepts describe the weakly subjects, I would say that although it is focused on the Irish side, it could also be helpful for different systems. Once again this was an exam with a mix of essay and problem questions.

Alternative Dispute Resolution was again not my favourite course, it was still a good course, just different from what I expected. While I liked Civil Procedural law in Groningen this course was slightly repetitive and just overall not as interesting to me. The level of study was fine, although some of the texts were weirdly phrased and difficult to get through, a sentiment shared by the native English speakers. The examination was a homework worth 20% and an exam with essay and problem questions. I personally would not recommend this course unless you are really interested in ADR.

The final course I took was Environmental law, this course was focused on planning regulations. I did not really enjoy this course, it was very technical and dry. The level of difficulty was fine. The examination was a number of in class group exercises and a large group work essay and presentation. I would not recommend this course.

### **Language**

Overall, I had no problems with the language, although some older Irish people have a very thick accent that is more difficult to understand, however everybody is more than willing to repeat their statements.

### **Finance and other conditions**

Ireland is definitely more expensive than the Netherlands, but if you budget correctly the Erasmus grant can cover a large part of the difference. I lived in a relatively expensive apartment, but overall I would say that you have to pay 500€ p.m. If you buy groceries try to go to the discounters rather than Tesco or Centra, which often are more convenient but also more expensive. Going out can also be rather expensive, but it is also an effective way to keep you from overdoing it. I would say that at night if you go home by yourself, be safe and get a cab, the buses stop driving around 12, and we were warned to walk by ourselves in certain parts of the town.

### **Preparation and contacts with the faculty abroad**

The staff members in Galway were really helpful with the planning and were quick to respond, the only thing that took time was their signature on the Erasmus Before Departure document.

### **Housing**

I lived in an apartment in Salthill with another exchange student. I would recommend that you look for a place as soon as possible as the housing market in Galway is equally crowded as it is in Groningen. The University of Galway has a few spots in the student accommodations if you are lucky you might get a spot. I lived further away from the university and took a bus to Uni most days, just be aware that rush-hour is pretty hectic, and the buses are not always on time.

### **Guidance/reception at the host university**

NUI has three days of introduction; they inform you about Galway and the university in general. There is an enormous number of clubs for all kinds of interests, and I really mean

enormous! The entire university tries to make you feel welcome and at home. There are many trips offered to exchange students in and around Galway.

### **Culture, free time and traveling**

Everybody in Galway is extremely nice and helpful. While Galway is a relatively small town, I never was bored while there. The beach is relatively close to the city centre and worth a visit, so are the many pubs all over town. Most days of the week the pubs in Galway offer live music. Depending on your style of studying, you can definitely use the weekends to travel around Ireland and still not be overly stressed during the week. My roommate came from the US and took the weekends to travel all over Europe.

### **Other**

I can strongly suggest picking Galway as your exchange destination. I met many new friends from all around. I would suggest that you try and not hang out with the other Erasmus students too much, as that tends to happen. Pack a decent raincoat as there are many rainy days and go travel around as much as possible as the country has a lot to offer. While Dublin is worth a visit, I am more than happy that I spend my exchange in Galway, it is a very beautiful and charming town and has more of that 'Irish' feeling to it than Dublin which is closer to every other metropolis in the world.