

Report Erasmus Exchange
Trinity College Dublin, Ireland
Fall semester 2015
Sophie Poiesz
386299sp@eur.nl

Studying at the ESE gives you the opportunity to study abroad. I have been away for the first three months of my third bachelor year of Economics and Business Economics. Those months covered one term at Trinity College and 2 blocks at the ESE. This report will be about my experience before and during the exchange and I hope to give some useful information when it comes to studying at a different university and beginning a life in another country.

Preparation

The first step in going on exchange, to any destination, is to start the application process at the ESE. Once you are nominated to go on exchange by the faculty, in general you will be accepted at the hosting university, in my case Trinity College. To be accepted there is loads of paperwork to do. Do not underestimate the time things will cost to get everything done. For Trinity you have to apply with all your personal information and state the courses you are interested in. It is good to orientate around the website of Trinity and find which courses you might be interested in taking. However, you will not have to make a final decision until the introduction week in September, but doing some research up front will save a bit of stress. Also, begin on time with the applications, to anything really, because you need signatures and stamps usually of both universities and that takes a while to process.

After sorting things out with the universities, studying and living abroad needs some other things organized. Since going to Dublin means going on an exchange within the EU, you can apply for the Erasmus Grant. The amount the grant has depends on the standard of living costs. Dublin is not any more expensive than The Netherlands (except for rent) but will still be the highest category. I got 270 a month for the three months I was there. Also, you can get your public transport grand reimbursed through DUO. You will, for the time you stay abroad, have to cancel your public transport card and you will get money on your banking account together with the monthly study finance. A travel insurance might be advisable. This does depend on your insurance. My own regular travel insurance covers going away for studies as well, as long as you do not stay longer than 180 days. I was very happy to have it, I had both my phone and my bike stolen being there and I got my money back for both.

As in every capital city, finding accommodation is a nightmare. There is in Dublin a huge shortage of housing so start as early as possible. I had been e-mailing loads of people as a response on their ads online. It is not uncommon to not even get a reply, let alone after you are not able to visit in person. I was lucky and found a place to live, but it was only a week before flying in. I have friends that did not have a place to stay when first coming to Ireland. What they did is stay in a hostel while looking for accommodation. Expect rent to be fairly higher than in Rotterdam and you usually pay on a weekly basis. Expect to pay around 110-150 euros a week for a room and highly likely a shared room. Yes, sharing a room scared me at first as well but it is done quite often in Ireland. In the end, I got along really well with my roommate and it was nice to share, since it was just for the 3,5 months. A tip, which Trinity will advise you as well, be careful who you pay money to. Most hosts will ask for a

deposit of a couple of hundred euros up front and there are scammers around. What I did was asking my host if I could pay just a quarter of the deposit up front and after moving in pay the rest. A good website to look for housing is daft.ie.

Arrival, Trinity College and Dublin

Trinity College has a great welcoming service. A student will collect you at the airport to advise you how to get to the city or to your accommodation. They will give you, at least, they gave me, a SIM card with a small amount on it and a ticket for the Aircoach to city center.

The fresher's week in Dublin is slightly different than the Eureka week in Rotterdam. It is much less organized, read not at all, and I was quite disappointed by the lack of activities. However, you do get some useful information sessions and from the initial group I found a really cool group of people that I would hang out with for the rest of my stay in Dublin. In fresher's week you will find loads of stands of societies. It is only a couple of euro to join so shop around and join a few that call to you. They will have something for everyone and societies will organize activities throughout the semester.

A beautiful fact Trinity surprises you with is the complete lack of efficiency in organizing their administration. They work with a very old system of handwritten forms, that need to be signed by various people that are never reachable. Although the contents of education at Trinity, the best university in Ireland, is really good in my opinion, the administration was absolutely horrible. In my last week here I was supposed to have either an exam on the first days of the week or an assignment. It was not until the Thursday before that I knew it would be an exam and it would be at the end of the week on Friday instead of the beginning of the week. And then day after this announcement it was moved again to the day before. What I want to say with this is that really the education is quite good but be prepared to be confused by the administrative side of things, it needs much upgrading.

Then Dublin City. Dublin is a really nice capital. It has around one million inhabitants but it is still not a rushing city. It has a bit of calmness around it with all the beautiful buildings and the river Liffey in the middle. Trinity College is amazing as well, walking around the campus with its green grass and gray buildings is a great feeling. It is so funny to be at your university and there are lots of tourists around. A tip; with your student card you can get into the Book of Kells museum and the Old Library for free and can bring up till 3 or 4 people with you for free.

Dublin is of course famous for its pubs and grabbing a pint with friends after class is just great. I personally preferred drinking pints with my friends and talk a bit much more than going dancing and clubbing, but if you like that Dublin has a large range of nightclubs around. The national museums are free to get into and highly recommendable. Some Dublin shops, restaurants and places of entertainment give student discounts. Do the Sandemans free walking tour upon arrival, it's good!

I lived quite far out of the city center so I decided to take a bike. I personally felt it was great to be mobile. I could go home at any time of the day and get to friend's houses easily. Plus, as I lived far out, I could cycle home without having to pay for a taxi after going out. Taxis can be quite expensive in Dublin. The public transport in Dublin consists of buses. You can get a Leap card (OV card) to use the bus. I hardly used it, but I think you can get a personal card made that will give you a monthly subscription with student discount that is about 80 euros a month.

While being in Ireland I have travelled quite a bit, both around and outside the country. The international students society organizes a few trips around Ireland and they are supposed to be nice,

I have never been. It is easy though to travel around with friends yourself. There are tour companies, busses and trains to bring you around. Belfast and the north is beautiful, as is the Irish West Coast. Keep in mind that the further you go to winter a lot of things will close down if you go north. Around Dublin there are a few nice places to go as well, like the Wicklow Mountains and Howth. Traveling outside of Ireland is great as well, as Aer Lingus and Ryanair fly really cheaply from Dublin Airport to many destinations.

Courses

For the ESE you have to get 24 ECTS out of which 12 were within the field of economics. Business and math modules were accepted for this as well. Make sure you meet these requirements set by the ESE. Trinity will allow you in into any course usually. Trinity works with a system of two semesters and a central examination period in May. If you stay only one semester you cannot do those exams of course, and most courses will ask you to do another assignment instead, usually essays. Most courses in Trinity are (a multiple of) 5 ECTS. Fourth year courses can be different, you would do half of the whole year course of 15 ECTS, so this would count for 7.5 ECTS. Mind you, the ESE and Examination Board will not recognize half points and will round them up downwards. Here are the courses that I took:

EC304B: Economics of Less Developed Countries

5 ECTS

I was interested in this course straight away. I had done an Honours Program at the EUR before going on exchange and was in contact with a lecturer who did development economics. The course was taught by a really enthusiastic woman who was passionate about her discipline. I really liked her, she would know everyone in the class by their first name. I have to say, in general it is easy to get in personal contact and with most of my professors I was on a first name basis. This is something I had never had at the EUR. You have to write two essays for this course.

EC308B: Mathematical Economics

5 ECTS

This is the course I liked best. It connects math to economic problems. It was taught by a scattered math professor, but he was really good and I enjoyed his classes. It suits perfectly to the previous courses I had in my first two years of studying at the ESE, mainly math and micro- and macroeconomics courses. Also general concepts used in finance were mathematically evaluated. There is one exam in week 8 of term and at the end of the semester a take home assignment has to be done.

BU2530: Introduction to accounting

5 ECTS

I took this course because I am contemplating to do accounting as my major. It is a second year course and, compared to the level of second year accounting course we have, it seemed like a nice refreshment. However, it was very basic and turned out to be the first time Trinity business students would have any accounting. What I did really like about the course is that it focuses more on the basic interpretation of financial statements, something the courses at EUR do not have. You have to sit two exams, one in week 8 and one in the last week of term.

PI110B: Central Problems in Philosophy A

10 ECTS

This course really appealed to me and I treated it as my minor. It was a first year course and I heard it was somewhat similar to doing a philosophy minor at the EUR. I did find it quite difficult to do, in philosophy you approach topics very differently than you do in economics. I found the course really interesting and it was great to learn to look at things from a different discipline. Because it was 10 ECTS I had to write four essays.

Finances

Dublin is, as far as living expenses, pretty of similar to The Netherlands, when you look at groceries and traveling, prices as hostels etc. Accommodation definitely is more expensive. Alcohol prices depend on what and where you buy it. In pubs beers are similar priced as at home, for a pint you pay around 5 euros. In the supermarket beer is almost twice as expensive as at home, but most supermarket will have multi buy discounts. Wine is crazy expensive either way and usually not very good. I did not spend any money on college, there is quite an extensive library with all necessary books and of course online literature. I have been using the SIM card I got from my Trinity pick up. It was from provider Three IE. It has all-you-can-eat data and you keep the balance for calls for only 20 euro per month. I found this really convenient, I would often whatsapp call friends there or home on the road.

Here is an overview of my expenses for 14 weeks, but of course it all depends on how much you want to do yourself:

Expense	Amount	Comment
Accommodation	1550	
Flight Ryanair	110	Two way with luggage, try to fly on less busy days as mon, tue or wed
Travel around Ireland	500	Mainly weekend trips
Public transport	50	Because of my bike I rarely used it
Bike	75	Second hand, with lock and upgrades less amount retrieved after selling off
Phone	60	Three months all you can eat data
Groceries	500	Aldi and Lidl are cheapest, I personally preferred Tesco
Other	700	Going out for dinner or drinks, get lunch etc This is a really rough estimation
TOTAL	3545	