

Trinity College Dublin 2015: The time of my life

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General information

In my 3rd year of my bachelor Econometrics at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam I went to Trinity College Dublin for an Erasmus program. I stayed there from mid-September till mid-December 2015. At the ESE this would correspond with the first two blocks of the academic year. At Trinity College they only have two terms: Michaelmas and Hilary term. The fall semester is called Michaelmas term I had to choose this term.

Preparation

Since Ireland is part of the EU I did not need a visa to enter the country. For me this saved a lot of work. However, you do have to arrange some important paperwork before departure. First of all, once you are elected by the ESE you have to send your application letter to Trinity college. This is all very straight forward, but since the academic year in Ireland starts relatively late (last week of September) compared to the Netherlands it can take a while before you finally receive your letter of acceptance. In my case I received my letter of acceptance by the end of August.

Secondly, you should not forgot to apply for the Erasmus+ grant. Since your documents has to be signed and stamped by host- and home university start on time and do as much before departure in order to receive the first part of your grant quick. Because you are going to Ireland you will get the highest grant level: 270 euro per month, because Ireland is quite expensive. I recommend you to finish this in the first week of your arrival. On top of that you can get another 100 euro per month from DUO if stop your OV-card. Unfortunately, this is for Dutch students only. You should arrange this before departure.

In most reports you will be advised to take an decent travel insurance. It is important to have a look on that, but I would first contact your insurance company or intermediary to check if it is necessary before paying for an additional travel insurance. For example my insurance was already sufficient enough for the 3,5 month in Ireland.

One of the last things where you should take a look at before departure is your accommodation. Unfortunately it is way harder to find some proper accommodation in Dublin than in Rotterdam. The accommodation shortage is immense and the demand for rooms is still increasing. Therefor the prices in Dublin are sky-high. When you are looking for a room. You will notice that many rooms are shared. This was a little different for me since it is not common in the Netherlands. If you are looking for a cheap room close to the city center this is the only option you have. I was forced to accept a twin room for temporary, because I underestimated the time it would take me to find a room. Therefor I started the hunting game too late I arrived two weeks before the start of the term. After one month I was finally able to move out to and move in a single room. It is very important not to pay any deposit or rent in advance before you have seen the room yourself. Trinity College will also warn you multiple times for active scammers. Especially on Facebook, but also on acknowledged websites like www.daft.ie they are active. In conclusion I would recommend you to travel to Dublin at least two or even three before the start of the term. Before arrival you should have already made some appointments for viewings. As long as you have not found anything you can stay in hostels. Most of them are located in the city center and they are relative cheap. On top of that it is an easy way to meet some other students. If you are one of the lucky ones who find a room quick, you have plenty of time left to do some sight-seeing. I can promise you Ireland is awesome. In the next section 'Arrival' I will tell you more about that.

Arrival

For the first few days in Dublin I booked a hotel in the city center. The first day I went to Trinity College to get all my documents signed and stamped and to collect my Student's card and Student's Leap Card. The student's leap card will give you some extra discount for travelling by bus or tram in Dublin. After this was done I only had to arrange my accommodation. Like I mentioned before this was quite challenging. I went to the students union, TCDSU, they helped me further. After some days I moved to a hostel. I have met here some great new friends. These guys were also looking for accommodation. So we did the house hunt together. We tried to rent a room in the same apartment. Unfortunately this was not possible. During the day we did some sightseeing and in the evenings we did the viewings. Within two weeks we had already crossed entire Ireland. Ireland is one of the most beautiful countries I have ever seen. If you decide to go to Dublin, please feel free to contact me, I have some more detailed tips and hot spots I could send you.

Courses

I had to take a minimum of 24 ECTS, where at least 12 ECTS were related to economy courses. In Dublin most of the courses are worth 5 or 10 ECTS. In the end I had chosen for 5 modules with a total worth of 30 ECTS. At Trinity College they only have exams in May. No matter when the module is taught. For one term exchange students they offer extra assignments which replace the exam. In my case this were only essays. This was a little surprise for me, because I was not used to that, but at Trinity College essays is a very popular way of examining. After all those essays I had improved my writing skill significantly which I am happy about since I have great difficulty with this skill.

EC302B-A-Y- 201516: Money and Banking - 5 ECTS

This module has three topics. First they will introduce the core principles of banking. The second part they will focus on the fundamental concepts of finance. In the last and third topic they focus on the economic theory behind financial intermediaries. For me this module was very interesting, because I may want to work in the banking sector. Unfortunately, this module demands a lot of work. Every week you have to summarize at least three papers.

EC305B-A-Y 201516: Investment Analysis - 5 ECTS

This module analyses the process of the investment in financial markets. Where they focus on the behavior fixed income securities like bonds. I thought this would be an interesting course, because I hoped they would teach me more than just bond pricing. I have learned here a lot, but I expected just a little more. The final assignment though was very interesting. You have to invest €100,000 in different types of bonds and motivate your choice. After one month you have to report the results of your investment. This was fun to do, since I made a big profit.

EC309B-A-Y 201516: Econometrics - 5 ECTS

This module is an introduction to econometrics. I chose this one, because I failed this course econometrics at the Erasmus University. So I am prepared for my return. This module was a little easier, but it helped me better to understand the principals of econometrics. I would recommend you to choose this one if you have failed econometrics 1 at the Erasmus University.

EC409B-A-Y 201516: Quantitative Methods - 10 ECTS

This was the only 4th year module I chose. The course emphasis is on the dynamic analysis, and the topics include differential and difference equations, and dynamic optimization. During the term this was very easy to me since it was only about calculus. This was not that hard for me although I had some great difficulty with the final assignment. I had to write an essay about the topics which were mentioned in the lectures instead of solving equations.

BU362B-A-Y 201516: Introduction to Fixed Income Securities and Alternative Investments - 5 ECTS

This was the only module I chose which was not taught by the economic department, but from the business department. Although it was not from the economic department it had some great overlap with another course which I mentioned before: Investment Analysis. For some reason these two courses were almost identical even the final assignments. This made my life a little easier in Dublin.

Finances

Although Dublin is a great city it is quite expensive. It is not only the accommodation, but also public transportation, groceries and alcohol. For example, one beer in Temple Bar costs easily 7 euro per pint. Therefore I recommend you to go to Dicey's or Howl of the Moon if you want to drink for cheap. You will easily discover this by yourself since all students are going there. Please feel free to contact me I know some great other pubs.

Like I mentioned before I did a lot of sightseeing and therefore I had to cross whole Ireland and even took some flights for that. My expenses for traveling and sightseeing covers a significant part of my total expenses therefore. I would recommend you to do the same. For this reason I had the time of my life. I left them out for this reason.

Expense	Amount	Comment
Accommodation	€1900	3.5 month (single room), twin room is less of course
Flight (Dublin- Eindhoven)	€180	Including luggage
Bike	€75	My bike was stolen, but otherwise you can sell it easily
Student's Leap Card Dublin	€100	30- day card public transportation only for Dublin
Groceries	€500	Food is expensive
Mobile Phone	€60	Use provider: "Three" for 20 euro per month you get all you can eat internet.
Sport facility	€0	Only for one term students the sport facility is for free.
Travel Insurance	€0	Was not necessary for me
Other	€500	Restaurants, Pubs, etc.
Total	€3315	Minimum
Sightseeing	Significant	If you like traveling a lot

Final Note

As an exchange student you will have plenty of spare time. Use your time well, go sightseeing a lot and make a lot of new friends. Become member of a student society or whatever. But I warn you in advance do not forget to study, because you are an exchange student and you will have more assignment than the Irish students. All deadlines of every module are in the final two weeks of the term. If you do not study every once a while you will face a very tough last month. Anyway, I am sure you will have a great time just like I had. Enjoy!!