



## Fachbereich Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften Nürnberg FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg

### Erfahrungsbericht Auslandsstudium

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Angaben zum Auslandsaufenthalt	
Studiengang an der WiSo:	BSc. International Business Studies
Gastuniversität:	University of Galway
Gastland:	Ireland
Studiengang an der Gastuniversität:	Commerce
Aufenthaltszeitraum (Semester und Jahr):	WS 2023/24
Darf der Bericht veröffentlicht werden?*	( <b>Nicht</b> zutreffendes löschen) JA

\*Veröffentlichung unter: <http://ib.wiso.fau.de/outgo/partneruniversitaeten/>

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## 1. Application and selection process

I started planning pretty early on (around August) to create a table of universities I was interested in. The international day helped me with the knowledge of all the formalities required to apply for the semester abroad. Ireland was in my top 5 choices because of their reputation; beautiful nature and very friendly and welcoming people (all very true). I had to submit a motivational letter, a CV, and other documents to begin the process of applying for the exchange. By mid-December, I was getting nominated by the international office, and by the end of March, the first e-mails from the host university started arriving (the official acceptance letter came in July though).

## 2. Arrival and Visa

I didn't have to apply for any visa since I'm an EU citizen. Although it is possible to drive by car to Galway (some people did that), the most convenient means of transportation is, hands down, planes. You can fly to Shannon or Dublin and take a bus afterward. I flew from Frankfurt to Dublin airport (there are also flights from Nuremberg to Dublin) and then took the bus to Galway. Buses go every hour from Dublin airport to the Galway coach station that's right in the city center. I found a promo code for 10 or 15% off on one of the university website or emails for one of the bus companies (GoBus or Citylink) before arriving.

## 3. Accommodation options (dormitory, private)

The university usually holds a few places in on-campus accommodation (Corrib, Goldcrest, and Dunlin villages), and we could register for them in June. The lottery works on a first-come, first-serve basis, so be fast because the spots fill up really quickly. I was unfortunate and didn't get in; therefore, I started hunting for accommodation on Facebook, Studentpad, Hostingpower, and daft.ie. I encountered many scams along the way, but eventually, I found a place with a host who lived in Knocknacarra on Studentpad (would recommend subscribing to the newsletter, which sends you daily mails about the newest postings). I paid €760 per month for a room in a house where I lived with the host and 4 other students, the bill also included utilities, wifi, breakfast (toast, cornflakes, milk, and juices), and dinners. The neighbourhood was an hour away by foot and 20 minutes by bus from the university.

In case you don't find anything before your arrival to Galway, don't panic, book a hostel for a few nights and make a few visits to the UoG's accommodation office. A lot of my friends found their housing that way and they often lived at much better locations than me (walking distance from the university).

## 4. Support at the host university

All the staff (both academic and non-academic) at the university were amazing. They usually answered within a day and went above and beyond to help students. Additionally, the university would organize a lot of events throughout the semester. The international office hosted speed-friending events and a trip to the Cliffs of Moher at the start of the semester, and the Students' Union would send out weekly emails about everything happening on campus in the upcoming week.



## 5. Courses/timetable at the host university

The system in Ireland is very different from the one at FAU, from how the semester is organized to the grading. We started studying in September and within the first 2 weeks we could try out all of the subjects we were interested in but ultimately we had to sign up for subjects by the end of this trial. This choice was locked in and automatically signed you up for respective exams. After the lecture phase, we got a week off to study and then had to write exams in a window of 2 weeks. I had completed the whole semester a week before Christmas.

Majority of courses are 5 ECTS just like at FAU, however the grading couldn't be more different. 100-70% are considered 1st class honors, 69-60% 2nd class honors grade 1, 59-50% 2nd class honors grade 2, 49-40% 3rd class honors, and under is a fail. Although it might seem like getting an A is pretty easy, let me disappoint you a bit because it's pretty hard to get a 70% and I have never seen anyone get close to a 100.

What grades consist of is different as well. Usually there are continuous assessments worth 20-40% and a final exam worth the rest, however, a few courses are 100% continuous assessment without an exam. Continuous assessment can be group projects, essays, reports, mid-terms. It added the practical aspect to a subject which I really enjoyed and the professors give out very helpful feedback. Final exams were essay based. For majority of my courses I had to answer 3 out of 5 questions within 2 hours. I had issues with the finals because I'm not good at writing and English is not my first language. However, an aid that was very handy during the exam season was looking up old exams which are accessible once you are enrolled in the university.

## 6. Facilities at the host university

The facilities available at the University of Galway are amazing. The campus is concentrated around one area and throughout the campus there are many cafeterias (the main one is An Bhialann), a fitness club (with a pool and a gym), and a ton of learning spaces.

I've only been to two cafeterias - An Bhialann and the one at the Cairnes building. Both offer 3 mains that change daily (1 vegetarian and 2 meat dishes) and a regular rotation - in An Bhialann it's pizza and burger, and in Cairnes it's burritos/burrito bowls.

Although the library doesn't look very modern, majority of the seats have a power socket, a few have a computer and there are a few rooms for group works where you are allowed to speak, some even have a blackboard, a projector, or a TV. They also have a lot of services: they lend out computers, offer workshops for academic writing and skills, and mental support dogs come by the library a few times in the semester.



## 7. Everyday life and leisure

The life in Galway was overall very pleasant. During the week there would be different events by societies. There were +100 societies for any hobby/interest like baking, gaming, international students, Germans, Star Wars, Formula 1, Harry Styles, etc. Additionally, my friend group would go on trips every weekend to cities and nature (a must see are the Aran Islands and The Giant's Causeway) There are also street performances in Galway's city centre and live music in pubs, so the atmosphere is always bustling. For eating out, I would recommend DoughBros for pizza, Hooked for seafood, and Papa's rich for asian food.

Money can be withdrawn from ATMs. I don't know how accessible they are in the city, but there is one in the Concourse building on campus. Extra charges vary depending on your bank account plan. There was no need to change my German SIM card since I was roaming inside the EU. However, if you are interested in an Irish SIM, there were representatives from a network company and gave out SIM cards at the welcoming event for incoming students. I don't know of anyone had a part-time job during their ERASMUS stay but many regular students have one.

## 8. Financial (cost of living, scholarships)

As you might have noticed by now, the cost of living in Ireland is very high. I was lucky to get an ERASMUS top-up, so the majority of my grant went into rent itself (the base grant wouldn't be able to cover the whole rent). Meals in Mensa are basically twice the price in Nuremberg (meat dishes were ~€7.20 and vegetarian ~€6.50), and for transportation you pay per bus ride (€0.60 - €1.35) as they don't have monthly tickets. Prices at supermarkets like Aldi and Lidl and for eating out were pretty similar to those in Germany.

## 9. Important contacts and links

UoG page for ERASMUS students: <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/erasmus-programme/incomingstudents/latestnews/>

On-campus accommodation: <https://www.campusaccommodation.ie/students/>

Studentpad: <https://www.uniofgalwaystudentpad.ie/students>

## 10. Conclusion (best and worst experience)

Overall, I loved both the semester in Galway. My worst experience would be the exam season as it was a very stressful time for me due to the exam format. However, I pushed through it and the experience immensely helped me improve my academic writing. Most importantly, the opportunity to meet so many amazing and inspiring people and explore so many breathtaking places at the same time make it all worth it. Words don't do justice to all the memories I have created at the University of Galway and I would do it all again.



## 11. Extra tips

### 1. Learning agreements

Before going to Galway you should have your learning agreements sorted out. I would recommend looking into the brochure with courses offered for the ERASMUS students in the previous year (it doesn't change much) and ask for learning agreements before August - that's when everyone starts applying for them and it can take an eternity before you get a learning agreement.

### 2. Avoiding accommodation scams

I cannot stress enough, how important it is to be careful of scammers, they are literally everywhere facebook, daft, Studentpad, you name it. A few tips that helped me: if it sounds too good to be true it's probably a scam, never send any money without video calling with the landlord, require a copy of their documents and check if the address in the documents and of the housing they are offering match.

### 3. Buses

Please be aware that the bus timetables are only orientational. Some days they come on time, other days they don't (especially the private owned ones). The longest I had to wait was an hour. So if you live away from the campus and/or city center make sure you plan ahead when you are going to leave your house.