

Erfahrungsbericht über einen Auslandsaufenthalt im Rahmen eines Austauschprogramms (Studium)

Gastland: Irland

Gastinstitution: NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND MAYNOOTH

1. Für welches Austausch- oder Förderprogramm fertigen Sie diesen Erfahrungsbericht an?
Erasmus (Europa oder Übersee)

2. Vorbereitung (Planung, Organisation und Bewerbung bei der Gasteinrichtung)

Once I was nominatted by FAU, I also needed to apply for an Erasmus at the Maynooth university. After having been accepted by the Maynooth university, they sent me all necessary information via email. The procudure was straightforward and somehow very intuitive.They provided us with some accommodation tips and links. There was even one Zoom session dedicated only to the accommodation. In spite of the fact that I missed this Zoom session, they anyway sent us a powerpoint presentaton summarazing all the points from the meeting. As a matter of fact, the most challenging part of the planning and organisation was an accommodation, without any doubt. Please plan a couple of weeks in advance. More information can be found in the section accommodation.

3. An- und Einreise (Visum, Flug/Bahn/Bus)

No need for visum as I am EU-citizen. There is an option called "Green Travel" if you travel to your final destination either by train or with another "green" vehicle. In other words, if you opt for "green travel", they (FAU university/Erasmus institution) will give you a certain amount of money (I guess about 50 Eur for one way). Since I am in favor of green travel, I calculated the travel expenses. Because of my final destination Ireland, you can imagine that travel green would not be cheap at all. I roughly calculated that I would have needed to pay about 400 Eur to get to Maynooth (close Dublin). Another option was an airplane. The travel expenses for airplane were less than 200 Eur. For the above mentioned facts and based on my student's financial situation, I made an easy decision: airplane. I opted for airplane and then I took an Airport Hooper Bus (<https://www.airporthopper.ie/>) from airport Dublin to Maynooth. Green Travel would have made sense for me, if I had studied in a different country which is closer to Germany, for instance France or Switzerland.

4. Unterkunft (Wohnheim/Privat)

There is an huge lack of accommodation in Maynooth. Mostly 1st year undergrads get an accommodation in a student dormitory on campus. For us Erasmus students is the situation a bit more challenging. I received an email from Maynooth university with login credentials for an accommodation platform called <https://www.maynoothstudentpad.ie/Accommodation>. Basically, the families in Maynooth and in the surroundings offer their rooms on that platform. You just need to contact them and eventually they interview you. I assume, I contacted about 20 families. Only 3 families responded me. First person was a landlady from Trim, which is a small town about 1 hour far away by bus from the Maynooth. A bus goes only 3 times to Maynooth and is owned by a private company. Despite her nice and respectful behaviour, I needed to decline her offer. Another landlady was from Lucan which is definitely closer to Maynooth but still 30 minutes by bus. Since I was looking for an accommodation in Maynooth, I also declined her offer. Luckily the third landlady was from Maynooth. It took me about 25 minutes to reach the university on foot. In spite of her peculiar interview, I was happy to accept. I assume that I was selected because of my mature age (I am 35 year old). Despite my complaints during my stay in her house, (another roomies were complaining as well) I must be grateful to have been living in Maynooth. My roomies and me also discussed whether she and other families really want to help the students or just earn money. Anyway, it will be up to you to evaluate the accommodation situation in Maynooth.

5. Fachlicher Aufenthalt an der Gasteinrichtung (Lehrveranstaltungen, Praktikumsinhalte und -aufgaben, Sprachkurse, Stundenplan, Prüfungen, Abschlussarbeit)

I took 4 modules: Introduction to Computer Science 2 (7.5 ECTS) Web Information Processing (5 ECTS) Data Structure & Algorithms (5 ECTS) English C1.1 Introduction to Computer Science 2 (7.5 ECTS) This modules comprised of 4 hours of lectures and 3 hours of labs. The attendance of labs was obligatory which made me feel to be like a student from the secondary school. The final grade consisted of 30 % of weekly assignments and 70 % of written exam. The lectures were pretty repetitive. The assignments were published every Monday after first lecture. Web Information Processing (5 ECTS) This modules comprised of 2 hours of lectures and 2 hours of labs. The attendance of labs was obligatory. The final grade consisted of 50 % of bi-weekly assignments, 25 % of 24 hours coding exam and 25 % of written exam. The assignments were not well structured which led to many confusion by many students including me. Used framework in this module were pretty outdated which are barely used in industry nowadays. The 24 hours coding exam was a great experience. We got an exam assignment at 9:00 AM on Saturday and the deadline was at 9:00 AM on Sunday. I finished the exam at 6:00 AM. It was a very interesting exam format. Data Structure & Algorithms (5 ECTS) Undoubtedly, the best module I have taken at the Maynooth University. This modules comprised of 2 hours of lectures and 2 hours of labs. The final grade consisted of 30 % of weekly assignments and 70 % of written exam. The lecturer was very passionate about the topics which facilitated my understanding of the subject. The attendance of labs was not obligatory. The lecturer usually sent the assignment every Saturday. You worked on the assignment and then you needed to show your solution during the lab. In other words, if you showed your solution at the beginning of the lab, then you could have left and enjoyed free time. English C1.1 This module comprised of 4 hours of session. The final grade consisted of 25 % of presentation and 75 % of written exam. Both lecturers were very professional and great speakers. They even allowed me to attend another module English C1.2 voluntarily. Consequently, I had 8 hours of English every week.

6. Betreuung an der Gasteinrichtung (International Office, Fachbereich, Praktikumsbetreuung)

The communication with International Office was great. I mostly communicated with Emma Ward who is a very helpful girl.

7. Ausstattung der Gasteinrichtung (Bibliothek, Computerräume, Laboratorien, Unterrichts- und Arbeitsräume etc.)

The library was newly built. Otherwise, the campus offers an average equipment in buildings.

8. Alltag und Freizeit (Sehenswertes, Kulinarisches, Geld abheben, Handy, Jobs)

I have been 3 Times in Dublin. Especially St. Patrick's parade on Sunday was a great experience. I also visited some sightseeing in Maynooth, above all the Carton House including the golf course. Another favorite place on campus was a gym which is free to use. Bear in mind that the gym is not perfect equipped and all the equipments are outdated but it works and it is for free. In order to travel in Maynooth, Dublin and in Ireland in general, it is highly recommended to register for so called leapcard <https://leapcard.ie/>. You register as a student and get student fares.

9. Finanzielles (Lebenshaltungskosten, Stipendien, finanzielle Unterstützung der Gasteinrichtung)

My cost of living were about 1000 Eur monthly. My cost of living in details: Rent including all bills - about 650 Eur, Grocery - 300 Eur Others - 50 Eur

10. Fazit (beste und schlechteste Erfahrung)

Since the Erasmus students did not live together in a student dormitory, but there were spread in the surroundings, I missed the "Erasmus spirit/mood". In other words, I did not feel like an Erasmus student but a regular one. Overall, I am grateful to get a great opportunity to do my Exchange Semester in Maynooth.

11. Wichtige Ansprechpartner und Links

Emma Ward - international office at Maynooth university <https://www.airporthopper.ie> - a bus to get from Dublin airport to Maynooth <https://www.maynoothstudentpad.ie/Accommodation> - to find your accommodation <https://leapcard.ie> - to be able to use public transport in Ireland

12. Nur Erasmus-Aufenthalte: Für diejenigen Studierenden, die eine Sonderförderung erhalten haben:

Bitte stellen Sie kurz dar, wie Sie Ihren Aufenthalt in dieser Hinsicht erlebt haben.