



Mihaela Gladovic

University of Limerick, Ireland
ERASMUS-Mobilitätsprogramm: Auslandsstudium
Fachbereich: Anglistik
Bergische Universität Wuppertal
Koordinatorin
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Limerick:

Limerick is a city in the southwest of Ireland, about an hour's drive southeast of the Cliffs of Moher, and commonly known as not really being the prettiest town on the green Island. Compared to places as Dublin, Cork or Galway, this might be true. Yet; going there to spend ten months at its brilliant college, *the University of Limerick*, was the best decision during my entire studies. Not only is Ireland an incredibly beautiful country with vast Lord-Of-The-Rings-like nature to explore and a great culture and history to learn more about – which you can only do by living there. Also, I have found great and overwhelmingly friendly people and real friends who made it easy to highly enjoy my stay, and who made it difficult to leave again. I'm glad I had the chance to make this experience and I can only recommend it to every single one who is reading this and considers doing the same.

Limerick is still quite a cute town, probably not as charming as Cork or as vibrant as Dublin, but with lots of great pubs and live music, where you will definitely get the atmosphere of the traditional Irish music culture, for the University of Limerick is as well very popular among those who study Irish music and dance. You will always find a place in town to enjoy *Ceol agus Craic* (which means "music and good times"), whether it is traditional music or one of the numerous great local pop and rock music artists. Also, the University often hosts exhibitions of several nationally and internationally famous artists and offers a wide range of clubs and societies for all kinds of free time activities for students.



The University of Limerick

Recently, the University of Limerick – as the only college in Ireland – has been awarded as an “Erasmus Success Story” by the European Commission (read more: <http://www2.ul.ie/web/WWW/Services/News?did=537024754&pageUrl=/WWW/Services/News>). With good reasons: As mentioned above, not only does it engage in offering students cultural and sportive leisure activities. Of course, it also provides a high number of very well organised courses of study, including all facilities you need for whatever you do (List of undergraduate courses: <http://www.ul.ie/courses/>).

I decided to study a combination of “New Media” and “English” and had incredibly interesting modules in both fields. Different from the Bergische Universität Wuppertal, a module is not a group of seminars you have to attend, but consists of one compulsory tutorial (which is one hour a week) and a lecture (which is two hours a week). You will have to choose a maximum of five modules for one semester and for each you will sometimes feel as having a ridiculously high work load, especially in the fields of literature. But there is no reason to be put off. Most of the lectures and tutorials I had were really fascinating and the lecturers well able to motivate and inspire the students. Thus, even the high work load was not much of a problem, but as interesting as the courses themselves. For most of the modules, I had to prepare one presentation (sometimes alone, sometimes with a group) and two essays. Sometimes I had to write three essays and had no presentation to prepare, sometimes I had to write an end-of-term exam instead of writing a final essay. The University is very strict when it comes to deadlines. A deadline is a deadline and unless you have a doctor's approval for being sick and therefore unable to attend an exam or finish an essay on time, you will be penalised. But also the professors have their deadlines, which makes sure that every student gets his/her record including their grades for the whole semester at its end. It is as well crucial to always read the things you are supposed to read, as tutorial participation is as important as writing an essay. Especially in the beginning, it will be difficult for to keep up reading and preparing your next tutorial, as there is so much other things to do when you first arrive in Limerick, but when you have found your rhythm, you will not only enjoy your life at university, but also your free time. In case you have a problem with an assignment, with fellow students or any other kind of issue, do not hesitate to contact your Erasmus-Coordinator, any other trustful professor or the Students' Union. They are all extremely friendly and willing to help you.



Apart from their courses of study, the University of Limerick has a lot of clubs (from soccer to capoeira, from karate to outdoor pursuits like hiking, climbing or caving, from surfing to softball and many more) and societies (from drama to photography, from DJing to music, or from debating to development) you can join for mostly less than 5 € per year. You can be sure to find the right thing to do (full list of clubs and societies: <http://www.registercs.ul.ie/#>). You can be sure as well, that once studied at the University of Limerick, you will miss it when you come back.

Living

Unfortunately, there is also one negative thing to be mentioned: Ireland is extremely expensive. If you decide to go there you should either apply for “Auslands-BAföG” or save some money. Working there would be an option and if you manage to find a job, you will get paid well, but as you will have a lot of things to do for university, you will probably miss out on the social life which is as important as the studying itself. Even though there is Aldi and Lidl in Limerick, both close to the university, it is still more expensive than in Germany. So is going out to a Pub or a Club. A pint is around 4,50 € and a longdrink or even a shot is around five or six Euros. But at least it is a good reason for those who smoke to give up, as a box of cigarettes is 8,60€.

Rooms are as well pretty expensive. The University offers a lot of rooms in student-accommodations. If it is important for you to live in five minutes walking distance to the college you should consider to apply for a room of one of the five “On Campus Accommodations” (See details: <http://www.ul.ie/campuslife/accommodation.htm>) in which you will share an apartment with one to five people. If you do not mind walking 15 to 20 minutes or buying a bicycle at the Students’ Union, which I did (I paid 150 € for a new bike and could sell it back to them after my year for 90€), you can as well apply for rooms in an “Off Campus Accommodation” (see more details below). “Parkview Hall” is one of them, but it is very far away from college. Yet, it is closer to town than any other accommodation. However, most of the people you will spend your time with do not live in town anyway, because the University is a couple of kilometers outside of the city center and so are all the accommodations. The other “Off Campus Accommodations” are in 20 minutes walking distance to the college, but there are as well some nice housing estates cheaper than any “Off-Campus Accommodation” and sometimes even closer. Thus, I decided to just search a



room in such an estate on my own. Unfortunately you do not talk to the people you live with (unless you are lucky and they are at home while you are there with your landlord), but to the landlord who organises everything. I have been pretty lucky with my choice of room, with my very nice landlord and my lovely three Irish and two polish housemates. I have made very good friends with all of them and a couple of weeks after I have gone back to Germany I visited them for camping during the Willie Clancy Week (the biggest Irish Traditional Music Festival). The most popular website for searching a room is <http://www.daft.ie>. The page has a pull down menu from which you can choose the city and afterwards the respective suburbs you want to live in. Pick Limerick City and afterwards search for rooms in Castletroy, as this is the area surrounding the University. For my room, I paid 260 €/ month and around 20€ - 30€ for the bills every months.

Getting There and Around

Limerick is a four-hours bus drive away from Dublin Airport and a two-hours drive away from Kerry Airport, both of which are connected to Weeze-Airport with “Ryanair” (See details: <http://www.buseireann.ie/>). Shannon Airport is only a couple of kilometers away from Limerick city, but unfortunately there are no more flights operating from Germany. Another cheap option is to fly with “Aer Lingus”, if you book your flight early enough.

One thing that really annoyed me was that you are not allowed to hire a car (not even a small one) if you are under 25, unless you pay a ridiculously high surcharge for insurance. Thus, if you want to travel around independently, you will need a lot of money or somebody who has a car or is old enough to rent one. But don't worry. You will have enough opportunities to travel around this beautiful island with its breathtaking nature. If you are a fan of outdoor pursuit like hiking, climbing or caving, you should join the OPC (outdoor pursuit club). Every Sunday they go for one of these activities to spots around Ireland, as Kerry, Conamara, Glendalough, the Aran Islands, the Cliffs of Moher or the Burren, just to name some of the places you should visit. For the membership, you will have to pay 4€ for one year. A Sunday trip is 8€ and a weekendtrip, including the bus and the hostel with breakfast and dinner is around 30€. If you do not have hiking boots, do not buy them here, as you will get outdoor clothes and gear much cheaper in Ireland. The International Society also organises trips to cities as Belfast, Cork, Dublin and Galway, but those trips are as well easy to do on your own, as there are busses operating between the cities (more details:



<http://www.buseireann.ie/>). Yet, it will probably be cheaper for you to join a weekendtrip with the International Society.

Last words

I left Ireland in tears. I had a brilliant time with all the amazing people (from Ireland and from all over the world) I have met there and truly enjoyed studying at the *University of Limerick*. If you have to chance to go there, you should grab it. It will be a great experience you will learn a lot from for your entire life. If you are already the lucky one who was chosen to go there, you can really look forward to it. Make the most of it and enjoy your time, for it will be over sooner than you think. I hope I could help you a little bit with this report and answer the most important questions. If you still have some, or if you need some more advices, do not hesitate to contact me (mihaela.gladovic@uni-wuppertal.de).

Have a good time in Ireland!

With kind regards

Mihaela Gladovic

Important Links and Information

The University of Limerick

Uni: <http://www.ul.ie>

Clubs and Societies: <http://www.registercs.ul.ie/#>

Students' Union: <http://www.ulsu.ie/>

On Campus Accommodations

<http://www.ul.ie/campuslife/accommodation.htm>

Off Campus Accommodation



Brookfield Hall

<http://www.brookfieldhall.com>

Phone 353 (0)61 333825 353
Fax 353 (0)61 333824
Email: info@brookfieldhall.com

Courtyard Student Village

<http://www.student-lettings.ie/>

Phone 353 (0)61 502200
Email: info@student-lettings.ie

Groody Student Village

www.groodyvillage.com

Phone 353 (0)61 334884
Fax: +353 (0)61 334886
Email: ulpropertymanagement@eircom.net

Parkview Hall

Phone: +353 (0)61 446714
Email: info@parkviewhall.com

Self organised housing:

<http://www.daft.ie>

Getting there and around

<http://www.ryanair.com/de>

<http://www.aerlingus.com>

<http://www.buseireann.ie/>.