

**Introduction**

Spending one or two semesters abroad is a great chance to not only improve your language skills but also to develop and rise personally. Besides, you make many new friends from different countries and learn about other cultures. You will definitely have a great and unforgettable time. However, there are several things one should plan and know before taking off to this adventure.

**Finding an Accommodation**

When you go abroad for a longer period, finding an accommodation is part of the organisation that must be planned in advance. We strongly advise you to start looking for an accommodation 3-5 months in advance because it is not easy to find a good place, which is affordable too, in Dublin. Since Dublin is one of the most expensive cities in Europe, so are the prices for accommodations. However, there are several opportunities for places to stay: Student accommodation, staying with host families or private flat shares. Most of the exchange students want to stay in a student accommodation where you can be independent and live on your own, together with fellow students. Unfortunately, the student accommodation is the most expensive alternative. If you want to stay in one of the many student accommodations in Dublin, you must pay round about 240 € per week. Furthermore, you need to bring your own stuff, including kitchen facilities, a blanket and pillow for your room. Regardless of the financial aspect, living in a student accommodation has many great advantages: First, you live very close to the city centre which means you can walk to college and to the pubs and shops. When you go to a party in the evening, you can walk home and don't need to catch the last bus, which leaves at 11:30 pm, latest. Second, almost every student accommodation throws intern parties or great events for you. They offer pizza, drinks and organise nice get togethers. When you live in a student accommodation you can be confident to make many friends.

Beside a student accommodation, you can also stay with a host family. There are several websites on the internet where you can find a suitable room in a host family. Many host families offer rooms for two or more people which we personally wouldn't advise you to rent. When you stay abroad for a long time, you will need some privacy and time for yourself. You can use the following websites to find a room in a host family: [spotahome.ie](http://spotahome.ie), [nestpick.com](http://nestpick.com), [homestay.com](http://homestay.com), etc.

We lived in a host family, too. Staying with a host family is a great experience since you live together with locals and can experience the Irish people and culture. However, most of the host families do not live in the city centre, which means you need to go by bus which can take time. Nonetheless, staying with a host family is the most affordable possibility for an accommodation. If you are not sure about the accommodation, the websites (as [spotahome](#)) will answer all your questions. To us, it was particularly important to use the kitchen or to have an own latch key. Yes, this is something which should be taken for granted when you stay in an accommodation for such a long time. Unfortunately, some families deny their exchange students those things. Make sure in advance that you can make yourself at home. The most important thing is to feel comfortable because this will be your home for a few months. So, ask as many questions as you want. The coordinators of the websites will pleasantly answer them.

## **College**

When we first arrived at the DIT, there was an induction week for all the Erasmus students who were going to study at the DIT for the next semester. In this first week, we were invited to take part in different activities, such as campus tours, introductions into different sport events or a city tour. We would really recommend you to attend this first week as it is really helpful to find your way around and also to get to know the people you will be studying with.

When college started, we received some help with arranging our timetables. However, although we were taught how to use the timetable system, it was still pretty difficult to arrange a timetable because the DIT is a technological university and hence does not offer that many opportunities for students who study English. What made arranging the timetable even more challenging was the fact that most of the English classes took place at the same time, so we had some clashes in the timetable. But in the end, we all managed to attend enough classes to get our credits.

Most of us ended up taking mainly literature classes but also some classes in the field of communication, TEFL or grammar. While in some classes, such as the communication classes, there was a good mixture of Irish and international students, the literature classes were pretty small (sometimes only around six people) and consisted almost only of Erasmus students. This took us a while to get used to and was also a little disappointing because it was hard to get into touch with Irish students.

If you do want to get to know some more Irish people, it is helpful to join different societies because this is a place where both Irish and international students come together. There is a great variety of different societies that you can join.

Concerning the classes and lecturers, the lecturers were usually pretty nice and open. Our Erasmus coordinator at the DIT was also very nice and helpful. The course assessment usually consisted of three different parts: a presentation, an essay and a final exam.

### **Dublin/ Ireland in general**

Dublin is a great city where you can do lots of things. There is a large number of museums that you can visit and some of them even are for free! Additionally, if you want to go shopping, you will find plenty of nice shops. The cliché that it is raining a lot in Ireland is definitely true, however, there are just as many days with sunshine when you can visit one of Dublin's many beautiful parks, for example Phoenix Park. Another thing you can do is go to pubs. But be careful, if you go to Temple Bar, you will pay much more than in the local pubs because this is where all the tourists go. We would recommend going to the local pubs anyway, since you can get in touch with locals and listen to live music in many of them. If you are looking for a nice pub where you can listen to music and dance, we advise you to go to Bad Bob's or Porterhouse.

Another great thing about Dublin is that it is very central, which makes it very easy to travel across the country. Use this opportunity and travel as much as you can during your time abroad! Ireland is a beautiful country that offers many different landscapes. Also, you can experience different mentalities that exist in Ireland since the people in the North are quite different to those who live in the East.

### **Conclusion**

To sum it up, studying abroad is a great opportunity for everyone. You will experience many new things and get in touch with other people and cultures. Although sometimes it will be hard and challenging to be so far away from home for such a long time, it is definitely worth it to live in a foreign country. We had a great year abroad and will never forget this experience. We wish you lots of fun and a great time.

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