

STUDYING ABROAD IN MAYNOOTH, IRELAND

Studying abroad is surely an experience for everyone to learn something new – it is highly recommended to engage in something new, to get to know people and sites, to learn languages ... ERASMUS and the AAA are a great help there! If you are looking for a smaller university with a personal atmosphere and nature around, the National University of Ireland Maynooth is a good choice! As it is a partner university of the University of Wuppertal, organisation is a lot easier than with other universities which are no partners. After several months of preparation (information meetings, signing documents, a language assessment etc.), you are good to go!

The University of Maynooth has about 10,000 students and has a colourful green campus. There is an older South Campus with a seminary from the 18TH century and a modern North Campus, both well-kept, making your daily walks easier. Besides a majestic chapel and modern learning faculties, the university offers a Student's Union building with a bar, dance floor and meeting rooms as well as modern sports facilities and restaurants, additionally a museum and a secret graveyard. Can you find it? The cozy town with 13,000 inhabitants lies close to the university. There is a medieval castle as well, and ALDI ensures that students don't starve during their studies. The library offers lots of reading material (also online) in a lofty and well-lit building, and there is also a bookshop. A team of international lecturers (I encountered Americans, Germans and British) and about 2,000 international students from all over the world (who are the happiest in Europe, according to a survey) guarantee interesting contacts.

You can fly to Dublin directly from Düsseldorf. Once in Dublin, you can take the Airport Hopper to one of the villages between Dublin and Maynooth. From there on, there are several bus routes bringing you to town and back. The train is a fast option, but goes less frequently. If you want to travel around Ireland, there is a network of buses and trains to use, but some prefer renting a car to get to more remote regions in Irish nature. Northern Ireland offers an interesting political history and the famous Giant's Causeway, the West offers the Cliffs of Moher and the colourful town Galway (full of music) as well as the harbour of Cork. Newgrange, the 5,000-year old tomb with its fascinating architecture and mythology, is quite close to where you will be studying, as well as the Wicklow Mountains, great for hiking. Plus, there are so much more natural sights, castles, towns etc. ... feel free to roam and let Irish students tell you that you have seen more than they themselves did!

Besides being freed from tuition fees (which would be around 12,000€ per year), you get 300€ per month for daily expenses from ERASMUS (which is reasonable, although Ireland is quite pricey). Besides a student contribution of about 500€ per term, you have to pay for your accommodation yourself. (If you are having financial difficulties, there are some grants from the University of Wuppertal and federal institutes supporting students.) Getting a place on campus is difficult as students from overseas are often put first because of their long way. Off campus, there is some accommodation in Maynooth, but there is a lot of competition for these places. In nearby villages (Leixlip, Lucan etc.), you should be more successful. The average rent ranges from 50 to 150€ per week; it is important to check the place by asking for photographs and to be sure about the costs, what is included, what your responsibilities are and the house rules as there are many private houses offering accommodation.

All in all, contact with the friendly, open and helpful Irish people is very pleasant. Just watch out: All public announcements are made in Irish Gaelic first, only then in English. The dialect is not hard to understand, though you need to get used to the sound first. After your arrival, you will be shown around campus and town, meeting people from all over the world in the process. Lectures have a duration of 60 minutes, the optimum for your concentration. Their content refers to relevant, recent topics, and personal talks with the lecturers are not uncommon. The difficulty of content

seems lower than usual in Germany, but the range of content seems to be broader instead. Essays are due mid-term, but there are more of them, they are shorter and more personal than our academic papers. At the end of term, the exams are essays as well, in which you are supposed to develop own thoughts. (All this counts for the humanities and social sciences, at least ...) Language courses and tutorials support your learning. Besides that, the university offers over 150 clubs and societies covering sports (also rare kinds such as horse-riding, fencing, archery and canoeing), music (orchestra, choir etc.) and political as well as religious communities, and lastly also fun and games. In the lively community of international students in the same situation as you are, you can join the International Society for well-organised trips around Ireland and walk around Dublin enjoying the live music. Lastly, frequent rain should be nothing new for anybody studying in Wuppertal ...



This is what you will see entering South Campus ...



... and this is our international group from last year. It was a great time!