



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

Study programme WU	BBI
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	04-01-2024 until 25-04-2024
Exchange destination: University	of Galway
Faculty	College of Science and Engineering
Country	Ireland
City	Galway

2. Motivation for exchange

a. Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to challenge myself by getting out of my bubble and meeting new people with different cultures. Also, I wanted to experience living in a different country.

b. What is the reason you chose for this country?

I wanted to go to an English-speaking country because I wanted to be able to meet locals. I feel like lots of Erasmus students only meet other international students but then you don't fully experience the country. Luckily the Irish are very open, kind and approachable which made it relatively easy to make Irish friends. Also, Ireland has a very rich culture through their language, music and literature. Lastly, the nature in Ireland, especially on the west coast, is spectacular.

c. What is the reason you chose for this university?

I chose Galway mostly for the city. It's the city in Ireland where Irish culture is still thriving most. You can hear a lot of traditional music in the bars and you might even hear some Irish while you're in the shops. Also, the Connemara, which is Galway's backyard is one of the prettiest parts of Europe. I would recommend joining the mountaineering club as they venture into the mountains each weekend.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

a. Do you have any advice about reaching your exchange destination?

Buses like Citylink are a more efficient way to travel across Ireland than trains.

4. University and studying

a. Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

	Course	ECTS	Short description of the contents	Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)	Remarks
1	Cell Signalling	5	Discusses the main cellular pathways shared in the animal kingdom. Also goes extensively into cancer development through oncogenes and cell death	2	Some lecturers are terrible. Also, the practical lacked explanation for international students and required you to come in every Friday to physically hand in your practical reports
2	Immunology and Recombinant Techniques	5	Course on the basics of immunology. Also provides some information on vaccine production.	4	Great lecturers who know how to tell an interesting story. Practical was a little bit boring and not very hands-on
3	Microbial Infectious Diseases	5	Course on main groups of pathogens causing human disease. Another important topic are antibiotics and the development of resistance. Lastly, some small bits of immunology and virology are discussed	4	Lecturers know how to couple the contents to real-life problems which are relevant in our current society.
4	Plant and Agricultural Genetics	5	Course focuses some on genetic techniques but also a lot on plant physiology in response to pathogens and competition	4	Might be a little low in level when you have already taken lots of plant sciences courses in Wageningen. Essay was really interesting and gives you lots of freedom to choose your own topic.
5	Systems Biology of Plant-Environment Interactions	5	Goes into basic plant physiology topics like circadian rhythms, types of photosynthesis and resource allocation in response to environmental stresses	3	The lecturer is hard to understand and doesn't have great teaching skills. He is a nice guy though. The practical was the most interesting I have done in Galway.
6	Protein Biochemistry	5	Goes into amino acid composition and how these can form functional catalytic triads and binding pockets. Also is about enzyme kinetics	3	Good lecturers and there were a lot of practicals (at least for Galway) to word hands-on with the course matter. The

			and a lot about protein processing (post-translational modifications) and transport in the cell		matter is very technical and goes into great detail about some processes, so that should be your thing.
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b. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses that were taught in English (Yes, No - Explain):

Yes, all the courses are in English there, except for a very few that are taught in Irish.

c. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses in my field of interest (Yes, No - Explain):

I personally found the selection of courses to be a little slim so you will probably find some interesting courses but will also have to do a few which are more foreign to you.

d. I am satisfied with the level of the courses that I followed (Yes, No - Explain):

No, the level of universities in Ireland is a lot lower than that of Dutch universities. Don't expect the courses to be very challenging.

e. I am satisfied, in the end, with the selection of courses I followed (Yes, No - Explain):

No. I felt like the courses in Ireland were less well organized and taught so they didn't really trigger too much interest for me.

f. What is it like to study there?

Studying in Galway is a lot less time-consuming than in Wageningen. You mostly have lectures and not a lot of practicals so you have a lot of free time. I did find it challenging to study for the exams because they expect you to cram everything in your head which they mentioned once in a lecture. In Wageningen I remembered a lot more of the content before I started studying. Luckily, the exams are quite easy.

g. What is the culture of the university?

I feel like Irish people in general are really welcoming and open. It is therefore never a problem to just approach a lecturer with questions or send an email to someone if something is unclear.

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

The university of Galway has a lot of societies which you can just join for fun so there are endless activities to do outside of studying. Sports facilities are also great for that reason.

5. Housing-traveling-living

a. What are the possibilities for housing?

There are quite some rooms available on campus for Erasmus students. You're not guaranteed one but I think around 75% of Erasmus students do get one. Also, there are some private housing companies affiliated with the university where it is possible to get

housing. The westwood is your best bet when you don't get university housing. So it is definitely not easy to get housing but I think everyone found something in the end. Most houses are modern and clean and you live with 5 or 6 people with a shared kitchen. Bathrooms are sometimes shared and sometimes not. You do pay a lot though. Expect to pay somewhere between 750 and 1100 euro a month.

b. What is the culture like?

Irish people are just very open for smalltalk. Just approach people, in stores, during lectures, they will most likely welcome you with open arms.

c. Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

Public transport isn't very good in Ireland compared to Dutch public transport. Still, the buses are quite alright. Get a TFI student leap card, this makes the bus trips pretty cheap and you don't have to pay cash in the bus.

6. Expenses

a. Can you give an indication of your expenses for/during your exchange?

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	100 euro including luggage if you take Ryanair
Visa - if applicable	
Vaccinations - if applicable	
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	
Daytrips/sight-seeing	60
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	1000 euro a month for a studio
Grocery costs per month	260
Public transport costs per month	20
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	100

b. The price levels were in general [higher; lower; equal] in comparison to in the Netherlands:

Equal

c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

Cost of living in Ireland is quite good. I think it's just a little less expensive than in the Netherlands for groceries. Alcohol is quite expensive, even though the Irish do drink a lot of it. But they have a very big housing crisis in Ireland which results in rent being around 800 to a 1000 euros a month. This makes it one of the most expensive destinations in Europe.

7. Free time

a. What are must-sees in the area?

I would recommend hiking in the Connemara especially and also in the Burren. However, because there are barely any hiking paths you need a guide if you're not an experienced mountaineer. Therefore I would recommend joining the mountaineering club, they go hiking every Sunday. A guide is provided. This way you can meet lots of other students while seeing the beautiful nature of Ireland. Also, the cliffs of Moher is a must-do. Walk to Salthill and go swimming in the sea at the Blackrock diving tower. It is a Galway tradition and it's really fun. Don't mind how cold the water is, that's part of the fun. Lastly, just go into the bars in the city centre, they're always great fun. I would recommend the Crane bar for chill live traditional music and The Quays is the best for dancing, to live music of course.

b. What does not appear in a travel guide, but is definitely worth seeing/doing?

Take a daytrip to Clifden and see the castle, it is really charming. Also, Palas is a supernice cinema with great films and if you join the student loyalty programme for free, tickets are only 5 euro on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

a. Any challenges? How did you deal with them?

Social life is just pretty challenging. Especially in the beginning everything costs a lot of energy because you know no one and are unaccustomed to the city. It will take time to make great friends and the moment you feel like you really get to know them, the end is already approaching. Just know this. It's not gonna be all fun and games everyday from the start but it will turn out great eventually and you will look back with envy.

b. Best memory?

Going on a trip to Belfast with four friends. We stayed in an Airbnb together and had loads of fun exploring Northern Ireland and just laughing with each other.

9. Contact details

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
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