

Erasmus in Waterford

Fall semester 2019/20, IM



1. General Information

I'm writing this report in English since that's what you'll hopefully be speaking most of the time. I personally decided to go to Waterford because I liked the courses the University offered, the safety of the small city of Waterford and the fact that I'd be able to understand everything and communicate easily.

Waterford is a very safe town to live in and it is quite beautiful. There are quaint little stores, cafes and you can easily travel between cities. More on that later though. If you decide to live in Waterford for your Erasmus experience then there are a few things you might want to know beforehand to help you out. That is where this report comes into play. Let me tell you a bit about my experiences in beautiful Ireland and why I can only urge you to take on this adventure.

2. Before the exchange

Before going on this exchange you might want to think about getting a credit card. You can pay nearly everything using your card. There are even small markets where it is possible to pay by card. The only thing you truly can never pay by card are bus tickets. You need to pay those in cash if you want to be flexible or book online if you do not have cash to spare.

Ireland has different electricity sockets than Germany so you need to buy an adapter to plug in your devices. You can get those in most electronic stores. I personally got mine at Saturn and I have no complaints.

Living abroad for a semester means that you'll have to pack a lot of things. If you don't want to splurge on another suitcase but also don't want to wear the same thing everyday you can get bags to vacuum seal your clothes and save room in your suitcase for other things. This really helped me in getting all my things into my suitcase. If weighing your suitcase before coming back to Germany is something that's on your mind then don't bother with a scale. There is a Penny's (Primark) in Waterford where you can get a little hand scale for your suitcase at little cost. I used one of those and it was fairly accurate.

3. Travel

Traveling to Waterford will take some time. You need to fly to Dublin Airport with the airline of your choice and then take an approximately four hour bus ride to Waterford. Most exchange students take JJ. Kavanagh (copy this link: <https://jjkavanagh.ie>). They are not the cheapest but they are still preferable to Dublin coach or bus Eireann. Those are fine for travels between cities but I would not recommend them if you are traveling with all your luggage. Spend the extra Euros on JJ. Kavanagh. You should definitely book online in advance to secure your seat and get a student discount though. This service will drop you off in front of your accommodation. If you decide to stay at Riverwalk they have their own stop and if you stay at WIT city accommodation you need to get off at the stop Manor Village. You'll be right across from it.

Otherwise any bus service is good for traveling through Ireland. I did not have a preference. It only mattered which got me to my destination the quickest. I'll tell you more about that a bit later though.

4. Accommodation

There are several different accommodation options. I meet a few people who were not staying at student accommodations but were living with Irish families and simply renting out a room in their house. This is a great option if accommodations are full but they were sometimes left out of things because they lived further away from most students who were staying at the accommodations.

Now most exchange students will be staying at Riverwalk. The Irish exchange students at our HS had advised us to try and get into those accommodations as well but I personally would highly recommend against it. I had made a lot of friends who were staying at Riverwalk and they were not very happy with the service they provide, the rooms, the additional costs of electricity and washing as well as the unfriendly reception. You also need to be there before 4pm for check in and those students staying for one semester were kicked out on the 21st of December even though there were still exams on the 23rd of December.

I stayed at WIT City accommodations. I applied for accommodations in February and I'd advise you to get into contact with them as soon as possible. Do not wait too long and simply inform them that you are not yet a student but will be. Alison (she works

there and will be your primary contact) is an absolute angel. She provides you with assistance and provided all exchange students with bedding, linen, cutlery and the essentials for the kitchen. Those staying at Riverwalk had to provide all that on their own. Manor Village is closer to city center and it's about a 20minute walk to University. There is however a free shuttle that can take you to the University from the accommodations if you do not wish to walk. The rooms have a bed, desk, wardrobe, nightstand, chair and a shelf. Every room has it's own bathroom and you only share a living room and kitchen with your roommates. I was in a three person apartment like all Erasmus students and it was amazing. I loved my roommates and we had a lot of movie nights and family dinners. There aren't as many Erasmus students at manor village so you'll meet a lot of Irish students and you'll get out of that exchange student bubble a bit quicker. They also do a 'get to know your neighbor' event in the beginning which was a lot of fun. Manor Village (another name for City accommodation) has a game room, parking and a 24h reception. If you have any noise complaints you can always call them and they will help immediately. I felt incredibly safe due to this since they make sure that strange people, who do not live there, stay outside. You need your room card to get into the reception, into the elevator or staircase, into the apartment and to get into your room. So you are very secure. If you lose it or lock yourself out you need to head down to reception and they'll give you a temporary one. There is supposed to be a fee but I never had to pay one. At Manor you cannot do your own laundry. You bring it down to the laundry lady, pay at 8EUR for 5kg and then just pick it up later on. It safes time for sure and is not more expensive than doing your laundry on your own at Riverwalk. They wash it, dry it and fold it for you at Manor. There is also a little grocery store across the street, a Lidl a few minutes away and a really great chip shop across the street.

In conclusion: APPLY BEFOREHAND AND DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE!
Once you have applied just stay on top of things, pay the deposit on time and talk to Alison if you have any questions.

5. University

The University is chaotic. I'll give you a bit of a general overview before talking about the classes. There is a WIT student Union where you can get help and print your papers. They also organize the buddy program and trips. While I was there they only

organized one party and one trip. I also never meet my buddy and he did not really talk to us. The same goes for the buddies of other exchange students I met.

The first four weeks are chaotic. You cannot get into Moodle yet and register for classes. You will have to wait until you get an e-mail from Damien (The exchange coordinator) and fill out a form to get registered. The schedule also changes every Friday for the first four weeks so you need to be flexible and you might have to change a few of your courses if they overlap. Don't be afraid to talk to your professors and asks questions if you have them though. They are all extremely helpful and kind.

In only took five classes instead of my planned six because everything was clashing so I decided to drop one, instead of taking a subject that I had no interest in.

The hardest module I chose was **Business Strategy**. I chose that subject in the hopes of having it count as 'Strategic management' at our HS. The subject is difficult in terms of what they expect from you. The best professor is Mr. Redmond and you'll have to be prepared to write two assignment in order to pass this class. One as a group and a second based on the group assignment but as an individual. He is lenient on exchange students in terms of grammar and spelling. He also answers all your questions and it's easy to get into contact with him.

Another hard one was **Customer Relation Management**. I loved it though. You learn a lot about the HubSpot system and you get to be very creative on your final project and pitch. This subject also requires a group assignment. It was very difficult because we had to find a Irish company to Interview. Non would reply and we were struggling so we e-mailed our professor and he asked a friend who owned a business to partner with us. So like I said before, never be afraid to ask for help.

The next module was **Sports Marketing**. It was fairly easy and got cancelled a lot which meant a lot of free time. You have to do a presentation and you have to write a case study. One tip: If it is not your turn to donor presentation then don't show up for presentation days. No one does and some Irish students have told me that it's a bit rude to show up because it makes them nervous. So unless told otherwise just stay home.

I also attended **Sponsorship and Event marketing**. It was super interesting. The professor told many stories and gave a lot of great examples which stuck with me. He

is very laid back and can be a bit crass in his language but it made his morning lectures more bearable. He cracked a joke every morning and provided a great lecture. You have to write two assignments. A group assignment for Sponsorship and a individual assignment on an event. There is also a presentation based on your sponsorship assignment. I highly recommend this lecture.

The final module was **International Marketing**. It is a great lecture and fun to attend. The lecturer picks a case for you to study throughout the entire semester. We had a very current case which was evolving every week so it forced us to do research on a weekly bases. The lecturer will meet with you twice to go over your work and you can take that work into your open book exam. He will let you know if you need to work a bit more or look at something else so you'll be well prepared for the exam. It was a lot of work and I ended up writing an excessively long paper but it did not feel like work because it was so interesting. I can only recommend this class.

I personally loved all my lectures and found them very interesting and engaging. You have to be prepared for a lot of group projects though as they seem to really like those. A great place to get all your work done is the library. There is almost always a spot open where you can plug in your things and work in peace and quiet as well as an upstairs cafe and group work environment were you can talk and be a bit louder.

6. Life in Waterford

Life in Waterford is great. I never felt so carefree before. There are plenty of stores to do your grocery shopping, a really nice bookstore and a bit of other shopping opportunities. There are great places to meet friends and grab a bite to eat as well as a lot of nice pubs with live music. There are also a few clubs.

Irish students go home on the weekends so the days to go out are Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. Pubs close at midnight and clubs close at 2pm. You go out earlier than you would in Germany so it's fine. Having a pint in a pub is like getting a coffee with friends. It's a calm environment and just very pleasant. A few great pubs are The Reg, Gingerman, Phil Grimms, Kasbah (Pub and Club) and everyone goes to Geoff's. There is also a new Pub called 'Jarrz' where you can draw your own pint, play music bingo on Mondays and Pub Quiz on Wednesdays.

Waterford isn't very big but you do feel rather safe and the people living there are very nice and helpful. I had gotten lost on the first day and a nice older gentleman helped me find the accommodations.

There is a group called Expats. Contact them on Facebook and join the group in order to be informed of the events they plan. They plan a lot of events and it's a group consisting of former exchange students who came back to live in Waterford and work. I got into that group by sheer accident but I am glad I did.

You have to go the first party thrown by the WIT student Union and try and get into contact with people quickly. I made a pretty big friends group rather quickly and we went on a lot of trips across Ireland as well as hung out almost every evening. I did not stay home often and I made so many great memories.

7. Free time

Waterford is great because you can get anywhere fairly quickly and easily. There is a small town called Tramore. It takes less than 15 minutes with a local bus to get there. The town itself offers little but there is a great beach, cliffs and opportunities to jump into the cold water. So take a swimsuit to try it out. You can also go surfing and hiking along the cliffs to the Iron man.

You can travel to other cities such as Kilkenny, Cork, Dublin, Dungarvan and so on within a couple of hours and have great day trips. You'll need a weekend or use the study week to travel to the Ring of Kerry, the cliffs of Moher and Galway. They are all further away and require a minimum of six hours. They are worth it though. If you get a chance you can even go to north Ireland by bus and have a great time in Belfast. It's a beautiful city and worth the visit.

Try and travel as much as you can to experience the true beauty of Ireland. It is a great place to be if you enjoy hiking and if you want to challenge yourself than rent a bicycle and take up the 46km Greenway tour. It was exhausting but worth it. The scenery is beautiful and you feel amazing once you've made it.

Make the most of your time in Ireland and use every weekend and free moment you have to explore the country and see new places. You can be very spontaneous as there are several buses that can take you where you need to go.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion I couldn't have asked for a better place to be on my semester abroad. It was the greatest experience you can have and I meet so many people who I am lucky to now call my friends. You'll feel a bit lost because people are more spontaneous and laid back but everything somehow always works out. So don't worry and just enjoy your time in Ireland. Make lots of friends and take interesting courses at WIT.