

Erasmus+ Erfahrungsbericht

Persönliche Angaben			
Name:		Vorname:	
E-Mail-Adresse			
Gastland	Northern Ireland (UK)		
Gasthochschule	Ulster University		
Aufenthalt	von: 13.09.2017	bis:	26.01.2018

Ich bin mit der Veröffentlichung meines Berichtes auf der Homepage des IUZ einverstanden:

- ☐ ja
☐ nein
☒ anonym

I have spent my 5th winter semester at the University of Ulster in Coleraine. I lived in Portstewart in a private shared house with the other 4 girls who were exchange students as well. I would suggest finding an accommodation in Portstewart because it is situated on the seaside (which is the greatest thing about this city), there is a supermarket, and it is easy to access the university with bus from this city.

Language

I was sure that I would not have any problems with communication in English because I know the language very well... but perhaps not well enough for Northern Ireland! The accent here is so strong that you can barely understand people during your first days after arrival. For example, I had to ask a bus driver three times what the fare was because his pronunciation of the word “eighty” was completely different from what I was taught. However, after spending some time in Northern Ireland, communicating with locals, you slowly get used to their pronunciation and intonation, though one can expect some problems from time to time.

Weather

The weather in Northern Ireland is absolutely crazy. Sometimes it rained all day; sometimes it was as sunny as could be, and surprisingly, it became not unusual to experience all four seasons simultaneously: blue skies, grey skies and plenty of rain.

Prices

I find that prices in Northern Ireland are higher than in Germany. Transport is definitely very expensive. For example, a return ticket to and from university cost me about 2.60 pounds.

The people's personality

Friendly, open and nice – these are three characteristics that apply to the majority of the locals in Northern Ireland. This made my time here even better than it could be. When I was walking on the street, especially on the promenade or along the beach, people often said “hello” and smiled which made me feel welcome in Northern Ireland country. It was easy to start a conversation with locals.

Traffic Troubles

You'll have to get used to the fact that in Northern Ireland – as in the United Kingdom and many Commonwealth countries – one drives on the left side of the road. During my first few weeks here, I really struggled when crossing the road! Besides, buses tend not to run on time, so waiting an extra five or fifteen minutes is something I have grown accustomed to. It's not unusual for some passengers to make some small talk with the driver while boarding or alighting from the bus, which obviously causes delays. But I think that it shows a more relaxed way of life here in Northern Ireland because even in shops, when packing your goods at the cashier's desk, you do not have to hurry up and do everything extremely fast, as in Germany. What I really like a lot is that it is common here to say "Hello" and "Bye" to a bus driver and thank him for the trip.

Coleraine Campus

Ulster University at Coleraine is located in very picturesque countryside and is surrounded by the river Bann and beautiful fields. When choosing an accommodation, it is advisable to bear in mind that the university campus is situated between the two small cities: Coleraine and Portstewart, and there is no shop on the campus territory (except of the small store "Spar" in the university building where the choice of goods is very limited and prices are quite high).

The main building itself looks so modern that I would never have guessed that it is a university. Sometimes the university seems to be even too modern. For example, students can enter the classrooms only by scanning their student-ID cards. It was something new for me. The classrooms are very well equipped, and the areas outside are suitable for studying or just relaxing because they are furnished with sofas, armchairs and tables, and there are even computers in some places. However, all cafes on campus are quite expensive and I could not afford having my lunch there (there is no canteen like in Chemnitz).

Students' Life

I would say that student's life at Ulster University in Coleraine is rather poor. I was really disappointed to find out that there is almost no student's social life here, especially if compared to the university in Chemnitz. As far as I remember, only 2 parties were organized by the university, both of them were on campus from where I could not reach home by bus because there are no buses after about 8 pm, and taking a cab is rather expensive. Other events, organized in the cooperation with the Ulster University, were always connected with religion. There is an organization called International Friends which consists of the members of the Baptist Church. Therefore, every their event, included a prayer and a talk about the importance of God and religion or some similar talk. Once they organized a trip to one of the sightseeing places nearby our city and that was definitely wonderful: we explored new places, met nice people, and there was absolutely nothing about religion. While being in Northern Ireland, I really missed the events at Club der Kulturen in Chemnitz, their parties and interesting evenings in the company with other students.

Scenic setting

The landscape is amazing here; I could see wonderful vistas every day! My phone memory was full after just a couple of days in Northern Ireland because I was constantly taking

pictures. Rolling fields, precious pathways, beautiful beaches and a magnificent ocean... Northern Ireland for sure is a country that makes you appreciate and love nature. Depending on where I went, I could enjoy the view of the ocean; find a centuries-old castle or even stroll around the demesne.