

Erasmus+ Erfahrungsbericht

Persönliche Angaben			
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Winter semester 2017/2018 in Ulster, United Kingdom

My ERASMUS started in late November 2016 when I decided to spend a semester abroad in order to improve my English through living in English speaking country which is Great Britain. The whole ERASMUS mobility can be divided into 3 phases:

- Registration and preparation. This phase takes much time and usually lasts from 7 to 9 months. During this period the applicants are supplied with all necessary information which is mostly given on special meetings with the academic staff and members of the international office. Another important part is writing of "Letter of motivation" where it is required to explain personal intentions concerning the mobility and to describe the outcomes and expectations from the forthcoming semester abroad.
- The actual stay abroad. This phase implies the arrival to the place of studies, attending lectures and passing exams.
- After mobility phase. This is the last step when all the exams are passed and person returns back home to complete his or her ERASMUS program.

University of Ulster

The University of Ulster is situated in Colerain, Northern Ireland. I arrived there on the 14th of September and my semester started 2 weeks later. It is better to be there during the registration period which usually ends on the 22nd or 23rd of September, so it is easier to complete the process of application and to start the semester without a rush. I would recommend you to stay in contact with the International department of Ulster University so it is easier to follow all the events. On the registration day all ERASMUS students choose their studies for the semester. For some reason some lectures may be not offered in the semester even if they are listed on the official web-site of Ulster University, so one needs to be ready to bring changes to the Learning agreement. It is necessary to note that ERASMUS students are not allowed to take more than 3 modules and those shouldn't be higher than Level 6. But it is possible to take additional classes such as Academic writing from the extra curriculum and get additional credits. This is done to ease the study period for students so they can spend a lot of time to learn more about Northern Ireland. The members of International office always keep in touch with students and inform them about all the events which take place in the area and supply students with full information about the city, university, locations and provide them with printed booklets. In addition to this students always organize trips and cultural evenings or just try to have a good time together.

The study process has a good organization. Students have no more than 3 lectures a week and the rest of the time they can travel or do some sports. Each lecture is followed by a seminar with the common length of approximately 2,5 hours with breaks. However, it may also happen that lectures and seminars have an interval which needs to be filled with something. In this case a good decision is to go to the university

canteen, to the coffee-shop or to the library where it is possible to find all kind of materials regarding the content of each module. The university library also has a PC-pool with facilities for printing. In this sense it doesn't differ from the university library of TU Chemnitz.

Life in Ulster

There are 4 campuses in the University of Ulster and one of them is called after the name of the closest town which is Colerain, but the campus itself is located at a distance from the town. The vast majority of students prefer to stay in dormitories which are situated in university campus and that is very convenient because it is easy to access the university facilities 24/7. Unfortunately, this is the only advantage of this type of accommodation. It is much cheaper to find a private apartment in the towns to the neighbourhood area. It is true that you will have to travel all the time here and there but you will still save some money. Another thing I heard from other students is that student dormitories are poorly-equipped and it is absolutely not comfortable to stay there, so I think that private apartment is the best choice. Also you won't find a lot of fun around the university campus but there are good facilities for doing sports.

Another unpleasant thing to be mentioned is public transport which has almost no discount for students, it always comes late (at least 10-15 min late) and you will be able to catch only 1 bus per hour. It sometimes happens that they don't follow the schedule and it is impossible to predict when the next one comes. Public transport in Northern Ireland is not good developed because the most citizens have cars. Buses are mostly used by students or elderly people.

The living cost in Northern Ireland is not much higher than in Germany. I spent around 450-600 Euro each month. This includes expenses for food, housing (around 180 Euro plus electricity and oil for heating) and transport (single bus ticket costs 1.80 pounds and return ticket is around 2.30 pounds. It is necessary to note that the price varies during the day, so it is more expensive if you travel somewhere before 11 am), entertainment and trips around NI. Smoking is very expensive.

Conclusion

All in all I should say that Northern Ireland is a good place if you want to get a good life experience of staying abroad alone. This will give you a good opportunity to get a taste only of Irish culture but also of British one because NI is still trying to find the balance between these two. You will also find a lot of new friends among local people or students from the rest of Europe which is a good opportunity to improve your English and find out more about different cultures. Local people are always very friendly to foreigners and ready to help if one has some problems. Their English differs from the standard one but it doesn't cause many difficulties in understanding.

One also needs to be prepared for windy and rainy climate. The temperature usually doesn't drop below 0 in winter, but it is still cold so don't hesitate to take warm clothes and an umbrella with you or maybe even a raincoat. You will also find a nice seacoast with fresh air and green fields with pleasant scenery.

The university supplies students with all possible and necessary study materials, facilities and university staff always tries to create a perfect environment for studying and spending your leisure time with pleasure and joy.