

ERASMUS-Erfahrungsbericht

Persönliche Angaben			
Name:		Vorname:	
E-Mail-Adresse			
Gastland	Nordirland		
Gasthochschule	University of Ulster		
Aufenthalt	von: 11.09.2010	bis:	31.05.2011

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Bericht (mindestens 1 Seite)

I spent my semester abroad at the University of Ulster, Coleraine Campus, in Northern Ireland, where I was able to experience both the country's very own history and tradition and its linguistic peculiarities. A week before the lectures and seminars started, the orientation period took place, the so called Fresher's week, where students learnt about general procedures, the marking of course work and exams and housing. The registration for the individual courses took place via internet. Each student had to register with the university's application system so as to then generate their registration number. After that the long list of courses could be accessed and the student could apply for the modules. In case students had questions or issues of any kind they could address themselves to the International Office.

The accent spoken in Coleraine was hard to understand at the beginning since native speakers talked rather quickly and connected words. After a while, however, it became familiar. It was no problem at all to follow lectures and seminars, as the members of staff really made an effort to help students and to speak clearly. Local students were very nice and sociable.

Applying for a place in the halls of residence was the thing to do for me since I wanted to live near the university buildings. This could be done directly with the Accommodation Office. The staff there were very friendly and willing to help. Students had accommodation in a house with usually five other students. It was possible to use the pigeon hole at the Accommodation Office, if you wanted to receive letters from home. There were no letter boxes at the houses itself. Once a week cleaners took care of the shared areas such as kitchen and bathrooms. The rooms were in a good condition. However, the rent for one semester was out of all proportion to accommodation in Germany. Sixty to seventy five pounds per week were common, depending on the location (on or off campus). More often than not electricity had to be paid separately; strictly speaking it needed to be bought in the supermarket. It was much cheaper to live in a private accommodation, which was possible for example in Portstewart or Portrush. Rooms there could cost between thirty to forty pounds per week. Offers can be found on the internet. However, long distances and train journeys need to be taken into account.

Shops like Tesco and ASDA down town were recommendable for bulk purchases, since they had a great variety of stuff in store ranging from food and clothing through to writing things. Own brands were comparatively reasonable. However, costs of living in general were quite high; especially a healthy diet was all but cheap. The opening hours were very customer friendly. The shops were open every day; from Monday to Friday even until ten or twelve pm. Buses went regularly downtown and back. Here, a weekly ticket was advisable. It could be bought at the bus station in Coleraine.

A lot of facilities could be found on campus. In the main building, there was a Spar shop that produced relief in case of emergency. It was open quite late, even during the weekend. The Post Office was next door, so that letters or post cards home could be sent conveniently. The coffee shop provided students with the necessary amount of coffee and the refectory had typical Irish dishes on the menu. Prices there were quite high, though, but the food quality was good. It's worth to have a go! If snacks were preferred the cafeteria called The Streat had much in store. In the adjacent building, there was the Student's Union's shop where treats and university material such as folders and writing pads could be bought. The book shop next door stocked most of the books that needed to be read in the courses.

The university offered a lot of free time options. Those who enjoyed physical activities could take part in sport courses such as boxing, fencing or rowing or the more utopian ones like Aikido. The Student's Union, a student's society, organized parties each week in the Student's Bar. The atmosphere there was relaxed and enjoyable. Those students who liked going to the theatre could visit the Riverside Theatre on campus. Despite the given student discount, tickets were rather expensive, though. For others, the Movie House Cinemas down town offered a variety of movies at reasonable prices. In the same building, the Jet Centre, lovers of bowling got their money's worth, too. Furthermore, there were several pubs and clubs with traditional live music in Portstewart and Portrush. Buses there and back, however, went only until eleven o'clock and taxi journeys were really expensive.

Finally, I would like to say that Coleraine is an interesting city with friendly people and that the university has a lot to offer. I gathered experiences that I would not want to do without.

