

Travel Report Erasmus

Content:

Maynooth University

Maynooth

Ireland

Fall 2018

Bachelor in Urban and Regional Planning

Maynooth:

The town of Maynooth has approximately 14 000 inhabitants where the main part lives in suburban housing estates around a small city centre mainly consisting of a main street with shops, pubs, cafes etc. There is also a small shopping centre in the city centre and some bigger shops in its outskirts. In addition to the main street you also find a pathway to the big Carton House estate, currently a golf and spa resort but which is open for the public, this is a nice place to take a walk. It is also possible to follow the canal that passes the town for a walk. Maynooth is located relatively close to Dublin. It is possible to take both the bus and the train to Dublin; the bus takes about 45 minutes to one hour and the train between 30 to 40 minutes and the tickets are fairly cheap. The traffic situation in the Dublin area is however bad, the public transport net is not so developed compared to Sweden so even though the link between Dublin and Maynooth is quite good in comparison, there is a lot of delays due to traffic jams etc. Because of the small size of Maynooth I found it nice to have the possibility to go to Dublin as well. The small size of Ireland is also nice because it makes it quite easy to travel around the island and the prices on long-distance bus fares is also quite cheap.

Maynooth University:

The university is allocated close to the Main Street which makes it easy to access if you are commuting to Maynooth. It has a north and south campus where the North campus consisted of very old buildings, housing the St Catherine's theology university and the South campus is the newer Maynooth campus. Some things are divided between them and others aren't. Student housing is also located on campus. There were mostly school buildings but also facilities like Student Union, Library, shops, cafes and a sports hall. The University felt very alive and welcoming.

Arrival:

You can fly to Dublin and if you're not arriving very late there should be an "Airport Hopper" taking you from the airport to central Maynooth, with some stops on the way. I lived on campus and it was possible to access my room a couple of days before orientation week started. There were three days of orientation, which mostly consisted of practical information about how things worked at the University, in Maynooth and Ireland but also some leisure activities like traditional Irish dancing, walking tour in Dublin and some games. It was a nice and fairly relaxed way to start. Maynooth takes in a lot of exchange students, both through

Erasmus and from other places, so it is easy to find other people in the same situation as you. I was the only student from Lund University and probably also the only one from Sweden.

Courses:

To read the 30 credits that is a full semester at Lund University I had to take approximately 5 to 6 courses (or modules as they call them) at Maynooth depending on their size. There was a broad range of modules possible to choose from. We choose modules over Internet before we got there and a couple of days later we could see if we were preliminarily accepted on these or not. This was a bit tricky because they hadn't uploaded the timetable for the modules by then so it was impossible to know if the modules you chose collided with each other. During orientation week we received a form where we wrote down the modules that we got preliminarily accepted to, we could also write down modules that we wanted to drop and others that we wanted to add. About a week later we had the official enrollment and after this we could hand in our Learning agreements to Lund. We had some weeks after this where it was possible to drop modules, after that we had to pay a fee to do so. The grades were 0-100 where 40 was the pass level and most teachers never handed out more than 70 which some exchange students got a bit stressed over because it would lower their average when they translated their grades to the system at their home university so if this is of importance to you it could be good to keep in mind.

Name of courses:

Contemporary Irish Society, SO151, 7,5 credits Teacher Eamonn Slater:

Brilliant teacher and interesting content. It was a sociology module focusing on the Irish contemporary society and how the society has been shaped by its colonial history in a range of ways. It was a very interesting module to take to get a better understanding of Ireland. It was three hours a week. It consisted of a couple of smaller assignments, one essay half time and one end-of-term essay before Christmas (instead of exam that one-semester students didn't have to come back after Christmas to do).

Urban Planning and Property Development, GY342, 5 credits, Teacher Sinead Kelly:

It was an interesting module that had an Irish context. It also felt very practical, going into the technicalities of property development which gave a good understanding to why the urban planning system functions the way it does. It was a bit difficult, especially the property development part with its economical terms in English but I really recommend the module anyways because if you put some effort into it you can learn a lot. It was two times a week and consisted of two in class assessments that were a smaller part of the grade and one bigger essay for the one semester Erasmus students.

Politics in Crisis, PO212, 5 credits, Teacher Karl Murphy:

The module focused on three themes; USA, Ireland and Europe. It was a module with a lot of content and a quick phase, I took it at the sociology department but it was a politics module. Ten weeks we handed in small assignments of 200 words that was a reflection from a text that we should read for that week. We also had an essay at half time and one before Christmas instead of exam. The module was twice a week.

Living Landscapes, GY151, 7,5 credits, Teacher Stephen McCarron:

This was a nature geography module. It was focused on topics such as the Arctic, tectonics, volcanoes etc. It was three times a week and consisted of three assignments to hand in.

Economic Geography, GY221, 5 credits, Teacher Chris van Egeraat:

The module took up a range of different subjects connected to the field of Economic Geography such as spaces for consumption, foreign direct investments, and Economic geography historically, different scopes of it etc. It was two times a week and consisted of one reflection paper, and two in-class assignments.

Accommodation:

It is expensive to live in Ireland and hard to find a place to live in places like Maynooth and Dublin. The university had a possibility to apply for campus housing on a first-come first-served base. I recommend to be well prepared for this application because the rooms were taken super fast. I managed to get a room in a campus dorm with four other rooms, two shared bathrooms and a shared kitchen. I had to pay around 25 000 kr for around 4 months of living which included a pillow, duvet and sheets. A lot of students living of campus also paid a lot. The campus housing was not fantastic for the price but I still found it all right because of its great location, a lot of students couldn't even manage to find housing in Maynooth but had to live in other towns.

Fun and leisure:

The university had a rich student life with a student housing that you could visit for food, drinks and events, but also a wide range of different clubs and societies that you could join for two euros and do different activities. This was a nice way to meet new people and try out new stuff. As mentioned earlier the size of Ireland also made it possible to travel during the weekends and study week.

Costs:

As mentioned above, housing in Ireland is pricy and I had to pay the whole sum before I got there. The price of public transport was all right and food prices was approximately the same as in Sweden.

Other:

I can really recommend going to Ireland and Maynooth University. Both the country over all and the University had a very friendly and helpful environment, which made me feel at home quickly.