University College Dublin, Ireland
Major: Business
Term: Spring 2018 (January to May)

**Preparation for exchange**

In preparing for my studies to UCD, I found it useful to talk to a student who has previously been on exchange to UCD.

**Academic details**

Unlike SFU, UCD has only two semesters a year and not every course is available in both semesters. It is important to plan ahead of time which course you are planning to enroll. Prior to registration, I received an email with a document outlining a list of business modules available next semester. Module outlines are available on the UCD online course search. Since all modules have a capacity limit and that timetables may clash, it is recommended to research additional modules to take. (Course is called "module" in Ireland)

**Packing**

In Dublin, it is cold and it rains a lot, so I would suggest packing more warm clothing and a raincoat or an umbrella.

**Travel**

The final schedule in UCD is not released after mid-term of the semester. Therefore, when booking round or return flight ticket, return flight date needs to be after the exam period to ensure not missing any exams. Personally, I waited until the release of the final exam schedule to book my return ticker. I recommend Air Canada and Iceland Airline, these two airlines have a cheaper price and less layover flight.

**Financial details**

Cash, debit and credit cards are widely accepted in Ireland. It is also easy to open an Irish bank account. There is an AIB bank on campus that require fewer paper documents for students to open an account than in other AIB branches outside the campus. I found that having a local bank account makes the currency difference more manageable.
During Exchange

Arrival and orientation
After arrived at the airport, I was informed that I need to apply for an Irish Residence Permit (IRP) card (previously called GNIB card) in Dublin within 30 days. I had to book an appointment online before going to the Immigration Registration Office. If you have to apply as well, I suggest making the appointment as soon as possible because the appointment time slot filled up pretty quickly. Students can make the appointment even before arriving in Dublin.

UCD holds lots of events (e.g. shopping tour, city tour) for exchange students a week before school starts, I suggest arriving one week prior to orientation. During orientation, you will be provided lots of helpful information and the opportunity to meet other exchange students. So definitely don’t miss it.

Accommodation and living
I lived off-campus because I missed the deadline to apply for on-campus accommodation. If I was given a second choice, I would like to live on-campus as it is more convenient to get to the Quinn School of Business and easier to make friends. I received an email from UCD International Accommodation regarding Prime Property Management that offers off-campus accommodations for exchange students. If living off-campus, it would be wise not to transfer the accommodation fee for the whole semester before viewing the property.

Transportation
You can get a Leap Card (similar to Compass Card) during the first couples of weeks on campus. You simply top-up the Leap Card and use it for the buses, Luas and the Dart. You can either use Travel Credit or load a Rambler ticket (5 days or 30 days). A Rambler Ticket saves you money if you take more than 2 buses in a day and if you travel infrequently. Another benefit of the student leap card is the fare capping. It will cap your daily or weekly spend on Dublin Bus. The daily cap is 5 euros and the weekly cap is 20 euros. Cycling is also a good way to commute and get around the city as there are many bike parking facilities and cycle lanes almost everywhere in Dublin.

Academic details (lecture format, schedules, grading, etc.)
Lectures are usually 2 hours a week. Lecturers use Blackboard, just like the canvas, to share module materials (ppt slides, assignment etc.) and post announcements for students.
40% is a pass in UCD and final grades are not curved. The majority of grades is based on final exams (more than 50%) and there is usually a group project. Some classes have a midterm exam usually worth around only 10%. For almost all modules, the past final exams are available on the sisweb, which helps students prepare for the finals. The professors are knowledgeable and genuinely helpful.

Country information
Ireland has a strong culture of pubs and drinking. There are lots of bars and pubs in the Temple Bar district. The Temple Bar is also a must-visit tourist attraction in Dublin. In terms of weather, it was windy, cloudy, and rainy from January to April and it started becoming sunny and warm in May.

Some suggested places to visit in Dublin are Guinness Storehouse, Book of Kells (in Trinity College), Phoenix Park, St. Stephen’s Green Park, Grafton Street (for shopping) etc. Ireland also has many great places to visit and the local tourist company offers lots of day tours departing from Dublin. Some of the most popular tours are Galway (Cliff of Moher), Belfast (Giant’s Causeway, Titanic Museum) and Cork (Blarney Castle).

Social and extracurricular activities.
The UCD Global Lounge holds a range of events and activities for International and Irish students, such as games and movies night. It is a great way to meet people and make friends on those events.

Reflection After Exchange
Honestly, I had a rough time in the first month getting used to living in a double room and walking 50 minutes to school and back. Gradually, I learn to keep an open mind. Your roommate may be from another culture and may have a different lifestyle, and perspective. It is important to respect the differences and understand others’ culture. The second advice is that don't just stay in the room, go out and attend more events on or off campus to meet new people and build lasting friendships. The time abroad goes by very fast. If there is anything you want to do or anyplace you want to visit, don't wait because too often you will find yourself run out of time and miss the opportunity.
I had a really great time and this exchange experience is unforgettable, challenging and rewarding.
Photos

UCD Orientation

Ha'penny Bridge