

Erasmus life in Ireland

Hey whoever you are,

I am Erasmus student in NUIM for the two semesters. I will try to give short impression about how does it feel (or cost ;) to be a foreign student in Ireland.

Generally speaking Irish NUIM campus is how we imagine university campus from movies. Huge territory is divided into two parts: south campus – the place, where the old seminary stands, and the north campus – modern new built campus side. You can find everything on campus: from the spacious classrooms and cosy student hanging out areas to restaurants and shops. Student accommodations are on campus too. Though a lot of students find their own accommodations off-campus.

Shortly about everything:

Accommodation:

As it was mentioned above there are two possible options: accommodation on campus and off-campus. The prices in on-campus accommodations are around 450eu/month (also there are private student dormitories such as Student Accommodation SAM) while off-campus accommodation can start from 250 eu + utilities/ a month to 500eu + utilities / month. However, Maynooth is a small town, where furthest any direction is 20 minutes by walk. Average is ±300eu + utilities. Utilities during winter could be around 80eu/month.

Useful website to search for accommodation: www.daft.ie -> pick Kildare as region and Maynooth as a town in 'lettings' search.

Since there are too many students, you should hurry up and search for an accommodation before semester starts. If you are coming for a second semester, you might be very lucky, because previous semester students, who are leaving, usually leave their rooms for someone else. For this check out facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/286185868106621/>

Otherwise students live further away from Maynooth in Dublin, Leixlip, Coolmine, Clonsilla, etc. For this you will need to catch a bus or train daily.

Transportation:

Maynooth is pretty well connected to Dublin's city centre by train or bus. Trains run few times an hour depending on daytime or week day. The price of train ticket Maynooth-Dublin O'Connolly train station is around 5 Eu, 7 EU if you buy the return ticket. The journey takes approximately 40 minutes.

There are 2 buses going to city centre: 66 and 67. It's cheaper (around 2.80eu one way) though longer – it takes an hour depending on traffic jams around the city.

If you are student in Maynooth, with your Irish bank account you can get LEAP CAR, which gives you some small discounts on bus and train tickets. Useful thing – if you have not enough cash on you leap car,d in the buses the driver can minus the amount needed, and you pay it later in the machine. Important to mention that you always should have exact amount of change because bus driver does not give the cash back.

Trains stop running around 11 pm. However, there is night bus service during the weekends, which connects Maynooth with Dublin's city centre. Though ticket is more expensive (5 eu one way) but it gives you a chance to experience Dublin's nightlife. These buses go on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Thinking of taxi? They are crazy expensive here! From the city centre to Straffan Wood (you can google map it) it's 6.5 eu!

Living expenses

Prices in Ireland are slightly more expensive than in Slovenia. Though it depends on your lifestyle and budget. Supermarkets such as Aldi (or Hofer) and Lidl exist in Ireland too, so if you are budget-saver these shops are exactly for you! Bigger variety of food can be found in Tesco and Dunnes, but food is more expensive there.

For comparison:

A loaf of bread – 1.50-1.80 EU

Packet of 3 paprika – 1.60 EU

2l of Milk – 2.0EU

6 pack of Guinness – 10 EU

Chicken breast pack (3 breasts) – 5EU

Cigarettes, alcohol and phone expenses are expensive. Also eating out is not usually a case in Ireland. However sometimes there are good deals for students. Important to mention that there is cheap and nice restaurant inside of north campus called Phoenix, where you can get a hot meal for 4.95EU. There is also nice Chinese restaurant in the city centre, where they have a buffet for 7.5 eu for students.

Cigarettes cost around 8-9EU, small pack (20 gr) of tobacco cost ±5 eu.

Going out is also pretty expensive. Be ready to spend around 4 eu for a pint of beer or shot of spirit in the pub. Usually students organize pre-parties before going out.

Going out:

Maynooth is quite a party town since there are so many students all over a year. Usually people start going out on Sunday. It's called 'a Sunday pint', because all Irish students return to Maynooth (yeah, Irish students also like to go home during the weekends too).

Tuesday nobody goes out, so forget about it. Tuesday is for studying!

Wednesday everybody goes to Brady's.

Thursday is for Roost.

Friday-Saturday Irish students go home, which means Roost and other pubs are full of non-student material. People from surroundings come to party. Also a lot of parties of 'happy 30s and 40s' are going on. So if you feel uncomfortable with that you can always head to Dublin since there is night transport available.

Usually there is live band in Roost most of the days during the week (starting with Wednesday). On Thursday's nights good live music is happening in O'Neils pub just around the corner. Mantra is one of the biggest nightclubs in Ireland. Though whichever place you will pick, remember that on Wednesday and Thursday nights (or special student occasions) entrance is not free anymore after 11 pm (usually it's around 3 eu).

Studies

There is no social work course in NUI, Maynooth. Applied Social Studies would be the closest what you could get. All the subjects have the major focus on Irish social policies. Professors usually are quite helpful and understanding though good knowledge of English is complementary.

From my experience it is easier to pick subjects, where there is 50% assessment and 50% exam, because at the end you already have half of the grade. I can recommend few subjects:

Case studies in drugs and criminal justice. 1st semester

http://www.nuim.ie/courses/?Target=MODULE&Mode=VIEW&MODULE_CODE=SP303

Linking equality and social inclusion. 1st semester

http://www.nuim.ie/courses/?Target=MODULE&Mode=VIEW&MODULE_CODE=SP302

Studying pace is well organized too. There is a lot of holiday during a year: autumn midterm break in Halloween period, Christmas break (3 weeks), after exam holiday (starts around 20th of January until February), spring midterm break (Easter period).

Getting to the airport

Get a bus 16 or 41 until Drumcondra train station and then change to train, which goes to Maynooth instead of taking a bus to city centre. You will save money and time.

Well Erasmus life in Ireland is priceless. To be a part of such a great and big community gives you great experience as a student and as a person.

If I haven't covered everything in this short review of Erasmus life in Ireland and you still have VERY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS or even doubts, feel free to contact me by email [redacted] or Facebook (type [Eirge Shinnick](#)). On Facebook you can even find some pictures from Ireland ;)

p.s. from September 2013 I am also available for a cup of coffee invitations instead of emails and FB messages.

Ciao!