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UQ Program: Bachelor of Social Work



Oh! The places you will go!

Studying abroad in Dublin has been one of the greatest educational, inspiring, fun experiences in my lifetime. Leaving Australia was hard, as I left the comforts of everything I knew behind for a land I had not explored and did not know a whole lot about. Oh, but how great it has been. Not to say there was not the difficult moment of letting go, but the experience just opened me to learning about myself and all the world has to offer.

I have been one of the first to study abroad in the Bachelor of Social Work in Ireland. I am in my last semester of my third year, which made it even more difficult to line up subjects, so I would suggest getting in early in your degree. The system of study in Ireland was different to the format at UQ, with a full time load being six subjects. I found this a lot of work, but more due to trying to establish what was required for each subject. One thing I really enjoyed was learning about the social situation in Ireland, which spun a different perspective on working in the field of social work. The staff and lecturers are all very friendly and really encouraging of international students.

Friendships I have forged on this trip have been amazing. I have become close to so many gorgeous people that it made my stay seem too short and it was sad to leave. However I now feel like I have a home to come back to in Europe. A little advice, try study during the weekdays and get out of town on the weekends. Time is short, so make the most of it. There was so much magic in the Irish landscape. A camera is a must.

Dublin is expensive, but once you settle in you will work out cheaper ways to live. Such as groceries go to Tesco's, Lidl or Aldi. Much cheaper. In terms of general expenses, a lot is spent on exploring and socialising. Keep a budget of around \$200 to \$300 a week at least for this. Really depends on how much travel you do.

If you come to Dublin make sure you visit the Queen of Tarts on Cows Lane in Temple Bar for lunch. Delicious food and yummy place for a hot drink and cake. Good pubs, well you're in Dublin, so there is many. But in Temple Bar you will find yourself with a few. I suggest also branching out to some smaller ones in the city or in Donnybrook for a change of scenery; Temple Bar can be very touristy. If you love chai like I do, visit the café Joy of Chai, a cosy little café tucked away at the back of Temple Bar.

Being on exchange has really helped me learn a lot. I learnt about a different country, about myself, about stepping into the unknown and taking risks. This has opened me to a fresh outlook on life and a new perspective for looking at things. I really enjoyed studying in a different cultural and political climate. I have enjoyed my moment abroad! Ireland is 'gas craic' (translated: means amazing amounts of fun!)

As Dr Suess states:

You have brains in your head.

You have feet in your shoes.

You can steer yourself any direction you choose.

You're on your own.

And you know what you know.

And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.