I have spent the '18 Fall semester studying at the UCD Smurfit Graduate Business School, at the Blackrock Campus of University College Dublin (UCD). As I am a CEMS student, I have had a lot of courses specific to my master's degree- however, I hope my report can be helpful to anybody who wishes to pursue her education in the Dublin area.

The city

Dublin is the capital of Ireland, the biggest, and arguably the most important city on the Emerald Isle. It has a considerably small central area, which includes sights such as the O'Connell Bridge, Phoenix Park, Dublin Castle, or the legendary Temple Bar quarter. This, historical and touristy area is surrounded by residential neighbourhoods from the west, north and south - and by the sea to the east.

North and South

Historically, the wealthier party part of the city has been its southern side, which includes upscale neighbourhoods such as Ballsbridge, Booterstown, Monkstown, Dalkey and Blackrock. As most of these neighbourhoods have historically been independent villages in the Dublin agglomeration, they still have small village centres, historical houses and good transportation link. The area is mostly characterized by detached houses, spectacular gardens and a good view to the seashore. The area is also mostly connected by the Dublin Bus and DART (Dublin Area Rapid Transit System) lines, which travel frequently to the city centre. Convenience stores and hypermarkets are within good reach, but pubs, clubs, cinemas or cheaper restaurants are hard to find in the neighbourhood as local shops cater mostly to more wealthy, older customers. A bit further south, many beautiful natural sites can be discovered, such as the Killiney Hill Park or the Bray Cliff Walk.

Both UCD campuses (Belfield and Blackrock) are in this area.

The northern part, in contrast, houses more working-class neighbourhoods such as Beaumont, Ballymun, Whitehall - living costs in these neighbourhoods are cheaper, however, most of the North is not connected by the DART system, making locals have to rely on Dublin Bus links. Houses are also smaller and budget eateries and small pizza, burger, sushi, etc. places are abundant. Notable landmarks in the northern part include the National Botanical Gardens, a free-to-enter, spectacular botanical garden, and the Howth peninsula, which is a favourite weekend location for many people living in Dublin. Dublin City University has its campus in the northern part of the city.

Living life in Dublin

Where to live
The usual student in Dublin has these broad options for accommodation:

1. Renting a room - an apartment is very expensive and finding people to co-rent can be very hard. Rooms, however, can be found for long-term rents even on Airbnb, but rent.ie and other sites can be useful as well. Most universities offer advertising boards for these kinds of accommodations, so be sure to check yours out.

2. Dorms - Dorms can be very expensive compared to regular European levels. My dorm was 1200EUR/month which was the only option given to CEMS students at UCD. We could live on campus, and the friendships pretty much compensated for the price of the apartment (a 10sqm, one-bed room with an ensuite bathroom). However, the cheapest option available was still 800eur, from which anybody could rent a room in the area.

3. Host families - some universities offer contacts to host families which rent out rooms in their houses in the neighbourhood for reduced prices. If you have this option, go for it - most likely, the quality of the accommodation is great, and you can save a lot of money doing it.

Eating and eating out

Eating out in Dublin can be an expensive hobby, however, "junk food" is quite good in the city. Takeaway Indian, Thai or Middle Eastern food can be a lot better than in Budapest, given that the quality of meat and veggies can be a lot better than in Hungary. Restaurants, however, have a varying level of quality, and the Irish cuisine can be quite divisive among foreigners. Traditional restaurant foods include Fish and Chips (which is heavily undersalted to the Hungarian taste), Fish Chowder (a very tasty smoked fish soup made with potatoes, clams and prawns), Black Pudding (which is basically a Hungarian "véres hurka"), and Steak&Fries (which is a lot better than in Hungary). Fine dining options are also available but are very hard to book and rather overpriced compared to the level of the average restaurant.

Cooking at home, however, is very easy, and many store chains serve a wide variety of very good quality pre-made food, which can include Chinese takeaway classics, Curries, pasta Bolognese, and anything in between. Meat, vegetables are very easy to find, and are high quality, and relatively low priced. However, Hungarian breakfasts (cold cuts, meat, veggies, eggs) are relatively expensive to prepare and most students are better off with cereals and pre-made dinners.

MY personal favourite was M&S Pre-made foods, which are a bit more expensive than other chains’ foods but can be as good as restaurant food in Hungary.

Pubs and partying
Drinking in Ireland is expensive. A pint of Guinness can start at 3 EUR but is usually closer to 6 euro in the city centre. Imported beers are more expensive (such as Coronita/Corona), and the usual price of a cocktail is around 10EUR. If you do pre-drinks, you're better off - however, many clubs downtown offer daily drink discounts, which can make partying and having fun a bit easier on the wallet. Clubs downtown such as Diceys or Coppers (Copper Face Jack's) are cheap options for students, but real, big clubs are hard to find in Dublin. A more general option are pubs/cocktail bars with small dancefloors, such as The Jar or Nolita.

Traveling

Dublin itself can get boring after a short while. However, you have the option to visit the neighbouring towns and sites - taking a trip to Northern Ireland, Galway, or down south are great and the sceneries are beautiful. If you wish to stay close to the city, Howth or the Wicklow mountains are also very good options, where you can visit the hills and take perfect Instagram photos which will give you bragging rights for months! Howth is accessible by the DART, while the Wicklow mountains are served by the Dublin Bus and many private companies.

Studying CEMS at UCD

University College Dublin has the best Business master's program, CEMS, in Ireland. This means that your CEMS classmates are probably students from top universities around the world - my class had two Irish people and approximately 48 foreigners. The quality of teaching is very good, and there is a big focus on homeworks, presentations, and simulations in groups. Classes about strategy, supply chain sustainability, negotiations and marketing were good in general.

The real strength of the CEMS programme in Dublin is the community - do as much group work and hang out with your classmates as much as possible!

The school's facilities are mostly up-to-date, and the design and furnishing of the rooms is very modern and comfortable. Classes are usually structured in 4-hour slots in a single day, with frequent breaks during the class - however, the comfort level of the classrooms makes listening for 4 hours easier. The school has a canteen, which provides good food at acceptable prices. The library is the only thing that is worse than the one at Corvinus, however, it is a lot more beautiful, as it is converted and rebuilt from an old church.