Hello everyone!

I am a marketing masters student at Corvinus and I spent the fall semester of 2018/19 studying at UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School in Dublin, Ireland. I was doing my semester abroad as a part of the CEMS MiM Program.

About Ireland and Dublin

Ireland is a beautiful tiny country. People there are the friendliest that I have ever met, they are genuinely helpful and nice but man, they can taaaaaalk! You don’t even have to say a word, they will talk for hours on end! It is really nice that they are so friendly but when you are in a hurry this can be a bit annoying. However, you can always be sure that the locals will help you find the right street or bus stop if you are lost in the city. Moreover, they are very patient. They will wait for the bus for 30 minutes without any anxiety or stress that they will be late from work, just chatting away until somehow one bus arrives. And yes, buses in Dublin are never on time, but more on this later.

People are always asking me about the Irish weather. You should be prepared for rain but believe me it isn’t that horrible. I was in Dublin from the end of August till the end of December so I got a glimpse of a variety of weathers. The most important advice I can give you is to be prepared for everything. It can be sunny in the morning but start raining an hour later. In autumn the temperature was ok, it wasn’t as nice as back at home but it wasn’t that cold. However, starting from November it gets veeeeeeery windy which makes it feel a lot colder than it actually is. You should always have a lot of layers on as you can never know how the day is going to progress weather-wise. A lot of Irish people say that all four seasons appear in one day in Ireland.

Ireland is an expensive country if you are from Hungary. The supermarkets are only a bit more expensive than at home but with most other things there is quite a big difference. They have Aldi, Lidl and SuperValu, which are the cheapest options for groceries. However, housing is out of control expensive. And it is really hard to find an apartment if you are a student, as most landlords want
someone with a job. Consequently, I decided against an apartment in the city center and opted for renting a room with a host family near the university. So I ended up living with a really nice Irish family, renting one of their rooms with its separate bathroom. I had a really great time living with this family and I can only recommend you trying it for yourself. But I have to warn you to never transfer money in advance to reserve a room, as there are many scammers. I found my accommodation through UCD’s accommodation website (https://www.ucdaccommodationpad.ie/Accommodation), but you can search https://www.rent.ie/, https://hostingpower.ie and https://www.daft.ie too. Alternatively, you could go to the dorms of the university, which is right next to the main building but it is very expensive for what it is. I spent quite a lot of time in the dorms as many of my friends lived there, but most of them were unhappy and unsatisfied with what they got for such a high price.

I was living in the Blackrock area, where the university was so I could walk to school. But I was surprised to see how many people bike in Dublin. Soon enough I learned that the public transport is not that reliable and is quite expensive so you are better off with a bike. You can easily rent a bike with Bleeperbike, it is very similar to Mol Bubi. If you decide on public transport, you should definitely get the Student Leap Card, which works as a kind of credit card for travelling. You can top it up with money at the appropriate machines at the DART stops but there is also an android app that you can use to do that (if you have an NFC chip in your phone). In Dublin there are many double decker buses, but most of the time they are late or never come. Do not trust the led screens in the stops! The other option is the DART, which is a kind of suburban train. I always preferred to take this as it was the most reliable and I lived near the Blackrock station. There are also trams in the city center but I have never actually taken them during my stay in Dublin. On nights out we always took a taxi back home, as it wasn’t that expensive if you spit the price. There is an app called myTaxi that helps you book a taxi (kinda like Uber) and you can pay by card through it. Sometimes they even have coupon codes so keep an eye out for that. Of course there are night buses too but as I have mentioned buses in general are never on time and the ticket for the night bus is even more expensive.

I’d highly advise you to go and travel while you are in Ireland. It is affordable even with a student budget. You can find organized day-tours (I recommend Paddywagon Tours) but you can also easily rent a car or hop on a bus and explore the country. My favorite places were the Cliffs of Moher, Galway, the Wicklow mountains and Kilkenny (the Smithwick brewery is there), but you can also visit Norther-Ireland too, there are quite a lot of nice places like Belfast, the Giant’s causeway and the Carrick-a-ridge rope bridge (this was my favorite out of all the travels I made). Since Dublin isn’t such a big city, you can see all its sights in one or two days max. But I recommend you go on a few cliff walks that are near Dublin: Howth and Greystones are beautiful.
Dublin itself is a nice little city but completely different from Budapest. The city center is quite small, not much sights to see but the atmosphere is amazing! There are many cool brunch and food spots: Sophie’s (amazing view of the city from the top of a hotel, where the restaurant is located, perfect for brunch), Hairy Lemon (typical pub where the food is amazing), The Gourmet Food Parlour (best brunch I ever had in Dublin), Sunday market at People’s Park (ton of different cuisine to choose from and great atmosphere), Neon (Asian fusion with a cool concept), Leo Burdock (best fish and chips in town). For pubs I’d recommend Hairy Lemon (yes it is that good that I have to say it twice), Nolita (young professionals, more sophisticated crowd, really nice to grab drinks before going out but it is a bit pricey), The Long Hall (typical Irish pub), Gingerman (cool interior), Three Tun Tavern (cheapest pub in Blackrock with amazing food, best spot to hang out after uni) and of course the Temple Bar (do not drink here, just go in, check it out but it is extremely expensive and always crowded with tourists). As for clubs, The Globe (always very crowded with younger kids), Copper’s (my personal fave), Dicey’s (there is a very cool open space inside the club). All in all, you can find tons and tons of interesting places where you can spend your evenings, weekends. I recommend you try out as many different things as you can to find your personal favorite spots in the city.

About UCD

UCD is considered to be a highly prestigious university in Ireland. It has two campuses in Dublin, the one I studied at was for the masters students in Blackrock (one of the suburbs of Dublin). The other campus is in Belfield (another area of Dublin), about a 20 mins bus ride from the Blackrock campus. All the language courses and the free gym is there, so I advise you to consider the commute if you are thinking of taking up language classes.

The school itself is very nice, they have designated study areas, groupwork rooms, they even have the facilities to record the lessons and post them on Blackboard (their version of Moodle) so you can replay them while studying. All in all the uni is well equipped and there is a restaurant in one of the buildings so you can grab lunch there. The library is a beautiful old building that used to be a church, so the windows are all colorful and the architecture is amazing! I recommend you going in there even if you don’t have to study just to check it out.
Since I was doing CEMS, I had the opportunity to study CEMS exclusive courses. Therefore, I cannot say a lot about the other classes, but I can give you an overall view. The teaching method is completely different at UCD than at Corvinus. They expect a lot of contribution from you during the class, you must prepare for every class as otherwise you will be lost and there are tons of individual work. I’d even say that your individual work outweighs the classwork! There are a lot of projects and teamwork and of course they have exams too. I only had 3 courses as each was worth 10 ECTS. This shows how much work one course is, so do not underestimate the time you have to spend on a module!

**Final thoughts**

After my semester in Dublin I cannot recommend visiting Ireland more to anyone. I am so glad I had the chance to live in this beautiful country and experience the friendliness of the Irish. I hope my report helped you in deciding whether Dublin is the right place for you. I am convinced that if you end up spending your semester abroad there you will have just as an amazing time there as I did. If you have any questions or need more information feel free to contact me (szabadosmolnarlilla@gmail.com), I’d be happy to help you.

Cheers!

Lilla