The country
Ireland’s most attractive feature for me was the picturesque landscape which didn’t leave me disappointed: the country is truly beautiful. My favourite sights were the Ring of Kerry and the Kylemore Abbey, where the scenery is breath-taking.

Although I expected the accent of the people to be difficult to understand, most people at the university spoke quite clear English and I only had some problems with locals when it came to speaking.

Irish weather is notoriously rainy and gloomy, but honestly I expected a bit more raining (it didn’t rain everyday) and surprisingly the sun was shining a lot too. However it’s still rainier than in Hungary, so rain boots and a raincoat are highly recommended and you should also carry an umbrella with you all the time because it can start raining quite unexpectedly, unfortunately the wind can be really strong so a raincoat is more useful sometimes.

The venue, transport and shopping
Although it’s called the University of Limerick, it is actually situated outside of Limerick, in a smaller town called Castletroy, but you can get to the city in 20-30 minutes by bus. As it’s
quite small, you can go almost everywhere on foot which is positive because the local transport system, i.e. the buses, is not really good. There are two companies operating buses, but they are usually late and not too frequent. One journey costs 2 or 2.30 € (depending in the company), if you’re planning to use them frequently, you should get something called a ‘leap card’ at the university, which you can stock up so you don’t have to pay every time (I’m not too familiar with this as I haven’t used it). You can also purchase a bike because there are bike trails almost everywhere and you can be way faster, however, on the negative side you can’t use it in heavy rain (or when there’s strong wind).

There are several grocery stores in Castletroy, the cheapest ones are Aldi and Lidl, but the selection is the widest at Supevalu which may be a bit more expensive, but it’s worth checking out at least once (the bakery and cakes are excellent). At the university there’s a Spar, if you need something immediately.

**Accommodation**
That’s what I had the most difficulties with while planning my semester. At the university there are several student villages, which are way better than the Hungarian dormitories. You can have your own room everywhere and they are also at the same place as the education buildings, on the other hand they are not cheap: 2000-3000€ for a semester, depending on which one you choose. Most of the students live in one of these therefore the social life is the liveliest there. Unfortunately, if you want to secure a place, you have to apply in the Spring (in March or April for the Autumn Semester), so there are not really places left at the end of May or in June. Initially I wanted to stay there, but the nomination process took so long that I missed it. There are other off-campus student villages which are not operated by the university (you can find these on the university website). For me only private accommodation was left as an option: there are offers on the university website and you should also check out daft.ie. It’s important that you have to be extremely cautious because there are frauds so you have to make sure that the offer is valid before you transfer any money (as you have to pay deposit mostly). I lived about 30 minutes away from the campus (on foot) which may be not too far but I could feel that I’m not that involved in the ‘student life’ that much.
The university and education

My perception was that the university aspires to take after American universities (or at least as I imagine them) in a way that there’s a separate campus outside of the town where all the buildings are.

Most fields of study are presented from medical studies through business to human sciences, therefore there are many buildings with some of them on the other side of River Shannon so it takes longer to get from one place to another. Although there’s a building for business studies, classes are randomly spread across the campus.

You can register for 5 modules (courses) in a semester, 6 ECTS each. Mostly there’s a lecture and a tutorial for each of the modules. One period takes 1 hour (50 minutes+10 minutes break). Usually a tutorial is one period and a lecture is two. There are no separate courses for Erasmus students so you’ll be in the same classes as locals, however I took a module called ‘Irish Music’ which I would recommend to everyone because it’s about Irish culture.

I was mostly satisfied with the level of education: it was noticeably more practical and the teachers were highly-qualified and fair.

A semester consists of 12 weeks, then there’s a ‘reading week’ to prepare for the exams which are then on for 2 weeks. You can only have a repeat exam is August so failing is not really an option, but you shouldn’t worry as they’re not too hard to pass (in my experience).

Additionally, there’s a Welcome Week before the start of the semester

Dining

At the university there are numerous places you can eat: there’s a restaurant or a café in almost every building, where the prices of the meals range from 5 to 8 €. There are also more dining places across Castletroy: for example, several pizzerias and a McDonalds too.
Social Life and Going out

You can meet fellow Erasmus students during the Welcome Week but it is also advisory to join the International Society which organizes several activities through the semester: there are trips during the weekends and there’s a TGIF party every Friday night at a club on campus. There are also many more Clubs and Societies which you can get to know and join in the first weeks. I believe that almost everybody can find something (activities, communities) they are interested in.

Obviously, Ireland is not short of pubs, it’s a ’must’ to try out at least a couple. There’s also a cinema in Castletroy and concerts regularly take place in the University Concert Hall.

The Sports Arena on campus is available if you buy a membership: you can take part in classes or use the gym.