

Preparation:

Apart from the Erasmus application no other paperwork is needed to enroll at the university. The Erasmus brochure we were given at the University of Bremen had all the step by step information we needed for before we left and also informed us about all the steps we needed to take afterwards. Not exceeding the deadlines was very easy on both sides. The international office in Bremen answered all of my questions and the international office in Coleraine was quick with scanning and emailing back the documents I needed to upload on mobility online.

Before the semester begins the courses are made available online on the University website so students can choose before they get there. As a Bachelor of Arts student you can pick courses from all the Arts faculties. These include English, English as a second language, Chinese, cultural studies, film, French, German, history, Irish cultural studies, language studies, media and Spanish. However, the foreign languages offered are just language courses which are interesting but would not help someone with credits if they are studying a second language at Bremen University.

Link: <https://webservices.ulster.ac.uk/modules/index/index>

At least a month before the semester begins the international office sent an email out explaining that a shuttle from Belfast to Coleraine University will be provided. The international office team picks up the students at the airport and brings them to the University. That is because a lot of students book accommodation there. These are rooms that are shared between two or three people and are two minutes away from the main University building. Students who have not booked a room with the university will have to get a bus/taxi to wherever they are staying.

Formalities:

To create a bank account one just has to go to the bank that is in the university's main building. The account is created within ten minutes and the card is sent to you within a week. Keep in mind that for the first week one should either have already taken out a larger amount of cash or use their German bank card to cover expenses. It is important

to go to your home bank before leaving for Northern Ireland. They might offer some kind of deal for you in order to not pay fees when withdrawing money abroad.

As far as I know of there is no possibility for Erasmus students to get any more financial help than the grant given by Erasmus. However, it might be worth asking the international office.

General information about the partner university:

The University of Ulster is divided in four campuses. Two of them are in Belfast one of them is in Londonderry/Derry and our campus is in Coleraine. The campus is small but has everything that a student needs (library, International office, café, Mensa supermarket, gym, theatre, bank and even a hairdresser). All these things are located in the main building so there is no way one can get confused or lost. The campus is a twenty minute walk away from the Coleraine town center but of course there are busses available. There is a bus stop right outside the University's main building and one just outside campus. The University also has its own train stop which makes it particularly easy to commute to Belfast. While Coleraine is small it is charming and the neighboring villages are great as well. Belfast is loud as any big city should be and offers a lot of interesting things. Dublin is 3.5 hours away and trips to Scotland, Wales or other places within the UK are not too expensive.

Orientation lasts two weeks and is full with activities from day one. Upon arrival there is a welcoming brunch by the International office team and their volunteer students ("people with the green shirts") which is a great opportunity for all the international students to meet each other. After that an overview of the Orientation week is given and various University staff members speak about life in Ulster and the academic perspectives in Coleraine. On the same day library cards are created as well and a tour of the campus is given by the volunteers. Later in the afternoon a shuttle takes the students to Coleraine for their first grocery shopping experience.

The first week goes on with meeting the STEW (students together experiencing the world= International student society) online enrolment (photo required) and the issuing of a University ID (no photo required, it will be taken on the spot). During orientation week a culture night in Londonderry/Derry takes place and a trip to the

Giant's Causeway and the Carrick-a-rede bridge. The latest one can pay for these is the first week of orientation. It is not expensive and it is definitely worth it to be a part of that experience.

The activities taking place during the second week of orientation are mostly directed towards students who are staying at the University. However a general venue that should not be missed is the Translink information meeting. A person from the local transport agency will come over and talk about how to efficiently use the application and the transportation itself. They will also issue discount cards for those who are under 23 years of age (photo taken on sight). If a student is older a discount card does not exist for busses but it does for trains. The last but certainly important meeting is the one with the Medical Centre personnel. Students have to fill in a form in order to receive a card that will allow them to go to the Medical Centre free of charge. General questions about vaccinations will be asked so having knowledge of your medical history will be helpful.

Important information:

Although the pool of courses one can choose from is available online months in advance there might be some slight changes when students are given the course catalogue but in my case that was only one course being different. Registering takes about five minutes and dropping out of or changing a course is possible in the first two weeks of the semester and it is quite easy to do. The international office helps out with that as well.

The Wi-Fi server is the same one we use in Bremen (eduroam); as long as a student has already registered for that it will also work in Northern Ireland (Ireland as well) on every campus.

Accommodation:

As mentioned before the university offers rooms for students at the price of 90 pounds per week; internet, heating and electricity included. The rooms are either at buildings that are directly on the university campus or located at the neighboring village called Portstewart which is 3km away from the campus. Private accommodation can also be found and can at times be cheaper. A lot of students prefer Portstewart or Portrush to

Coleraine because of the location. A bus ride to campus is worth it when one wakes up with a view of the sea and the sound of the waves.

Back in Bremen:

After getting back one should take the Second Language Test and then wait until the University of Ulster sends the transcript of records over. Once that has arrived it should be scanned and uploaded on mobility online. Students then get a link to the EU-survey which only takes five minutes to complete. This needs to be uploaded on mobility online as well. For the recognition of grades and credit points students have to print out the recognition form, fill it in and go with the transcript of records to the faculty's staff member responsible for the recognition of grades gotten while abroad. Once the form is signed it should be handed in to the ZPA in order for the grades to show up on Pabo.

Conclusion:

Northern Ireland is beautiful and definitely worth exploring. A lot of sightseeing to be done and a whole new/different culture to explore. The courses offered are in my opinion great and the professors are amazing at their subjects. N.Irish students and people in general will welcome you with open arms and show you a good time. It is definitely a good place to spend your semester abroad if you do not mind the occasional quiet day and not living in a big city.