



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Studying Abroad 2026/27

Pre-departure information

August 2026

Mary Lyons

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& Celtic Studies

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What our 2025/26 students say ...

“Erasmus was one of the most eyeopening, fun, and impactful experiences of my life. The inevitable fear or apprehension that you will probably experience at the beginning/ before you leave is inexplicably worth it for what is about to come.” (Rea, Granada)

“This was an unforgettable experience that allowed me to immerse myself ~~learn~~ in a completely different culture and environment. It became a real testament to my own abilities taking such a bold opportunity and succeeding in it.” (Cal, Hong Kong)

“I learned a lot, was exposed to many cultures and new experiences and gained a lot of perspective and independence.” (Mia, Oviedo)

“I have made so many friends and experienced so many things I never would have been able to back in Ireland.” (Daniel, Uppsala)



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What our 2025/26 students say

“You make a new life, you find out more about yourself in a different environment and you gain a different perspective on the world.” (Matthew, Salamanca)

“The exchange was an invaluable experience both academically and personally. It gave me the opportunity to meet people from different cultures, work on my personal development, and experience life in the US.”
(Colm, Arizona)

“I have had the best 4 months here and made so many friends. I also feel like it has really changed me as a person. I feel like I am much more confident and feel a lot better about doing things by myself.” (Ava, Richmond University, USA)

“In the moment, you don’t realise it as much, but Erasmus really changes you as a person and helps you to develop more skills, whether that is communication or problem solving, it feels as though you mature a lot within that year (or even in a semester).” (Wiktorja, Tartu)



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College of Arts
homepage



“International
Students”



“Outgoing Students”

<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/colleges-and-schools/arts-social-sciences-and-celtic-studies/international-students/outgoingstudents/studyabroad/>

College of Arts study abroad web pages

Partner uni fact
sheets here



A range of
useful
documents here

Study Abroad

Overview

Current Students

Schools and Subject Areas

Undergraduate Programmes

Taught Postgraduate Programmes

PhD and Research Degrees

International Students

Collaborate with Us

Research

Arts in Action

College Office Staff

Strategy 2021-2025

Centre for Creative Technologies

On these pages you can learn more about the many study abroad opportunities for students of the College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies.



DESTINATIONS FOR STUDY ABROAD



WHO CAN STUDY ABROAD?



OPTIONS FOR NON-LANGUAGE STUDENTS



BA GLOBAL EXPERIENCE



NEWS & RESOURCES



TESTIMONIALS



Outline

Preparation checklist

Practicalities – money, paperwork

Accommodation (and scams)

Culture shock

Getting the most from mobility

Personal safety

What to do when problems arise

Mobility Assessment / Student Declaration



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PREPARATION: Checklist

- ☐ Passport
- ☐ **EHIC** and Travel Insurance (register on AIG app!)
- ☐ Online banking
- ☐ Erasmus paperwork (if applicable)
- ☐ **Register at University of Galway** (opens 19 August; closes 30 Sept)
- ☐ Register with DFA
- ☐ ISIC and/or ESN card
- ☐ Unlock phone?
- ☐ Academic requirements & contacts





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Health Insurance and Travel Insurance

- **HEALTH INSURANCE:** EHIC provides basic **health cover** for EU citizens within EU (www.ehic.ie) – apply online
- **TRAVEL INSURANCE:** University of Galway now has an **Accident and Travel Insurance Policy** in place for all outbound students resident in Ireland
 - You must download the AIG app and register.
 - Information was emailed to you by Global Galway; make sure to read it, and the full Lifeline Plus policy wording. Be aware of what is not included.
- Some universities, especially in North America, will require students to also take out a private health insurance policy.



ATTENTION ERASMUS STUDENTS!

Please be sure to read all the information provided and attend to your paperwork!

www.universityofgalway.ie/erasmus-programme/outgoingstudents/latestnews/#tab2

www.universityofgalway.ie/erasmus-programme/outgoingstudents/erasmustraineeships

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Latest News

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Incoming Visiting Students
Outbound University of

Quick Links

Outgoing Erasmus 2026/27

Documentation and Information Resources

HANDBOOK FOR OUTGOING ERASMUS STUDY VISITS:

[Handbook for Outgoing Erasmus Study Visits](#) - Please make sure to read this handbook very carefully.

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION SESSIONS:

[Outgoing Erasmus+ Pre-Departure Information Session April](#)

Registering at University of Galway

You must be registered as a student here at University of Galway for the year in which you are going abroad.

You will be able to register online in late August, and you should **follow the instructions**, "Returning to my Next Year"





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The learning agreement

Who is the “responsible person” at the University of Galway?

That’s the person who must review and approve your course choices.

➤ **Your academic coordinator .**

The “contact person” can be Mary Lyons, but the “responsible person” must be your academic coordinator

(exceptions: Linköping, Lund, UC Maastricht, Madrid, Malta, Radboud, Utrecht, Uppsala – “responsible person” is Mary Lyons; also for Joint Hons students going to Groningen, LMU Munich, UPV/Basque Country, Comenius/Bratislava)

You’ll find more information about the learning agreement here:

<https://tinyurl.com/CASSCS-Outbound-Resources> and here:

www.nuigalway.ie/erasmus-programme/outgoingstudents/latestnews/#tab2





Remember:

no learning agreement, no Erasmus grant!

If you are an Erasmus student, your Erasmus grant cannot be paid unless your learning agreement has been signed by all three parties: you, your University of Galway “responsible person” and your host university responsible person.

For the OLA, remember also:

Select the correct year, 2026/27.

Table B: just write “Mobility Window” and either 60 or 30 ECTS.

Don’t create more than one OLA; amendments are possible.

Host uni not using the OLA? Just use the Word version.





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TRAVEL

The Dept of Foreign Affairs (DFA) provides guidance by country - read the advice on safety/security, local laws, health, etc.

<https://www.ireland.ie/en/dfa/overseastravel/>

Irish citizens should register with the DFA.

Note the contact details of the Irish Embassy or Consulate in your host country (or your own embassy if you're not an Irish citizen).



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Money: What our students say

“The main thing I would say is to save more money than you think you’ll need. I saved extra money during the Summer. However, that ran out faster than I thought it would.”

“Be aware of the cost of a year living abroad, I would definitely tell people coming on Erasmus not to depend solely on the Erasmus grant. It is an expensive year, especially if you want to travel around and fully immerse yourself in the culture and activities.”

“The US is generally expensive and the indicated expenses that you need to prove for your Visa is a fairly accurate reflection of how much you will end up spending.”

“I recommend saving up a decent amount of money before you go. Although there are many discounts available and cheap alternatives for things, I am glad I was able to afford all the travels I did and participate in all the events too without worrying too much about my expenses.”

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Accommodation

- Standards may vary!
- Research areas/prices in advance.
- Bring enough money to pay a deposit if renting in private sector.
- Read your rental contract carefully.
- Good idea to record and report any existing damage or anything missing at the time of moving in.
- Best not to enter into subletting arrangements.
- Carefully consider with whom you want to share.
- **BEWARE OF SCAMS!!!**





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Choosing your roommates: advice from a student

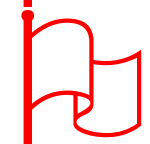
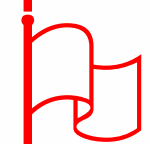
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“While having Irish roommates is a very comforting idea, I found that it really hindered me from getting the most out of the Erasmus experience. I felt obliged to spend time with my roommates because we came together, but this in turn stopped me from meeting new people. It took me a long time to change this mentality, but once I did my experience got so much better! Erasmus is such a unique chance to meet people from all over the world and become part of the local community, and it can be so easy to get trapped in a bubble of familiarity and Irishness. This also gives you less opportunity to practice speaking your target language, which is the whole point of the year/semester. Chances are you won’t get the chance to live your day-to-day life in that country again, in the near future at least, so make the most of it while you are here!”

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Accommodation Scams: some red flags!

-  Rent below the going rate
-  Bad spelling/grammar in the ad.
-  Contact is made only via social media, Whatsapp, etc
-  A story about renting for a relative / not in the country / can't be there to meet you ...
-  Pushy approach
-  Demands money up front
-  Additional charges appear – legal fees, cleaning, etc
-  Western Union money transfer, MoneyGram, etc – avoid!



Accommodation Scams: Tips and hints

- Don't be pressurised.
- Do some research online; try to verify the person's identity (and before signing/paying, ask for a copy of their ID)
- Letting agency: check if the website is genuine.
- Google the address of the property – check Maps and Street View
- Check if the “property” has been advertised in multiple cities.
- Look for inconsistencies.
- Trust your gut feeling.
- Avoid paying till you've seen the property. At least request a live video showing.
- If viewing in person: cross-check with short-term rental sites. (And do keys fit?)
- Do not pay cash! Avoid Western Union, etc. Use traceable payment methods.
- Get a proper rental contract.



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When to arrive?

“I wish I arrived sooner. Especially if you are going in semester 1, get there ASAP. Enjoy the weather, get to know the city, socialise and get settled in. I couldn't arrive until a few days before classes started and I really regretted it. Most of my other peers arrived earlier and had such a great time.”

Aisling, Valencia

“There are a lot of things to do in the beginning and it can be overwhelming if you do not have the time for all of this. You also want leisure time to explore this new city that you will be living in. I recommend arriving one week before the semester begins.”

Daisy, Leipzig

“My advice would be to arrive at least a week before class starts so you have some time to adjust and explore the city.”

Shauna, Poitiers

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Seriously consider a pre-semester language course

I would strongly encourage you to sign up for this course even though it's expensive because it really gives you some knowledge on the German language as well as a good introduction to things like registering at the city hall, setting up a bank account and many other practical aspects of living in Munich. Above all, you'll meet your friends there and, in my experience, the friends that I made there became the friends that I spent most of my time with. Of course, you might meet other people in class or at events, but I think that sharing that whole month together before lectures start creates a different kind of bond. The language course is also an amazing opportunity to meet people from different nationalities and experience a level of cultural exchange that is much harder to find in other contexts.

Beatrice, Munich

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Before you head off ...



?

Have you read thoroughly all the information and instructions that were sent to you by your host university or your student residence?





Some tips for the early days

- Be sure to take part in the host university's Orientation Programme.
- Sign up for a Buddy Programme if this is offered.
- Take part in ESN (Erasmus Student Network) events.
- Avail of a language course if possible.
(if there's a fee, keep receipts and evidence of participation!)
- Expect a little chaos for the first few weeks. 😊
- Be prepared for Culture Shock.
- Be prepared for shops being closed on Sundays.
- Don't get caught on public transport without a valid ticket!



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It may seem scary at first ...

At first, Erasmus is super overwhelming and I felt really stressed and scared when I first arrived, but after a while that feeling goes away once you make friends and settle into your classes. I think oftentimes you don't even realise how big of a change it is until you get there, so give yourself some patience and grace to get used to it. The first few weeks I even considered going home, but I'm so glad that I powered through those feelings because now I see Tartu as almost a second home where I have made so many memories and met so many people from different walks of life. The time flies incredibly fast, before you know it, you will be going home so try to make the absolute most of the time. At first, I thought a year abroad was going to drag on, but the reality is the complete opposite. If I could change anything, I would definitely have tried harder to socialise during my first semester and to go to more events.

Wiktorja, Tartu

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Making connections ...

One thing I wish I knew beforehand was how easy it is to meet people and make friends. During orientation, they make it so easy for you and it's not as scary as you think it will be. People are eager to make friends and do new things, and you'll hear it a lot, but everyone really is in the same boat with the same fear and emotions, so the best thing to do is just reach out and try, and nine times out of ten, people are feeling the same way

Mia, Utrecht

I would try and say yes to every opportunity you get to go out and meet people and make an effort to reach out to people you meet the start. The start of Erasmus is like first year college again, it's the time when it's normal to talk to strangers and ask people to hang out, so really try your hardest in the first 1 or 2 weeks because that's how you will make friends for the year.

Sadhbh, Maastricht

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Thoughts on homesickness

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If you get FOMO or homesick, it's grand, it's normal and it does always pass. Part of the experience studying abroad is loving the new place you are in and another part is realising what you love about your home. (Áine, Ghent)

I would recommend giving yourself a few days to settle in before classes start in September. It can be quite daunting at the beginning, and you will feel homesick in ways you didn't even expect, so give yourself time and space to settle in and take things slow so you can really take it all in. (Sive, Avignon)

It is normal to still get homesick on a random day even six months in, but everyone is in the same boat so it is important to share that with your friends there. It is also normal to feel like you have made the wrong decision in the first week or two, it is a big step and there is a lot of emotions involved. (Katie, Budapest)

I thought the hardest bit would be coming over the first time, but in the end the most difficult thing has been having to leave. (Jack, Leiden)

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Visiting home during the semester?

Consider:

- Difficulty settling back in afterwards, interrupting the momentum
- Lost time = lost opportunities to travel, explore or take part in local activities
- Unnecessary air travel and your carbon footprint





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Spread your wings

Definitely go to ESN events to meet other internationals, it can be scary, but everyone is there to make friends, so no one is judging you! It's easy to stick with the Irish over there but I'd recommend trying to branch out, I've learnt so much about the world through all the international friends I've made.

Naturally, you'll have times where you're overwhelmed and experience a bit of culture shock but that's normal and the good times have been far more frequent for me than the bad.

Anna, Ghent

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LANGUAGE

COMMUNICATION
STYLES

CULTURE SHOCK

CUSTOMS

CLIMATE

MEALTIMES

FOOD

POLITICS / RELIGION



Features of Culture Shock

- Disorientation due to new environment
- Psychological or physical effects:
alienation / boredom / withdrawal / isolation / irritation / homesickness/ aches
- Frustration, uncertainty, distress
- Adjustment
- Adaptation
- Reverse Culture Shock



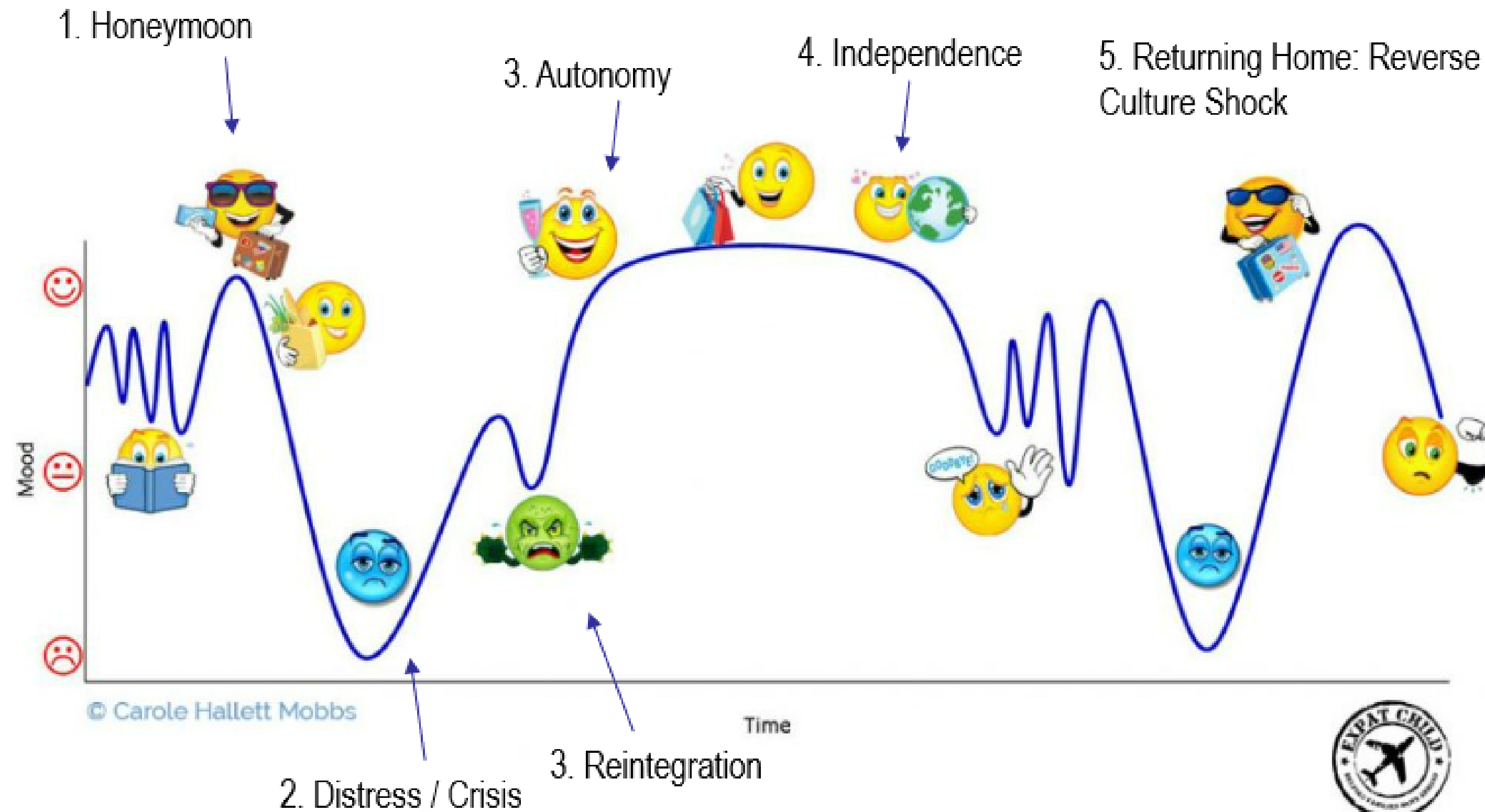


TYPICAL DIFFERENCES

- Climate
- Language
- Communication styles
- Food and mealtimes
- Mindset (and politics, religion ...)
- Customs and rituals
- Behaviour and societal norms
- Formality
- Approaches to the law



STAGES OF CULTURE SHOCK



Coping with Culture Shock

- Be aware that this is normal and that adjustment takes time.
- Be **patient** with yourself.
- See it as a **learning experience**.
- Good **self-care** and routine
- Reminders of home; comforting, familiar objects
- Find ways to **integrate** : be creative in this!
- Significant problem? Ask for help.
- Resources for all students incl. external supports & self-help: <https://sway.office.com/N7VYxq6kaGfcE9vA?ref=Link>



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Gaining resilience

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I have become much more resilient than I would have been at home and that is something that you cannot do in comfort. I love how Erasmus helped me to become more independent and more brave. I have done things that I never thought I could do and they only happened because I was brave. For anyone feeling scared/apprehensive or disliking having to go on Erasmus, you will come out the other side regardless of what happens and all experience is experience. Be present and just do what you need to do and do your best!!

Things that have helped me are calling home, going for daily walks, saying yes to every event/trip etc, being outside, not being on my phone too much, trying out new foods/drinks and having a good routine. Also focus on your Erasmus and not other people's Erasmus's, everyone is different.

Chloe, Karlsruhe

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Tips

- Do your research before you go so you have an idea of what to expect.
- Remember that you are rarely alone in what you are experiencing.
- Try to approach things with openness, curiosity and humour.
- Respect for host country and its culture





General Survival Tips and getting the most out of the experience



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Do PREPARE, but don't STRESS

Everything tends to work out eventually, even when things feel stressful at the beginning. Before arriving, I worried a lot about finding accommodation, navigating a new university system, studying in Spanish and adapting to life in a different country. In reality, these challenges were all manageable, and support was available whenever I needed it.

I would tell future students not to panic if everything is not perfectly organised before departure. Stay flexible, be proactive, ask questions when you need help, and trust that you will adapt much more quickly than you expect. The first few weeks can feel overwhelming, but they are also some of the most exciting and rewarding parts of the Erasmus experience.

Sofiia, Málaga

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Don't over-prepare! 🤗

Part of what really made my experience was not knowing a whole lot about the place beforehand and discovering the city without any ideas or plans beforehand. Don't over-research it, let yourself enjoy and play it by ear!

Tommaso, Ghent



Getting the most out of it

- Make the most of the time abroad, because it will go by very quickly!
- **Assimilate** with native and other international students
e.g. when arranging accommodation, or pursuing interests/hobbies.
- **Travel** when you can, but get to know your host city too.
- Be **open-minded** !
- Be aware of and **respect cultural differences** ...
- **Embrace the differences!**
- Journal, blog, photographic record?
- Be diligent and consistent about your **academic work** .





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Academic aspects

The teaching methods were quite different, in every lecture they would just talk. There were no slides to follow in class, no recordings, and they also didn't post notes on Moodle (Canvas). Some lecturers were willing to help me out when I introduced myself to them at the beginning of each semester. I made friends with French classmates who helped me by sharing notes or translating certain things that I couldn't understand.

Matthew, Besançon

Usually Erasmus is spoken about as a fun experience, especially by students, but I think it is important to note that you will be doing a lot more work than you expect.

Aisling, Zaragoza

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Practising your language skills

It can be hard to mix with native students at first because you will probably still be unsure of yourself speaking Spanish and most of them won't speak enough English for you to actually talk to them. But you really have to force yourself to keep trying to talk or you just won't ever understand anything. (Adam, Oviedo)

I wish I was more prepared for the drastic shock that the French you learn in school/uni is not a the French they actually speak, so it was a shock at first but you acclimatise. Maybe immerse yourself in French media as preparation!! (Kiefer, Angers)

It is a lot easier to make local friends if you speak German of course. If you speak German to anyone, they usually will speak back which is quite encouraging. If you speak in German remember to use the polite Sie, especially when talking to older people or lecturers as they will find it disrespectful if you refer to them as du. (Daisy, Leipzig)

Don't be afraid to talk to people, to try your Spanish, because the best way to learn is through speaking and making mistakes, it's the only way to progress. (Caoimhe, Granada)

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If you do not complete your studies abroad ...

- Erasmus students: If you do not complete 60 days at your host university, you must return any Erasmus grant money you received.
- Erasmus students: if you return home without completing agreed mobility period (but having completed the minimum of 60 days), you can be asked to return a proportion of the Erasmus grant.
- Erasmus students: You may have to repay your Erasmus grant if you fail to complete the *agreed study programme* abroad (as per learning agreement)
- All Joint Honours students: Returning home without completing “International” year *also* has implications for your subsequent studies, your final degree and your fees at University of Galway. Upon return to college the following year, you will have to enrol in 3BA1 (3-year programme) and will be liable for fees of approx. €2,140 (if EU rate) as well as forfeiting your SUSI grant, if applicable.
- (Leave of absence application deadlines: 30 Oct. [full year] and 30 Jan. [Sem. 2])



Avoiding problems during your time abroad

- Take precautions to prevent unpleasant experiences.
- Healthy awareness of risk – don't take chances.
- **Alcohol** ... if you drink, please drink responsibly.
- Please read the yellow Safety Advice Sheet.
- University of Galway **Code of Conduct** applies to our students while abroad for studies or traineeships.





CONDUCT

- You are an **ambassador** for your country & University.
- Remember that you are bound by the regulations and the **Code of Conduct** of both the host university and of University of Galway.
- <http://www.universityofgalway.ie/codeofconduct/>
- It is expected that you show respect for the host country, its people and its customs.





PERSONAL SAFETY

- Arriving with a large amount of luggage, be extremely vigilant at railway or bus stations!!!
- Don't look conspicuous or carry valuables / large amounts of cash. Avoid carrying your passport if it's not necessary.
- Lock your door when going out, even briefly (and even in a residence!)
- Exercise caution generally when out and about, especially at night. Look out for each other!
- Alcohol ... if you drink, please drink responsibly.
- Read the yellow Safety Advice sheet.
- **Don't take risks. Heed your gut feeling.**





YOUR SAFETY

- It is not advisable to be out alone at night.
- NEVER, EVER go off somewhere at night on your own without telling someone where you are going. This applies regardless of whether you are male or female.
- Identify and avoid districts known to be unsafe.
- After dark, avoid deserted areas, public parks* and badly lit streets and alleyways. (*some public parks might be unsafe even in the daytime!)
- Don't walk home alone late at night: travel in groups or take a taxi.
- Avoid political rallies and demonstrations.





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Ladies ... some words of caution

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“I was also made aware by many local students, particularly girls, that my host city was less on the safe side and to always be cautious. I found that it helped to always have company walking home late at night or in the dark evenings, and to also unfortunately be more wary about your choice of clothing (especially when going out). To avoid feeling unsafe/ uncomfortable, I advise to avoid miniskirts, dresses, heels, etc for nightlife as they tended to attract more unwanted attention. From my observations, and from what local students advised me, the dress code for nightlife is more casual!

“Of course, you are allowed to wear whatever you please but to avoid any unsafe situations, unwanted attention, etc, I recommend blending in with the crowd and wear something more casual. As annoying as it may be to have to dress casually to prevent inappropriate behaviour from men, it is better to be safe than sorry and to be able to fully enjoy yourself. I found this more possible when I was underdressed.”

from a 20-year-old girl in Belgium “who experienced a lot of nightlife while abroad”

“I would recommend if it is possible for everyone to walk each other home and make sure everyone was safe. The girls in particular found themselves approached by unwanted attention, especially on nights out when in ‘clubbing outfits’ which are not as commonly worn by locals.”
(student in Avignon)

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SAFETY AND WELFARE

- Good idea to note local emergency numbers just in case ...
- Register with a doctor in the host town or city.
- If you have a medical condition, take translated copies of any documentation and ensure you will be able to get your medication.





If an INCIDENT should occur where you are ...

- Contact your family without delay to let them know you are ok.
- Follow instructions issued by the authorities.
- Avoid crowded areas if possible.
- Report any suspicious packages or persons to the police.
- Your host university or organisation should issue advice. Contact them with any concerns.



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Keep in touch!

We like to hear from you and know how you are getting on!

If **problems** arise, do not hesitate to contact either:

Mary Lyons, your CASSCS Mobility Officer

(mary.lyons@universityofgalway.ie), *or*

your University of Galway coordinator, *or*

Global Galway Erasmus staff

or, if in distress,

University of Galway Counselling Service

****Contact your family on a regular basis!****

****Check your @universityofgalway.ie e-mail regularly!****





E-mail communication

Impressions matter, and courtesy is always appreciated: an email is not a text message ...

Use a greeting, and use paragraphs to set out your message clearly.

Communicating with University of Galway

- Use a meaningful subject line (“Re:”)
- Tell us what programme you’re on and where you are
- Quote your student number
- Please don’t send the same message individually to several people: send one e-mail to all, so everyone can see who has been copied.
- Think about the title you give to attachments





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Academics: one student's experience

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Classes are far more interactive than they are back home. Virtually all students get super involved in discussion, which initially was my worst nightmare; however, these class discussions are truly judgement free, and are fantastically educational if you engage with them.

Also, the exams aren't 'hard', just different; It is less a question of memory as it is back home, rather your understanding. Try and change the way you approach studying.

Thomas, Ghent



If mental health issues arise during your time abroad, take action

- You can e-mail counselling@universityofgalway.ie
- Assessments and counselling sessions can be offered via MS Teams or Zoom.

OR

Consider approaching the counselling service at your host university.





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Resilience

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Erasmus can be tough sometimes, please do not let anyone make you feel like it is not. Sometimes it seems as though everyone is having a great time and you are the only one who doesn't feel as though it is what you thought it would be. You are not alone in this, in fact, most of my friends here and from Galway went through a tough time at least once on Erasmus. That does not negate from the fact that it is a brilliant opportunity to learn about other people, places, and yourself. I now know that even when things are scary to try, or to do on your own, sometimes putting yourself out of your comfort zone leads to the best things imaginable. The only thing I would change would be throwing myself into everything immediately. Try everything you can, because this kind of opportunity doesn't present itself often, and enjoy it (it will speed by). At the same time, don't be afraid to reach out if you are having a tough time. Chances are the people around you will be having some kind of trouble as well! Apart from that all I can say is to enjoy it, the Netherlands is a great country for people who want to be kept busy trying new things!

Aoibhe, Leiden

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Don't expect everything to go well all of the time

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It will likely not be smooth sailing the entire way through, and you will probably face some sort of challenges. You might even question if you made the right decision, at times. This is normal but try not to let these discourage you! Give it a chance, make the most out of it and I promise you will not regret this experience.

(Ava, Richmond)

Yes, there might be times when course material will look a lot, there will be times when the weather is going to be bad and you don't want to do anything. It is part of the journey. But at the end of the day, I met many new, wonderful and absolutely sound people anywhere I went ... it was an experience that I will not forget as long as I live.

(Tamás, Ghent)

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Dealing with Challenges

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Even the difficult moments have been valuable, and I feel I have learned a lot.

Sophie, Ghent

Of course, things won't always go right but that's just part of the experience, so don't overthink it when something doesn't go to plan. Things can always be fixed. I found part of the fun is finding things out as you go by yourself.

Matthew, Ghent

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It will be fine!

I would 100% do an Erasmus again, it was the best year of my life and I will not regret it for a second. This means a lot especially coming from me, as I was originally unsure whether I wanted to do the year abroad or not, and tried my best to get out of it. But Thank God I didn't! It can be terrifying, and overwhelming, but everyone at home and abroad is there to help you with whatever you need, everyone understands what you're going through, and you will never ever be alone no matter what the situation. There is nothing I would change, I tried my best and gave everything a go, welcoming everything with a smile (even if it was not a smiling situation) and looking for the positive in everything, it is all you can do.

Sive, Avignon

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Do your own thing!

One really important thing is do not compare. I was in a snowy and cold Netherlands in the depth of winter studying and on Instagram I was seeing all my friends in New York or Malta with friends and enjoying themselves. It made me feel like I was wasting my erasmus or that I wasn't having 'the' erasmus experience that everyone praises. When things get a bit less fun and you have to study all day, that is a part of the experience and it is your own so don't compare yourself to anyone else and do what is best for you. My best advice is come here with an open mind. Let yourself experience things and you will enjoy yourself. Take the opportunity to explore and live away from home. I have learnt about so many cultures, people and also about myself. You're gonna have the most fun ever and when you feel lonely or like it was a big mistake just remember you're going to be so grateful when it ends with all the things you have learnt and experienced. Don't worry, have fun and take it slow because the time goes fast.

Sophie, Groningen

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Pace yourself

Do not attempt to do too many things at the same time, it will tire you out more quickly than you could imagine but also do not let yourself get lost. Take everything step by step, week by week, it will help. Enjoy the experience. Be out there. Do your comfort things and also try to do some new stuff. Travel around the country, if you can. Enjoy being out here. Good luck!

Tamás, Ghent



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Do it your way!

For the first 2 weeks, I kept feeling like I wasn't doing the Study Abroad experience 'right'. I kept looking at pictures people were posting and feeling like I was somehow 'behind'. It is so important to realise that everyone does things differently around here and, so long as you are enjoying yourself, you cannot do this incorrectly. Also, you should say yes to as many things as you thoroughly want to do – don't feel pressured to do things you genuinely don't want to do just because you feel like you should. But if you feel like there's something you want to do but are nervous about, you should do it!

Ava, Richmond

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of Galway.ie



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Go for it!!!

Just put yourself out there and take it as an opportunity to do new things and find what makes you happy. Don't go into with any strict expectations or pressure for things to go a certain way, take every experience as it comes and enjoy it!

Sarah, Ghent

I would tell people to say YES to everything as I often told myself that this is the only time I will get to experience something like this.

Colm, Arizona

The only thing I'd change is certain things I hadn't done that I wish I had. Take every opportunity you get and put yourself out there, you'll never regret the things you tried even if you didn't like them, but you will regret the ones you didn't.

Tommaso, Ghent



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Final reflections

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I will say one thing for anyone who may be worried about stepping outside of their comfort zone.

Taking each experience in with open arms and framing your perspective of each experience, the good and the bad, as new learning opportunities for personal development and growth and to expand your view of the world around you, really helped me embrace the experience and not fall into moments where I was thinking what have I done or missed home too much.

AnneSophie, Indiana University



Mobility Assessment and Student Declaration

- **The Mobility Assessment** is an online form which you must complete no less than 2 weeks before travel.
- It requires you to consider topics like travel, risks, health issues, safety, etc
- It contains, at the end, 2 questions relating to the **Student Declaration** .
- The **Student Declaration** is about **your responsibilities** regarding performance, good conduct, your health, insurance, safety, risks, etc
- I will send you the Declaration by e-mail: please read it carefully, as you will be asked to indicate your agreement to it in the Mobility Assessment.





One more quote, received last week—worth reading

Erasmus is an experience of highs and lows. Logically, I should say that I would go back and change all those low moments. But then it wouldn't have been a transformative experience. Whether excited or nervous, when you start, you must take each day as it comes. And give yourself grace. I was so hard on myself when things weren't working out how I envisioned. You're living away from home in a foreign country. That isn't easy. Every day you're living there is an exceptional feat. Remind yourself of that. I think people romanticise the Erasmus experience. Social media creates unrealistic expectations of the experience as it 'should' be. But yours might not look like that, mine didn't. It doesn't mean you're doing it wrong. Erasmus looks to be a yearlong holiday, with people living their absolute best lives. All the time. That isn't realistic. Would you put a bad day on social media? No. And there's nothing wrong with that, as long as we remember it's never the full picture. Despite all of this, I can say that if you ride the wave of Erasmus, it may well be the best year of your life. Not because it's picture-perfect, but because it isn't. Don't get me wrong, you'll have incredible memories. But they aren't what define you. Growth happens when you miss home but choose to stay, when you worry about making friends but introduce yourself anyway and when you think about giving up but keep going. Those are the moments that shape you. Embrace the difficult times. One day, you'll realise they changed your life. I know they changed mine.

Damien, Munich



Thanks for your attention!

Any Questions?

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