Ollscoil na Gaillimhe
University of Galway

BA Global Experience: Year Abroad

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Outline

- How it all works
- Destinations
- Student testimonials
- FAQs
- Costs and Funding
- Benefits and Challenges
- Timeline
- Questions?



University of Helsinki Library
Photo: Nicola Bugler

Students not studying a continental language







- Full Third Year Abroad
- Europe (ERASMUS)
- USA, Canada, Hong Kong, S. Korea
- All Subjects through English

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POSSIBLE STUDY DESTINATIONS



The College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies and its disciplines are linked – through the Erasmus Programme - with partner universities in **Europe** that offer courses through English.

There are also some exchange links with universities in the **USA, Canada, Hong Kong and South Korea**.

Not all subjects may be available through English in every university.

Consult Excel sheet showing destinations and subject combinations. ⚠

Some terms we use

Home University: University of Galway

Host University: the university where you study abroad

Exchange agreement: a “contract” between universities to exchange students, usually in a particular subject area

Learning agreement: a “contract” between you and your home/host universities, setting out what courses you will take while abroad.

Academic coordinator: the lecturer at the University of Galway who will provide guidance on course choice and sign your learning agreement, and with whom you are expected to keep in touch before and during your year abroad.

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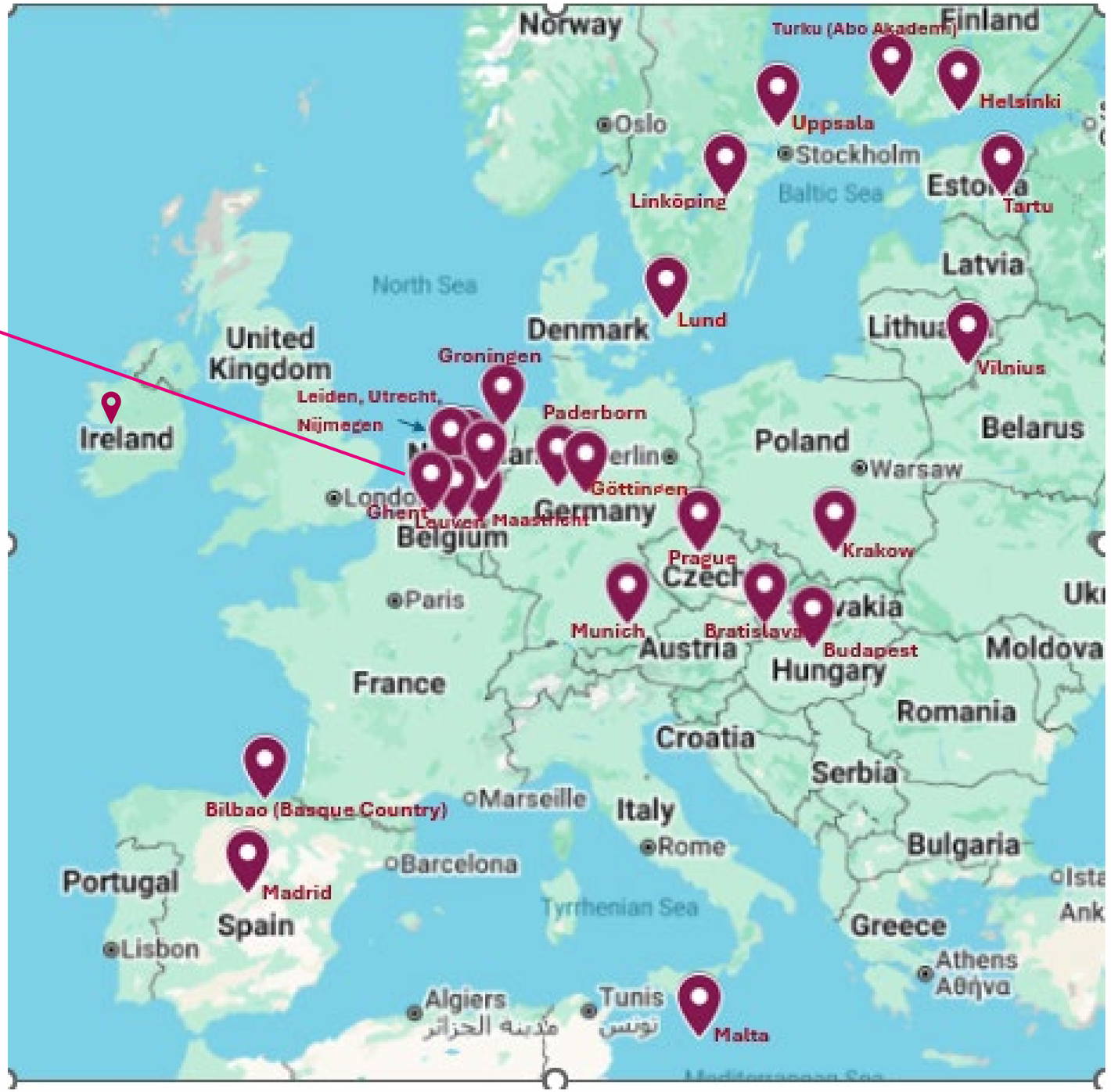
HOW IT WORKS

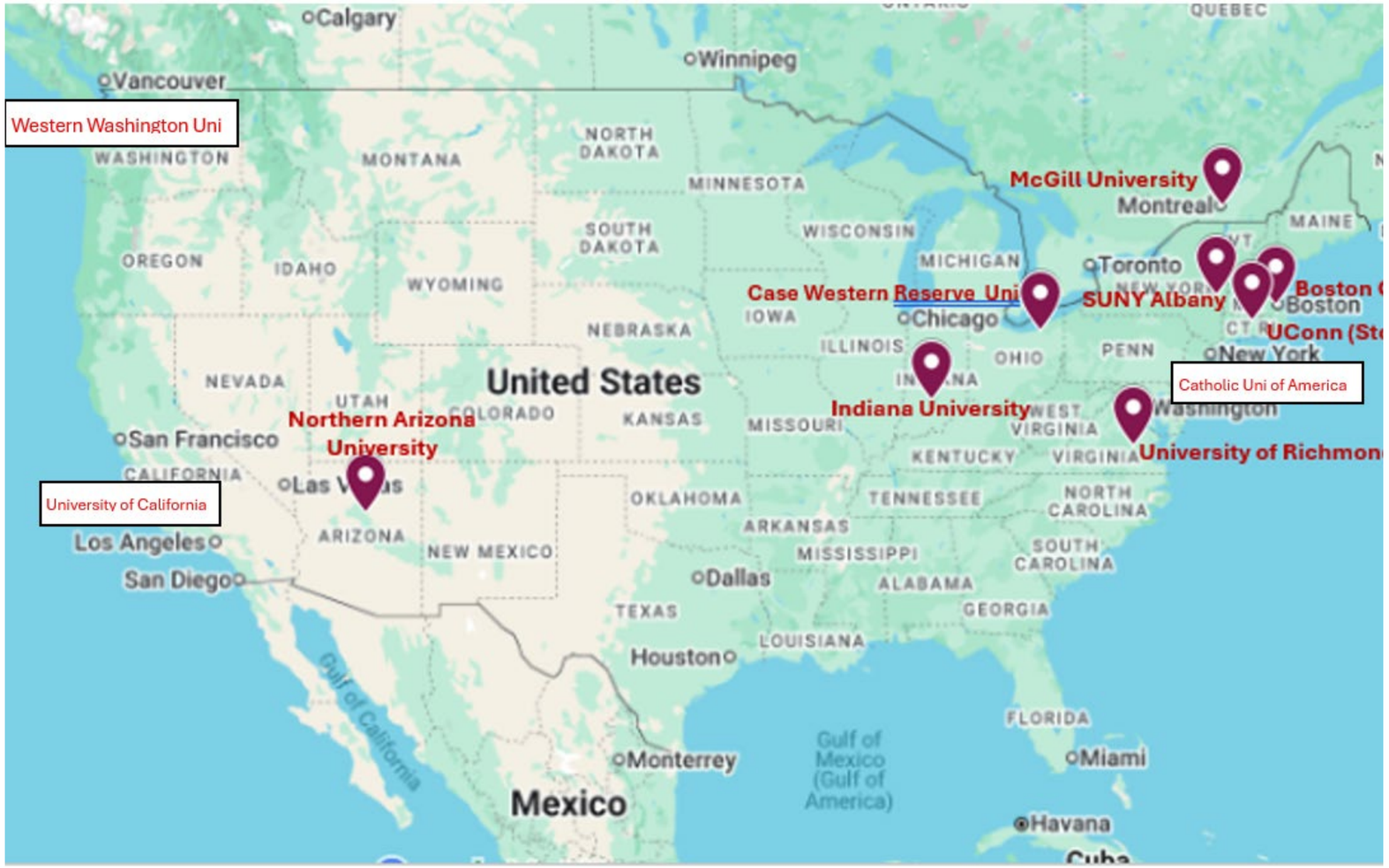
- Period of study is 1 academic year (not a semester, unless you study Gaeilge)
- No tuition fees to Host University – but pay normal registration fee to the University of Galway
- So you remain registered as a University of Galway student while studying abroad.
- The year abroad must be completed successfully: 40 ECTS in total
- Ideally you'll take both of your degree subjects, but you must take a total of 40 ECTS of modules related or complementary to *at least one* of your degree subjects.
- Pass all modules: receive 60 ECTS from University of Galway, i.e. a Pass in the Year Abroad



Study destinations in Europe



Study destinations in North America …

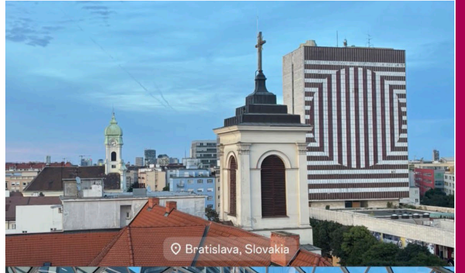


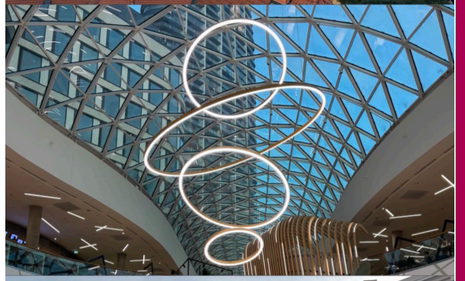
… and in Asia





Jaimee is at Comenius University in Bratislava



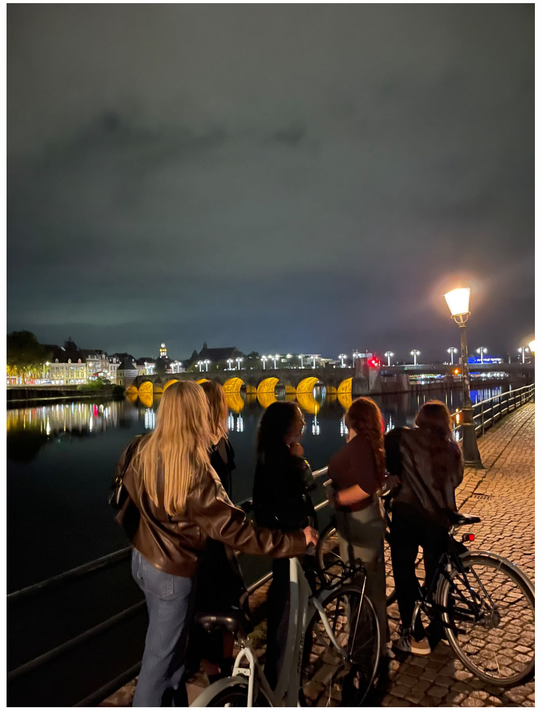






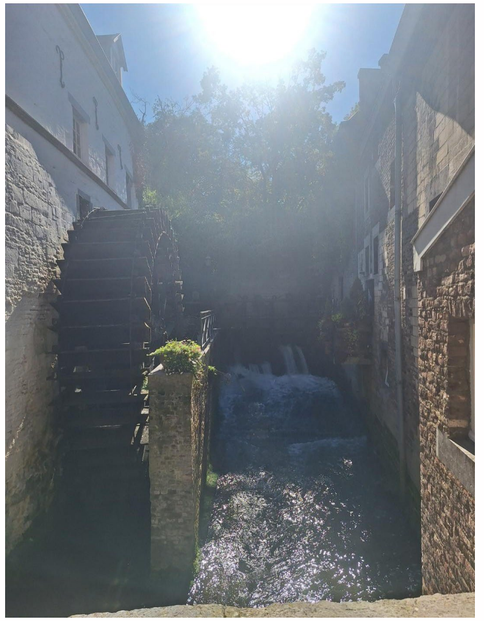
I’m currently studying at the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences at Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. I’ve really enjoyed my experience here so far, both at the university and in the city itself. Bratislava has lots to explore , beautiful architecture and a great social scene. The nightlife is quite different to Ireland, but I’ve really enjoyed it and there’s always something fun going on. Everyone at the university has been so friendly and helpful, making it a really welcoming environment. Another great thing about Bratislava is its location, as travelling to other European countries is really affordable and easy. I’d definitely recommend Bratislava to anyone considering studying abroad. I’ve already made so many new friends and memories that I’ll take home with me!





Sophie is at University College Maastricht

I am glad to say that I am loving studying in Maastricht so far. The city is old and beautiful and the weather so far has been showing it off at its best and I haven't seen too much of the Dutch weather and rain that I have been warned about (but I don't think that will scare anyone from Galway anyway).



I love my classes; they have all been really interesting so far and while Problem-based Learning (PBL) took a while to settle into I do think it is a very interesting way of learning. They are strict on attendance but, especially doing less credits than usual, this isn't much of an issue as I am only in around three days a week. I am living in the UM Guesthouse and while I do think this made it easier to make friends outside of just my classes or faculty, I think that making friends is honestly inevitable because everyone is here to meet people.



In terms of travelling outside of Maastricht, I haven't gone very far yet but I went on a trip to the Hague with friends which was lovely. I joined the UNSA as part of EuroMUN and they have organised a few trips this period and I am meeting my sister in Luxembourg at the end of this month. However, my lack of travel so far is kind of a personal choice because I wanted to take a while to settle in and get to know people before going too far but there are definitely plenty of opportunities to go and see more of the country and surrounding countries while here.



Laura is in Groningen, studying History

"Groningen is the perfect student city! It never feels too overwhelming, but there’s constantly something to do. There are countless cinemas, public parks, sports clubs, and more, yet it still has an atmosphere of closeness unlike some larger cities.”









Róisín is also studying in Groningen

Hi! I'm currently studying Psychology and Global Media at the University of Groningen, in the Netherlands. Groningen is a beautiful city with amazing architecture! It feels more like a big town rather than an overwhelmingly big city. The University here is great, and the standard of education is very high. Groningen has a great atmosphere, everyone is very friendly and the high population of students (32,000) means there is always something going on for students.

The Erasmus Student Network here (ESN) is one of the best in Europe too. They are constantly organising events for the thousands of international students here. Through this Network, you will make friends with people from almost every country in Europe! They host 2 introduction weeks throughout the year with events every day, then have parties, excursions and events throughout the rest of the year.

Being here means that it is easy to go by train to nearby destinations. I have spent weekends in Belgium and Germany so far, and plan to visit more. There is also a big community of Irish people here. I would encourage anyone coming here to join 'Groningen Gaels', the GAA club. (Even if you have never played before!) They have events + trips quite often.





Other things to keep in mind: Dutch lessons are available for all students here, although everyone has great English anyway. There's an agency called 'Recruit a student' which makes it very easy for international students to get jobs here, me and a lot of my friends have gotten employed this way. Cost of living here is very similar to Ireland. And the only way you will travel is by bike!

Overall, I absolutely love it here and would recommend studying in Groningen





Banan is attending Åbo Akademi in Turku, Finland

My study destination is Åbo Akademi in Turku, Finland. I moved in with a friend of mine from my course, and we've been exploring the city together, making new friends and settling into the university life.

The country is very expensive, but it truly is beautiful and I do not regret this choice.
If you plan on choosing Finland, make sure you wear layers, it is absolutely freezing!







Oliwier, currently on Erasmus in Lund (Sweden)





Coming to Lund to study abroad was the best decision for me. With my course, in the first semester here I was able to explore the Skåne region of Sweden and the Island of Zeeland in Denmark. I got to meet people from all around the world, and I got the opportunity to discover new cultures.

If you are looking for a place to study abroad that looks like it's from a fantasy book, then I highly recommend coming to Lund. Life is easy going here and there is plenty of festivals and activities for everyone not just in Lund but also the surrounding areas. A place I would highly recommend for everyone to visit.



Catherine is in Helsinki, Finland





The group picture is an event that the Uni of Helsinki student tutors/mentors organised for us exchange students at a park in the city - a chance for us to meet other exchange students in our faculty.

Hi, my name is Catherine and I am currently a 3rd year Arts student – studying Psychology and Sociology and Politics. I am currently in my 2nd month of Erasmus in Helsinki, Finland. I am truly enjoying my time in Helsinki.

I have never been to a Nordic/Scandinavian country before and when I arrived, I realized how different it is to Western and Central Europe. It was a bit frightening in the beginning, but I am slowly but surely becoming used to the different social norms and culture and slowly preferring it to back home. The education system here is very liberal and the main library, Kaiso-talo, is gorgeous.

The student culture is very ingrained in university life, which makes making friends very easy, even with Finnish peers. Students here get many benefits, through heavy discounts on public transport, housing and meals in student cafeterias (which are called UniCafe) are all priced at €3.10, no matter what type of lunch you get.







Emily, currently on Erasmus at IE Madrid



Studying in Madrid has been the best decision I have made so far in my degree. The city itself is so lively and full of life, and there is something to do at every hour of the night and it's much more affordable than many other European capital cities. Madrid is a great base for travelling around Spain. I visited friends in Granada and Salamanca in September. I got to go to the Warner Bro Waterpark 20 mins outside of Madrid.





There are always events and show cases on. In September, the Formula One Race was on and all of the cars were displayed on the main shop streets.
There is a variety of food in Madrid, and it can be very cheap too.
I would consider Madrid a very safe city, even during the protest in Sol, plenty of people were walking around at every hour of the night. The metro line stops at 1:30.

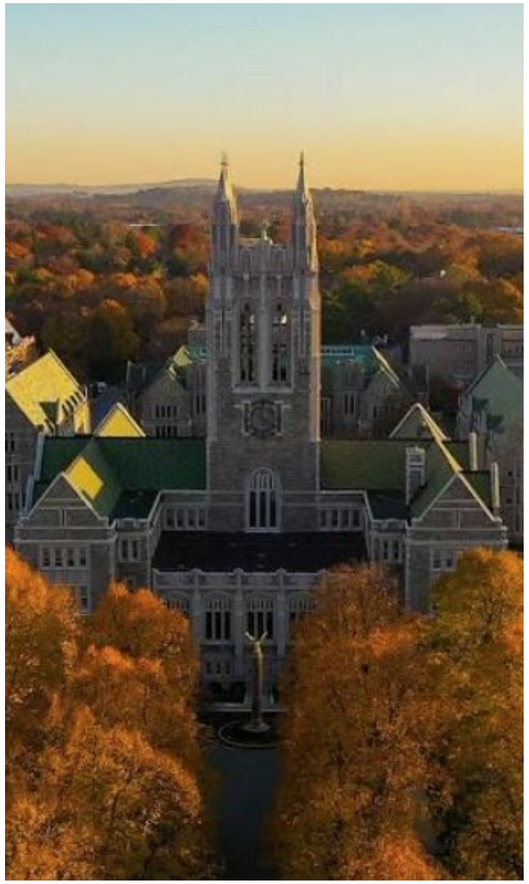


My friends have called it the cheaper, nicer and prettier London, Paris and New York. It even has its own Oxford Street: Gran Via.
Retiro Park, the city's main park is autumnal at the moment.
 The weather is amazing roughly 20 degrees everyday and I am able to sit out and eat outside everyday.

I couldn't recommend Madrid enough.

Antonia is attending Boston College

I’m really enjoying Boston College so far! The academics are a little more intense then I’m used to, but I really like the learning style. There is so much choice for different courses and each one I’ve picked is really interesting. The professors are very engaging which was a little intimidating at the start, but because of this the classroom environment is actually really fun.



The American students at BC have many opportunities to study abroad and for this reason I think they are very friendly and inclusive to international/exchange students and integrating into BC life has been quite smooth. There’s always something happening on campus and the College has a large focus on sport, which means there’s always football/basketball/ice hockey games to attend.

The college itself is really beautiful and their facilities e.g gym, stadiums, libraries are incredible. It’s a little bit out of the city, but the t-line train is quite cheap and runs every ten minutes. It only takes about 30/40 minutes to get downtown from the campus. Food is quite expensive, but getting an on-campus job is quite attainable.

Loghan is attending Indiana University



I really like Indiana University so far. America is definitely more expensive than other places, but between the weather, the people, and the wide selection of modules, it's worth it. Studying English and History, there's a much wider and more interesting selection of modules available.

Playing rugby with the college is also a huge boost for the experience. They have a really quality program, and I've gotten to visit a number of places through it. It's also a great way to make friends. The campus itself is also really beautiful.





Cian, Erasmus in Vilnius (Lithuania) 25/26



I’m very much settled in here in Lithuania, and although it’s getting cold, I'm having a great time! The city is amazing and I'm never short of things to do and places to see. So far it has been an excellent experience. Additionally, I'm really enjoying my classes and the University as a whole, it’s a great institution and I'm finding everything to be very interesting.



A lot of people might not give Vilnius a chance because it's northeastern Europe and maybe a little bit ‘different’, but that's what makes it so interesting and unique. The city is also very modern, which maybe people don't realise. The Erasmus network over here is great too - from what I know there's over 800 Erasmus students and the Erasmus Student Network arrange events, nights out and trips.



I am extremely grateful to have been given the opportunity to study abroad here, So far, it has been a wonderful experience which has exceeded my expectations.”

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Will the University of Galway arrange my accommodation abroad?

- No, but …
- We will offer advice on this topic
- Each **host university** has a dedicated **Accommodation Service**.
- Possibility of a room in a student residence
- Early application advisable!

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How should I choose courses?

- Consult the host university's online course catalogue
- Avoid duplicating what you've already studied.
- Avoid significant overlap with your Final Year courses.
- Modules to complement and enhance your study of your degree subjects.
- Modules that you wouldn't ordinarily get the chance to study.
- Modules related to society/culture of host country.
- Avoid self-study modules.
- Need approval from University of Galway academic coordinators.

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Will the marks I get while abroad count towards my degree?

- Period abroad assessed on **Pass/Fail** basis by University of Galway
- Transcript from host university will show all your results
- Valuable document, e.g. for postgrad applications, seeking employment, etc

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What if I fail the Year Abroad?

- Upon return to University of Galway, you register for 3BA1 (GY101, Joint Hons)
- Repeat Fees are ~€2,000 (EU)* or ~€5,000 (non-EU)
- Lose SUSI funding*
- Erasmus grant may have to be repaid

**GY129 is a 4-year programme. If you fail Year 3 and have to join Third Year of GY101, you are now on a 3-year programme, but have already used up 3 years' worth of government-funded tuition fees, so are liable for Repeat Fees.*

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COSTS – What to budget for

- Flights, including flight home at Christmas
- Accommodation
- Household bills
- Food
- Books, materials
- Leisure
- Insurance (for North America)

ESTIMATED LIVING COSTS – some examples
Uppsala University: at least €920 per month
University of Tartu: €600 to €800 per month
Boston College: US$30,000 for the academic year (~ €26,800)
(Check partner uni websites for estimated costs!)

https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/

Start saving early!



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FUNDING

- Erasmus funding for study in Europe:

  grant at monthly rate, based on duration of attendance

  80% of total grant at start, balance on return

  Plus one-off travel grant, based on distance

  Supplementary Erasmus funding for financially disadvantaged students

  Maintain eligibility for SUSI grant, etc

  "non-adjacent" rate may apply, provided study abroad integral to course

  (Erasmus Disability grant, if applicable)

  Erasmus funding cannot be guaranteed!

- Boston College: $5,000 scholarship
- Other non-EU: no funding



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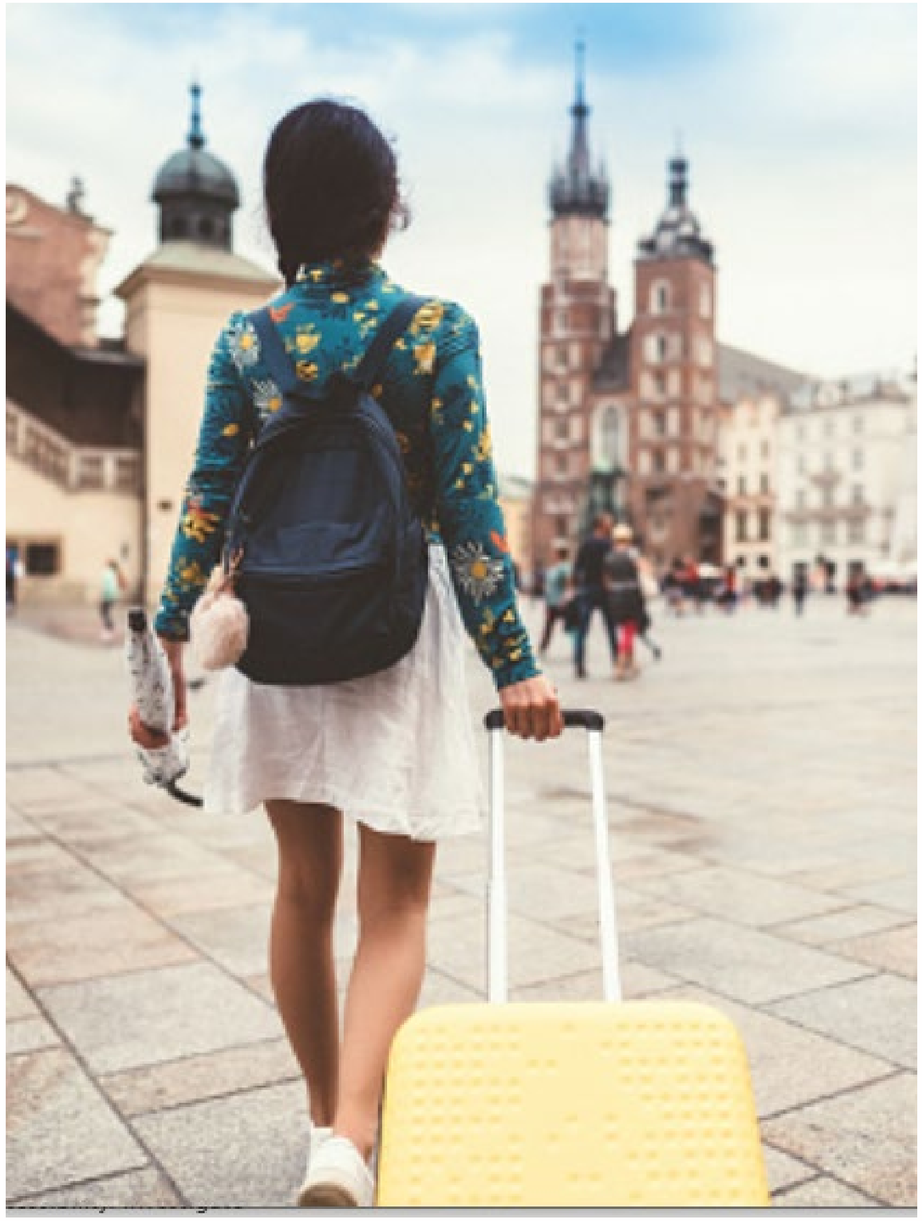
BENEFITS OF STUDYING ABROAD

- Academic development
- Personal development
- Cultural and social aspects
  - Get to know another country and its culture
  - Perhaps learn some of the language
  - Make friends from all over the world
  - Expand your horizons
- A positive addition to your CV





WHAT STUDENTS SAY ABOUT STUDYING ABROAD

“I feel like Erasmus really added to my degree and to who I am as a person. There will be work but it'll be rewarding, you get out of it what you put in. The modules I took added more variety to my education and this definitely benefitted me for final year. Adapting to a different lifestyle is challenging but that's what encourages growth.”

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Be aware that …

- ***Study abroad is demanding***
- ***It will require a whole set of personal qualities to deal with the everyday challenges.***
- ***These qualities can be developed, but you must be prepared to step out of your comfort zone.***
- ***It's important to do thorough research on academic, practical and financial matters.***
- ***Mental health issues? – study abroad may prove stressful, so please consider carefully whether it's appropriate for you.***

So what's next?

- Please complete the brief survey you'll get from me.
- Go to https://tinyurl.com/BA-Global-Experience and study the Excel table of destinations/subjects. Take heed of any **"Core Subject"** requirements.
- Please research the destinations and prepare to list up to 5 in order of preference.
- I'll circulate an application form in mid-November.
- You'll need to identify courses you're interested in.
- You'll be asked to explain your choices (in your own words).
  Deadline for submitting form: Tuesday, 1st December, 12 noon.
- We will meet to discuss.
- You should be offered a study abroad place before the end of January.
- If you accept, you'll be nominated to a host university early in 2027.



Any questions?? ☺ Please feel free to ask now!

or

e-mail

mary.lyons@universityofgalway.ie

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