

Student Exchange Questionnaire

Name: Jessica Timings

Massey Degree: Bachelor of Communication

Host university: University of Limerick, Ireland

Semester and year of exchange: 2017, Semester 2

- **Why did you choose this particular university and/or country for exchange?**

Ever since I was very young I have wanted to live in Ireland. When I realised it was possible to do exactly that, while still continuing my studies, it sounded like the perfect option. The University of Limerick seemed to be the only one in Ireland offering papers that would work with my degree.



- **Did it meet your expectations?**

I didn't really have expectations for my exchange, but whatever they could have been my experience would surely have been wildly different. All I really expected was to complete some papers and make some friends!

- **What courses did you study while on exchange? Would you recommend them?**

Papers for communication ended up being really difficult to find, so in the end I took Irish Folklore, Irish Music and Dance, Creative Writing, Theories of New Media, and Politics, Ethnicity and Conflict.

I really enjoyed the politics paper, though it was very challenging, because it gave me the opportunity to learn something in a field I had never studied before but was interested in. The Irish papers were good but not as practical or fun as I thought they might be. In retrospect I would take the dance tutorial in IMA D because it was lots more relaxed and fun than singing.

- **Were there differences in the teaching methods and academic environment at your host university, compared to Massey University? If so, what kind of differences?**

The classes were taught in a very similar way, though I thought (with the exception of the Politics paper) papers in general were easier. Study did not take as much time as I thought it might, or as much effort for grade as my home papers.

- **Did you stay on-campus or off-campus? What was the accommodation like?**

I stayed in Plassey Village on campus and was really lucky to have a house full of amazing people. Not everyone I talked to had the same experience. We lived with only internationals which was cool but not what I had expected. The house itself was well kept, with good rooms and friendly RA's.

- **How did living expenses compare to in New Zealand?**



Mostly everything was comparable, though any exchange student should expect to spend more than they would generally because you should be travelling, adventuring and going out as much as you can!

- **What extra-curricular activities did you participate in at the host university?**

I joined kayaking club, international society, and attended Christian Union a couple times. I heard that the outdoor pursuit club was amazing. International society is worth signing up for, but getting on to some of the popular trips can be difficult. Most trips we went on I organised and hired a car (the privilege of being 24+ and a native left-hand driver).



- **What's one thing you learnt about your host country or culture?**

Don't expect anything, especially not the clichés. Irish people are nice and there are a lot of friendly people, but I think I was expecting everyone to be loud and making jokes all the time. Also, Irish people are very sarcastic – so if you don't have a thick skin you best find one.

- **What were some of the highlights of your exchange experience?**

Travelling Europe either side of my exchange was awesome, making some amazing friends from all over, and really getting to almost everywhere in Ireland. Most memorable moment was finding myself sleeping in a car with two of my flatmates, and waking up surrounded by Irish fishermen.

- **What did you find challenging?**

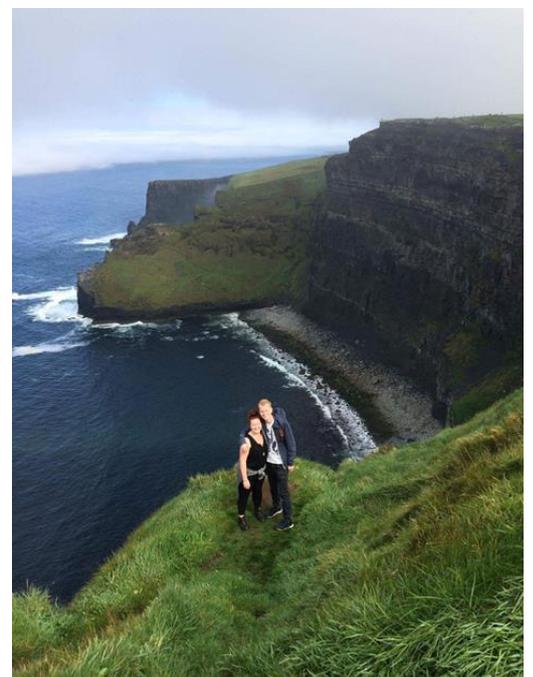
It was difficult being in close quarters with 7 people for four months, with nowhere to really take a break. There were times where we had some social drama which I was not accustomed to, but those are things that you don't really remember when you think back.

- **What do you feel you have learnt or gained from going on exchange?**

I feel I got to understand a bit more about my mothers side of the family who are of Irish decent. Also how to live with strangers and make it work so that we were all genuine friends in the end!

- **Do you have any tips for future students intending to travel to the same country or university?**

Expect nothing, be open to everything, make a habit of saying yes, and don't be frugal with your money. You won't have this time again so make the most of it.



- **Do you have any comments on the support provided to you by Massey University and/or by the host university before/during/after your exchange?**

No, Massey was helpful in answering all the questions I had and working with me when selecting papers became very irritating!