

# Student Exchange Questionnaire

**Name:** Kate Gumbrell

**Massey Degree:** Business Psychology

**Host university:** University of Limerick

**Semester and year of exchange:** Semester 1 2015

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

I have always had a strong fascination with Ireland. The culture, music, and scenery enticed me, and after looking at possible universities who could host me, the University of Limerick was the most obvious option. With great reviews, location, and accessibility, the opportunity for me to fulfil my dream of visiting Ireland became real.



## **Did it meet your expectations?**

Studying at the University of Limerick was not even close to what I expected. It was incredibly different to what I had in mind. However it was a much greater, richer experience to what I had expected.

## **What papers did you study while on exchange? Would you recommend them?**

I studied Psychometrics and psychological testing which was a great paper to study if you are looking to study human resource management in the future or are interested in psychological testing of individuals. Psychology as social issues was a paper run in a way I had never experienced before. It was incredibly practical and involved doing things you wouldn't usually label 'academic' but the outcome was incredibly beneficial and I learnt so much about myself and the outcomes of our human interactions. I would definitely recommend taking the Irish music and dance paper to get to learn a little about Ireland and their strong musical culture. Human development and the life span was another interesting paper that I would recommend to beginners studying psychology or education- but only at beginner level. Organisational behaviour was my least favourite paper but helped me identify my passion for team building and dealing with large groups and their problems.

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

Even though I thoroughly enjoyed studying at the University of Limerick, I missed the Massey Albany campus a lot. Our library at Albany is so incredible, that I will no longer take it for granted! In lectures at Limerick, it was very much a speaker talking to his pupils, rather than a discussion amongst learners. When a lecturer asked a question, the room would stay quiet and it seemed that only international students would speak up and start an educational conversation with the lecturer. I love the relationship we have with our lecturers at Massey University. We can learn from each other and treat each other as individuals.

**Did you stay on-campus or off-campus?**

**What was the accommodation like?**

I stayed on campus in the Plassey Village. It was very basic accommodation, the cheapest on campus. I enjoyed living there, however I could not live there permanently. It was very loud and lively, so to study or sleep at times, was very hard to do, and the cleanliness was not always kept to a level I would have liked.



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

It seemed living expenses were a bit cheaper than NZ. The cost of my weekly shop was slightly less in Ireland.

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

I was part of the Outdoor Pursuit Club and participated in a few of their weekend tramping adventures. I also went to different parts of Ireland and attended sports games with the International Society. I played at the university open mic nights that happen every week, and also played music at pubs in the city centre.

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

The people of Ireland are very similar in some ways to New Zealanders. They are all very open and friendly, stopping to chat with you at any opportunity. Music is a main source of expression and community within the Irish culture, and their traditions have been kept because of their love of music.

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

Because the rest of Europe was so close to Ireland, I was able to travel to other countries during my weekends and mid-semester breaks. It was amazing to become so close with some of the international students while living there, and go adventure together even if we had only known each other a few days!

**What did you find challenging?**

It was challenging to be living a life separate from my family and partner, and make every single decision for myself. I became very independent while living over there, and I think one big challenge has actually been adjusting my life to fit around others while being back in NZ.

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

I have learnt that there are so many amazing people in the world who do such cool things, and I was so glad to meet some of them and now be life long friends. I have learnt that every one of us is broken in some way or another, but I can't fix everyone, I can only do my best. I have learnt not to punish myself when I have not succeeded 100%- it is



okay not to succeed in everything I do. I have gained independence and maturity.

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

Travel around Ireland as much as possible- even when other countries are so close by! Be part of their amazing clubs and take every opportunity to travel with them on adventures.

**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?**

It would be much easier if the communication between studylink and Massey was clear about exchange students. I had to call studylink many many times before I left to explain that I was still a fulltime student but just wasn't enrolled in Massey papers. It would have made me less stressed and given me much more time to prepare other things if I did not have to arrange that myself or correct their mistakes.

