

Student Exchange Questionnaire

Name: Maria Sanson

Massey Degree: BA/BBS majors in Politics and International Business

Host university: University of Limerick

Semester and year of exchange: Semester 2 2015

- **Why did you choose this particular university and/or country for exchange?**
I wanted to study in an English speaking country as I do not speak another language, and I wanted to have the opportunity to travel outside of my host country while on exchange. This is very easy to do in Europe. A family friend suggested Ireland as he had enjoyed his time there so I picked Limerick as my first choice university.
- **Did it meet your expectations?**
It exceeded my expectations! The facilities and grounds at UL are amazing, particularly the gym/sports arena. And I was able to visit a number of European destinations while abroad.
- **What papers did you study while on exchange? Would you recommend them?**
I studied 5 papers while on exchange, 2 Irish history papers, 2 politics papers and a human resource management paper. I would recommend doing papers about where you are studying, like a history paper because it allows you to better appreciate your new environment.
- **Were there differences in the teaching methods and academic environment at your host university, compared to Massey University? If so, what kind of differences?**
I found UL very similar to Massey University. Sulis, a system almost identical to stream was used by most modules to upload lecture and tutorial material. I had one module which did not utilise sulis or lecture slides in class which was a bit frustrating as strong Irish accents aren't easy to follow and having some typed material to refer to would have been helpful.
- **Did you stay on-campus or off-campus? What was the accommodation like?**
I stayed on campus at Plassey Village. The house was 2 floors with 8 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and 1 kitchen/dining/living room. My housemates were from Finland, Canada, Germany, America and France. The entire village was made up of around 40 similar, if not identical, houses.
- **How did living expenses compare to in New Zealand?**
The conversion rate from NZD to Euro is not fantastic. That being said I found my savings adequate to cover my expenses as well as travel. Ireland certainly isn't the cheapest place to do your exchange, but it was manageable.
- **What extra-curricular activities did you participate in at the host university?**
I joined the UL equestrian team and the international society. With the equestrian team I did various treks and horse related activities. The international society organises

regular trips to various locations around Ireland which was a fantastic way to see the country.

- **What's one thing you learnt about your host country or culture?**
I learnt a lot in my politics and history classes about the way the Irish culture has been shaped. From their relationship with England, the potato famine, the Catholic Emancipation movement and more recently the Troubles in Northern Ireland, have all influenced the way Ireland is today.
- **What were some of the highlights of your exchange experience?**
One of my highlights was securing tickets to the All Blacks vs Georgia RWC pool match in Cardiff, Wales. Myself and an Irish student I'd met on exchange flew to Cardiff for the game and it is an experience I will never forget. Millenium stadium is enormous, and the atmosphere with the roof closed and the crowd singing was unbelievable. And of course the All Blacks won which made the experience even better!
- **What did you find challenging?**
I missed my boyfriend and my family. My boyfriend was deployed to Iraq for the duration of my stay in Ireland which made it difficult to keep in contact.
- **What do you feel you have learnt or gained from going on exchange?**
The more you say yes, the happier you're going to be.
- **Do you have any tips for future students intending to travel to the same country or university?**
Put yourself out there, join clubs and societies, make friends and SAY YES.
- **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?**
The team at the international office in Palmerston North were fantastic at answering all of my queries prior to departure which made preparations easy.