



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHÉ
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Studying Abroad 2024/25

Pre-departure information

August 2024

Mary Lyons

Mobility Officer,
College of Arts, Social Sciences
& Celtic Studies

mary.lyons@universityofgalway.ie

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Info for all College of Arts students

Please refer to the “News & resources” page.

From **College of Arts homepage**, click on **International**, then click on **Outgoing Students**, and you will see this:

Study Abroad

Overview
Student Information
Schools and Subject Areas
Undergraduate Degrees
Taught Postgraduate Programmes
PhD and Research Degrees
International

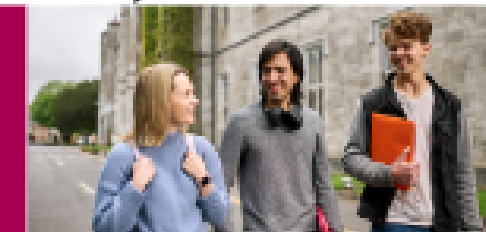
Partner uni fact sheets here

Destinations



[DESTINATIONS FOR STUDY](#) >

Who Can Study Abroad?



[WHO CAN STUDY ABROAD?](#) >

BA Global Experience



[BA GLOBAL EXPERIENCE](#) >

Opportunities for non-language students



[OPPORTUNITIES FOR NON-](#) >

News and resources



[NEWS AND RESOURCES](#) >

Testimonials



[TESTIMONIALS](#) >

A range of useful documents here





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
- Travel Insurance (& EHIC?)**
- Online banking
- Erasmus paperwork (if applicable)
- Accommodation
- Register at University of Galway (opens on 19 August at 10am)**
- Register with DFA
- ISIC and/or ESN card
- Unlock phone?
- Academic requirements & contacts





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

[HOME](#) > > [INTERNATIONAL OFFICE](#) > [ERASMUS](#) > [OUTGOING STUDENTS](#) > [LATEST NEWS](#)

Latest News

Overview
Study in Ireland
Offer Holders
The International Student Experience
Incoming Visiting Students

Paperwork Explained

Outgoing Erasmus 2024/25

Students going on Erasmus+ in 2024/25

Please note that this page relates to Erasmus+ study visits (to universities abroad). If you are planning to go on an Erasmus traineeship (work placement), please go to the [Erasmus Traineeship web page](#).

MY ERASMUS+ STUDY VISIT - WHAT DO I NEED TO DO AND WHEN?

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**.



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Money: What our students say

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“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 Italy 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.”

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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!!!**





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, PayPal, etc – avoid!



Accommodation Scams: Tips and hints

- Don't be pressurised.
- Do some research online; try to verify the person's identity.
- Letting agency: check if the website is genuine.
- Google the address of the property.
- 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.
- Payment by credit card is safest.
- Get a proper rental contract.



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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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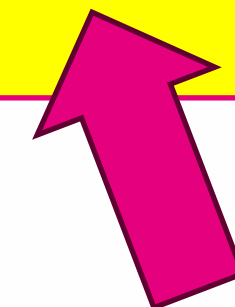
Travel Insurance

- EHIC for EU citizens within EU (www.ehic.ie)
- Private insurance mandatory for **all** University of Galway students on mobility
- **Must cover**
 - ✓ medical treatment
 - ✓ personal liability
 - ✓ repatriation
 - ✓ cancellation/curtailment
 - ✓ personal effects
- Possible providers:
 - www.collegetravel.ie
 - www.protrip-world.com (there are others, see Travel Insurance section here)

Please be sure to read the University of Galway's advice on insurance!

See <https://tinyurl.com/CASSCS-Outbound-Resources>,

Travel Insurance: "Insurance Recommendations for Students on Mobility"





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Before you head off ...



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



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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/overseas-travel/>

Irish citizens should register with the DFA.

Note the contact details of the Irish Embassy or Consulate in your host country.



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The first weeks at your host uni

“Arrive a week before classes start so that you can settle into the city and so that you have time to explore and orient yourself.”

“I recommend arriving in time for orientation. It's a good opportunity to meet other exchange students and make friends from the start when everyone is in the same boat.”

“Attending any events being run by ESN in the first two weeks is really good for making friends.”

“My biggest recommendation in terms of social life is to say ‘yes’ to as much as you can (events, invites to go places etc.) especially during those first few weeks – you’ll find there are a lot of people in the same position as you looking to make friends and build a community, and it’s a great way of meeting lots of people and exploring the area.”

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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!



Thoughts on homesickness

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“Homesickness hits hard, even if you consider yourself to be quite an extroverted and independent person like I do.”

“It definitely had its challenges and felt quite lonely at the start, but it definitely gets better. I learned a lot about myself, and I think it’s a great time in your life to do something like this. It is really normal to feel home sick, but don’t think about going home in the first few weeks!”

“I definitely would do it again – I miss it a lot, and it was a great experience. The only thing I wish I’d known beforehand was the culture shock really does hit you when you arrive and you miss home immediately, but try not to let it overwhelm you! It definitely overwhelmed me and I had second thoughts about going through with the semester, but I’m so glad I gave it time and stuck it out because it was definitely worth it.”

“Of course, at times you will miss home; it would be crazy if you didn’t ... but just know that that is so normal and that home and your hometown is still there and will always be there but this experience won’t.”

LANGUAGE

COMMUNICATION
STYLES

CULTURE SHOCK

CUSTOMS

CLIMATE

MEALTIMES

FOOD

POLITICS / RELIGION



Features of Culture Shock

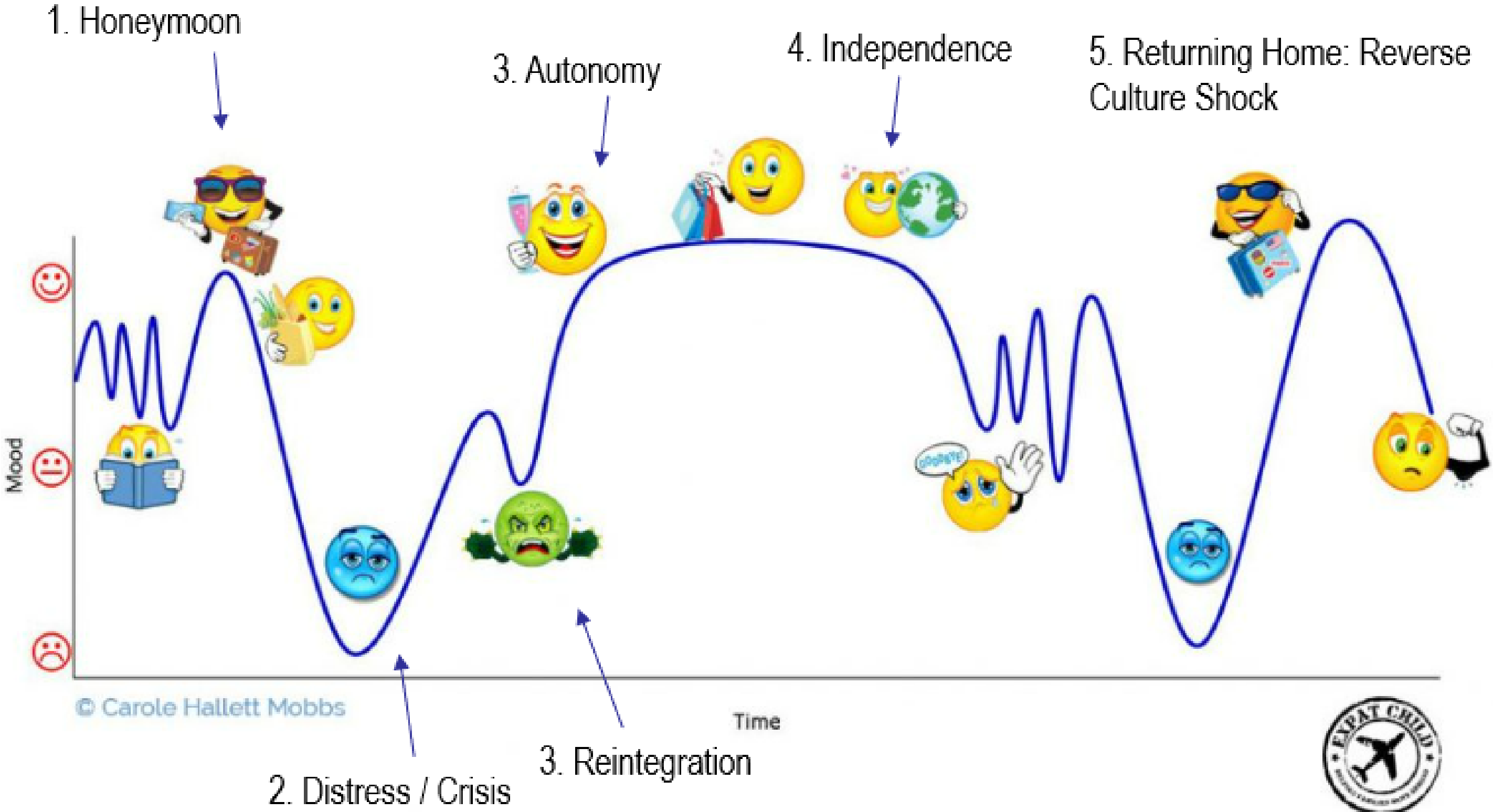
- Disorientation due to new environment
- Psychological or physical effects:
alienation / boredom / withdrawal / isolation / irritation / homesickness / aches
- Frustration, uncertainty, distress
- Adjustment
- Adaptation
- Reverse Culture Shock



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>

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

“To anyone going on their year abroad, wherever that may be, my one piece of advice is just take every moment in and enjoy it. From the second you get there, just embrace it. I cannot explain how fast the year goes; it feels like yesterday I was nervous packing, but at the same time, I don't remember a time I was not living in The Netherlands.”

“The only thing that I wish I had known beforehand is to try and relax a bit more about the whole process. I got myself very worked up over the summer about all the small details, but they all work themselves out in the end. “



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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Academics: one student's experience

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“The academic set-up was quite different from what I am used to in Galway. No lectures are recorded and the slides that the professors use during the lectures are not available for students online. This means that you **MUST** attend your classes otherwise it will be hard for you to get notes that you have missed, especially as an **ERASMUS** student where you may not have someone to ask notes from.”

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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, Malta, Radboud, Utrecht, Uppsala – “responsible person” is Mary Lyons)

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



If you do not complete your studies abroad ...

- Erasmus students: You may have to repay your Erasmus grant if you fail to complete the agreed study programme abroad.
- Erasmus students: If you return home without completing agreed mobility period (but have completed the minimum of 60 days), you can be asked to return a proportion of the Erasmus grant.
- 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, you will have to enrol in 3BA1 (3-year programme) and will be liable for full fees of approx. €5,700 as well as forfeiting your SUSI grant, if applicable.



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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A unique opportunity for language students

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“The shopkeepers and restaurant waitresses ... don't speak much English there and they don't appreciate English, so using Spanish, even if it's bad, really puts you in their good books and they'll help you understand and learn when you try. Sometimes when they tried to practice English on me, I would reject and use Spanish instead because you're not there to use your own language, and they're more than willing to help you with theirs.

Would you change anything? Maybe to try and make more native friends as I was so scared to speak as I have no confidence and I was so scared they wouldn't understand me. However, Erasmus taught me to be confident and to trust yourself in your language.

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Avoiding problems

- 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.



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 academic coordinator, *or*

International Affairs Office

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 e-mail 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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Don't expect everything to go well all of the time ...

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“I had the best time of my life. I would do it again. I wouldn't change anything as the bad experiences have become a necessary lesson for me to learn in my life.”

“Even in the midst of hard times, I learned valuable lessons. Therefore, I'm glad that things got hard at times. These hard times made me better. They helped me find out what I'm really made out of.”

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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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Spread your wings ...

“Don’t get too attached to other Irish students, you should take this opportunity to meet people from around the world, sometimes you can get too insular.”

“You do not need to make friends with people just because they are the same nationality as you. Immerse yourself in different cultures, it’s all part of the experience. Always do what you want to do and don’t let judgement ever stop you. Your Erasmus experience is what you make it.”



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Go for it!!!

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The best memories I had from my time in France were the times I went out of my comfort zone and tried something new. I wouldn't change anything about my experience, because every part of it, the good and the difficult, is what made it my Erasmus experience.

"I would highly encourage anyone that is quiet or is nervous at the thought of it, to just go for it as you will gain so much independence from it and you will gain so much confidence in social spaces too. The only thing I would change is I would have put myself out there more at the start."

I would highly recommend putting yourself out there as much as possible, don't be afraid to talk to new people and make friends as the people around you really can affect your experience while you are abroad. The one piece of advice that is so important is to make the most of it as the time goes by so quickly. You'll be put out of your comfort zone quite a bit but it is so worth it in the end.

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"This is the ultimate learning experience for you so take every opportunity that comes your way."



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 academic 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.



Thanks for your attention!

Any Questions?

mary.lyons@universityofgalway.ie



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