

Republic of Ireland Study Abroad Guide

2021-22



Please use this booklet in conjunction with the [DU Study Abroad Handbook](#)

**University of Denver
Office of International Education**

2200 South Josephine Street
Denver, CO 80208 USA

Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Mountain Time

Website: du.edu/abroad

Office: 303.871.4912

Fax: 303.871.4910

Emergencies:

Campus Safety: 303.871.3000

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Introduction

Congratulations on your acceptance to participate in a **University of Denver Partner Program** at one of the following partners in Ireland:

Cork:
University College Cork



Maynooth:
Maynooth University



This handbook will provide you with a general overview of issues involved in traveling to the Republic of Ireland (Ireland). We thank the U.S. State Department for sharing with us the Irish safety and travel information in this handbook. Please use this guide in conjunction with the [DU Study Abroad Handbook](#).

We hope this information will assist you and your family in preparing for your time abroad. It is important that you review all the information, as well as the information sent by your Irish host-university, before you leave the US and that you take these materials with you to Ireland. Please refer to the [Ireland Immigration Instructions](#) document for detailed information on the immigration process.

Studying abroad is an exciting opportunity. Nothing during your college years will likely change you more. You will learn about another country and another culture. You will also learn to look at your own country from a different perspective and, most importantly, learn more about yourself. The OIE encourages you to invest yourself fully into this experience.

How much you gain from this opportunity will depend on your preparedness, flexibility and responsibility. Review the general pre-departure information the OIE has provided to you. Complete the administrative and academic matters that need to be taken care of before you leave. Research the country and city you will be going to. Review some of the suggested readings in the Study Abroad Handbook about what it means to go abroad. Be respectful of other cultures; things are not better, they are not worse; they are just different – learn to accept, not expect. Remember, you are there to complete an academic program successfully, just as if you were at DU. Good time management and goal setting are keys to handling a challenging academic program and becoming familiar with life outside the classroom.

Most of all, we want you to have a great experience and to make the most out of this opportunity. When you return, be ready to share your stories with others because your personal experience will be the best source of inspiration for others.

Safe Travels,

Office of International Education (OIE)

Preparing for Your Program

Arriving in Ireland

Confirming Move-In and Orientation Dates

You are responsible for knowing your program start and end dates, the date that you can move in/out of your housing, and the date orientation begins. It is a good idea to arrive 1-2 days prior to your orientation (**mandatory for all students**) to allow yourself time to get settled, but you should confirm whether you will have access to your housing and, if not, plan accordingly. Make sure you have a contact number for your accommodations office and keep in touch with them if you have a delay. If your flight arrives outside of regular business hours (*Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm*) make sure to contact your housing provider and understand the move-in procedure.

Connecting Flights

If you do not have a direct flight, make sure that you have ample time between connections.

Students flying to Ireland are advised not to fly through the UK (England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland) before entering the Republic of Ireland. Due to lack of immigration tracking between the two countries, you might end up with the wrong immigration status and need to leave Ireland and come back in.

Customs Regulations

When passing through Irish customs, remember to be polite and to have all required documents easily on hand. Remember, immigration officers can refuse you entry for any reason, so take the process seriously and be respectful. Refer to the [Immigration Instructions](#) for more information.

Airport Pick-Up

Some Irish host universities offer to have volunteer students meet incoming international students at the airport. This is typically limited to a specific date and time period. If you are interested, connect with your host university *before* buying a ticket.

Medication

If you are taking regular medication, you should contact [International SOS](#) before departure to confirm that the medicine and quantities you will be carrying are permitted into the country, and any necessary documentation (DU's Membership Number is 11BSGC000067). **Keep all medications in the container in which they were dispensed.**

Orientations and Welcome Weeks

Universities will provide you with arrival and orientation dates. The content and extent of your orientation varies among programs. It can vary from one day with optional social activities later in the week to an entire week of meetings. Acceptance materials your host university will send you will describe their orientation in more detail, i.e. if registration will occur at this time. You will get as much out of the orientation as you put in. *Please note that your attendance of the full on-site orientation program is required!*

International Education Offices

While abroad you will be working with the international office at your host university. These offices are equipped with advisors who will answer your questions, provide resources and an orientation upon arrival, and ensure that your transcripts are processed and sent to DU. The international office will likely provide you

with a 24-hour emergency phone number. Your program is your primary contact. If you have questions, concerns, or need advice you will need to take the initiative to speak with them. Most easy-to-answer questions will be laid-out in written material and will be sent to you via email over the summer. Please read these materials thoroughly and keep them in a safe place.

Some students in the past have been frustrated with the lack of individualized attention from their host institution's international office, complaining about poor communication. This frustration is often due to a cultural misunderstanding and ungrounded expectations about the level of service at public institutions abroad. The international office staff is there **if you need them**. They assume that you are fine unless you say otherwise. You will find the communication and support to be comprehensive if you read the materials provided and seek out staff when you have questions. The message here is **you need to go to them – they will not come to you!**

For your reference and convenience, our partners' contact information is located at the [end of this guide](#) book. Once you are accepted to your program, please begin corresponding with them whenever you have questions about the program, your host university, your host city, etc.

The Irish Academic System

Registering for Class and Planning Your Academic Schedule

Irish terminology differs from the US:

US Terminology	Irish Terminology
Classes or courses	Modules
Majors	Courses
Professors, Instructors, Teachers	Tutors, academics, lecturers, instructors, or professors

For the purposes of this guide book, we will keep to the American terminology.

Remember that because Irish universities do not set their academic timetables and course offerings until shortly before the beginning of the term, you will not finalize your registration until you are at your orientation in Ireland. Due to this uncertainty, you should select several classes that would satisfy DU degree requirements and have them all pre-approved at DU, so you have back-ups during registration. You can use the previous years' catalogue as a guide, as they will likely offer similar classes again (especially at lower levels). If you have questions about where to find course listings, connect with your program. Remember to discuss what credits you plan to earn abroad with your academic advisors at DU.

One way to maximize your level of immersion with local students and experience the Irish education system is to take as many modules as possible from one department at the same level, (i.e. taking 2000-level English modules). Local second-year English majors will be taking only 2000-level English modules; therefore, you're likely to have a lot of the same people in all your courses, giving you opportunities to get to know your peers.

The best way to get your first-choice classes is to make sure that your host university is aware of your most current preferences. Many of our partnering universities do offer pre-registration/have you list courses in your application. If your preferences change from what you listed on your application, contact your host university's international office.

Getting Classes Approved for DU Degree Requirements

Remember that all the courses you take abroad will be considered DU general elective credit unless you have completed the course approval process, obtaining approval for each course (i.e., major, minor, or common curriculum requirements). Directions for the course approval process are posted on our [website](#) and in the [handbook](#).

Course Levels and Equivalencies

For the Irish course levels, we typically translate the equivalencies as such:

- 100/1000 level – Ireland First Year – DU Sophomore/Junior Level
- 200/2000 level – Ireland Second Year – DU Junior/Senior Level
- 300/3000 level – Ireland Third Year – DU Senior/Graduate Level

For transcript purposes, we assume courses will be upper division in Ireland. The exception is if the course's title specifies that it is an introductory class (i.e. "Introduction to Psychology") and it is a first-year course. Always confirm if a course will be upper-division with your OIE advisor if your academic advisor's approval is contingent upon it being upper level.

Credit Loads and Limits

The amount of credit that you will earn for each course varies among the locations in Ireland and the courses within a particular university. Please see the [Global Grade and Credit Scale](#) for more information.

You must remain "full-time" in the terms of your host university enrollment. Your legal residence in Ireland is only valid so long as you are a full-time student at your host university. If you compromise this, you invalidate your legal immigration status and are vulnerable to deportation. See the [Study Abroad Policies](#) for more detail.

Grades

The Irish education system does not experience the same grade inflation as the US. Most Irish professors are accustomed to awarding "C" level grades to the average hard-working student, reserving "A" grades for rare and extraordinary students. Returnees have equated "B+" level work at DU with "C+" level work in Ireland. *Also, note that the grades awarded by percentage are very different; for example, a 70 percent in most Irish universities is the equivalent of an "A+"!* Please see the [Global Grade and Credit Scale](#) for more information.

You Must Complete ALL Coursework Before You Leave!

Most students will need to arrange exams and/or final paper due dates with professors before a specified deadline set by the international office at your host university. You may not be taking your exam with the local students because their assessment will be given after the winter holiday. Your professors may be unfamiliar with the procedure for international students, so connect with your host university's international office with questions.

Save all your coursework and material and bring it home with you. *If possible, save proof that you turned in your final assignment or exam on-time* so that you can prove you did the exam or assignment in case your work is lost. Connect with your host university if you have questions.

Being Successful in the Irish Academic System

The American and Irish education systems are very different, leading most study abroad students to experience academic culture shock on campus.

Understand that Irish universities aim to produce specialists, while most American undergraduate degrees are built to produce well-rounded students. To get into college, Irish students take placement exams on academic subjects at the end of their equivalent to high school. They typically take exams in 2-4 academic subjects that interest them (you might imagine these to be like AP exams) and will receive a score in each area. In these topics, (for example, physics, math, and chemistry), students would use their highest score (say it's physics) to apply to universities to study that subject (e.g., physics) exclusively for 3-4 years to get an undergraduate degree.

There are several outcomes of this that may be different for American students:

- Degrees are rigidly mapped out and have first- and second-year students often taking the same sets of courses. In other words, there are far fewer major electives. *Therefore, even if you cannot see the course catalogue for next academic year, it is likely they will offer similar sets of lower level courses every year, especially if they are required courses for a degree.*
- Irish students have no general education requirements outside of their majors, meaning they only study their topic. *Because local students will be focusing exclusively on their majors at your host university, it is recommended that you do the same and at the same level if this is possible (remember to check with your major advisor first!) to genuinely experience what the local higher education is like.* Because local students tend to take the same courses in the same term as they work through their degree requirements, they tend to see each other in class a lot. The professors will often make references to other courses that these students will be enrolled in at the same time.
- Every class you take in Ireland will be full of majors in that topic who come to the course with a solid background knowledge and familiarity with the terminology. *Therefore, if you're going to take a class in a subject that you know nothing about, be prepared to work hard and stick to the first-year courses.*

Remember also that Irish universities are public institutions and do not compete for business in the same way that American universities do. High levels of service and support for students is not a major selling point for them, especially not when compared to U.S. private institutions, such as DU. You should be prepared to be persistent, but polite and patient whenever you need assistance.

Another key to understanding the Irish education system is to understand that *the local students have been raised to self-educate*. Professors view learning how to educate yourself independently as part of the whole point of being at a university; therefore, they will push their students to not be overly reliant on their instructors and expect you to be in the same mind set. Your independent research is the primary way learning takes place. *To get the most out of your study abroad at an Irish university, you should see this as an opportunity to take ownership over your education and practice self-education more independently.*

Because of this central difference in the education systems, you will probably notice some differences in academic life in your Irish university:

- A lack of structure and/or sense of what's expected of you to earn a good grade.

- Classes meet less frequently, and attendance might not be taken at all or considered as part of your grade.
- Local students take the lectures less seriously. Lectures are seen as a supplement to your private studies, not as the central piece.
- Lectures may be followed by seminars or tutorials, usually 1-hour sessions with a smaller group of students and a tutor (i.e. PhD students).
- There are fewer assessments (e.g., quizzes, papers, exams, presentations), which are weighed more heavily. Many courses may only require one exam or paper that's worth 100% of your grade!
- You are not given many specific reading assignments nor is there a particular text that the class will focus upon.
- Classes are usually not discussion-based and your participation in class may not be considered as part of your grade.
- Professors are less approachable and less available.
- More time is spent in the library.

Assessment (Grading)

For your class grade, you may be expected to concentrate your academic efforts in research and writing. The tutorials may require you to prepare material, present a paper, read articles or participate in group discussions.

Exams can last up to three hours in length. In some cases, you may be given a topic or questions beforehand, but in most the exam will be closed book. Your exam or paper should be your very best work and you should set a study plan for yourself throughout the semester.

- The quality of your essay will be compared with others in your class. Grades will be awarded based on how yours ranks relative to the others. Students whose answers demonstrate that they did a lot of research outside of class tend to earn the highest grades.
- Make sure you cite sources in your paper/exam and bring in outside sources NOT discussed in class.
- Exam questions from previous terms are often available so that you can get a sense of typical questions.
- Plan on studying 3-4 hours for every hour spent in class.
- Use the learning outcomes of the class to determine what you should focus on and what outside research to find.
- Request a reading list from the professor (if not already provided) and search these sources for recurring themes and references.
- Supplement lecture topics with in-depth readings on the same theme.
- Schedule a time to meet with professors early in the term to show them your study plan. They may have additional suggestions for you.
- DO NOT PRESUME A CLASS IS EASY BECAUSE YOU HAVE NO HOMEWORK! Remember the professor assumes you will be assigning yourself homework and that will be reflected in the exam.

Learning Differences and Accommodations

If you have special needs regarding assessment, such as reading or note taking assistance, please inform your overseas program **as soon as possible**. Disability services are available in Ireland but will likely look very different than the US. You must give your documentation to the Irish university's disabilities services office, so they can determine accommodations for which you are eligible in Ireland. If you plan to request accommodation for a disability, you must do so **now**. Waiting until after your program starts to disclose this information may result in you not receiving the accommodations you requested.

Living in Ireland

Accommodation (Housing)

As a participant on a DU Partner Program, you are required to live in DU-arranged student housing. You will most likely live in a university residence hall or apartment with other international students. Most housing options offer both single and double rooms, usually with shared facilities (bathroom, living area, kitchen, etc.). If you have questions or would like to make requests, reach out to your host university's housing office.

Make sure to submit your housing application in time. Your OIE advisor and/or host university will send you instructions on this process, typically via email after you have been accepted. It is very important that you read this information thoroughly and know your deadlines. **Housing is limited, and failure to apply for housing on time may result in not receiving a housing assignment.**

Please read your accommodation contracts before signing them, being sure to double-check that the dates are correct (some students have unknowingly signed year-long and were billed for breaking their contract early when they returned to the US after only one semester).

Moving In and Out

Your host university/housing provider will give you a specific window of time to move in:

- Plan your arrival around this time and have a phone number for a housing contact in case you arrive late.
- This information is usually emailed to you over the summer for Fall term students. Contact your host university and/or housing provider if you have not received it.
- Make sure you are aware of your move-out date and procedures and plan accordingly for the end of the term.

Damage Deposit

You may be required to pay a refundable damage deposit to secure your accommodation, which is usually around €250-300. Since this deposit is refundable, DU will not cover this for you. If you are unable to pay your deposit up front, please speak with the OIE. To secure some university accommodations, a “Pre-payment” (i.e. a down payment on your rent) may be required. If the fee is a non-refundable fee relating to housing rent, the OIE will pay for this on your behalf.

If the cost of damages to your room exceeds your damage deposit, the OIE reserves the right to bill you for the outstanding amount. Your abroad transcript will be held until the bill has been settled.

Meals

DU Partner Program universities in Ireland do not provide meal plans for their students. You will be responsible for your own meals and **will not be charged a DU meal plan for your term abroad.** If your host university does offer meal plan options, these are entirely optional and would be an additional cost to you.

Realistic Expectations and Planning Tips

Remember that most things in Ireland are smaller, older, and more expensive than in the US. Please set realistic expectations about your accommodation in Ireland. You can usually see pictures of the rooms online or ask a recently returned DU student for a description.

Many programs and housing providers do NOT provide you with linens and basic kitchenware. Check with your accommodation provider to find out what is included, if that information is not provided upfront. You should build this into your start-up costs when you are creating a budget. Some programs do include a “starter kit” in their price.

Laundry facilities are typically more expensive in Ireland than US students are accustomed to. It can cost around €5 to do one load of laundry, so budget accordingly.

Behaviour

Respect quiet hours, guest policies, and other rules of your housing site. Your mature behavior and respect for the accommodation team ensures that DU can continue housing its study abroad students in those halls. If you do not agree with the management about certain issues, please let the OIE know the details of the disagreement.

If you do not agree with the stated charges for certain services provided by the residence hall, do not use those services. Please do not use those services and then refuse to pay saying the cost is too high.

Fitness Center Membership

The Irish government heavily subsidizes university education for its citizens. This means that some on-campus facilities, such as the fitness center, charge for student usage. Therefore, when budgeting for study abroad, consider whether you plan to use the fitness center. You can generally find usage rates on the university's website.

Internet

As with the fitness center, you may have to pay for internet usage at your program location. Some universities have unlimited internet usage when you are on campus, others may have more restrictions. If there is internet available in your housing, you will most likely pay for your internet usage. You can contact your accommodations provider to understand typical costs of internet for one term.

While internet access makes communication with your friends and family back home convenient and easy, too much time spent on Zoom, social media, or messaging apps may prevent you from having a full study abroad experience. Keep in touch with your friends and family, but don't forget to be present abroad.

Meeting Locals

A major goal of study abroad is to develop cross-cultural understanding. In addition to achieving academic success, you should strive to meet locals and get to know their culture:

1. **Make an effort.** Since the universities host new study abroad students each semester (some of whom promise to keep in touch with the locals but never do), Irish students may not immediately try to befriend you. Likewise, Europeans generally take longer to form friendships rather than just acquaintances. As the “outsider”, you must show that you want to meet the locals and get to know their culture. Be friendly and genuine.
2. **Join a Club or Society.** Each of the universities has a student union that oversees clubs and societies on campus. They may also provide general support, such as tutoring or helping connect students to

resources/activities on campus. The university's sport center should also have a listing of social sport clubs that you can join.

3. **Stick around.** While you may be tempted to head out every weekend to travel, doing so could impede your chances of making friendships with local students. Constantly talking about your travel, particularly about expensive excursions, could also turn off the local students.
4. **Be respectful.** Contrast gets old fast. Instead of talking about and dwelling on what you are missing in the US, think about and enjoy everything you are experiencing in Ireland!
5. **Know your politics.** Most likely you will be asked by locals about your political stance. Questions about your political views generally will be well-intentioned and made by people genuinely interested in hearing your perspective. Be careful not to get offended or defensive when these questions arise. Also, try not to compare governments. Approach political conversations as an opportunity to learn and remain open-minded.
6. **Know the local culture/history.** Identifying someone as "British" rather than "Irish," "Welsh," or "Scottish" can have deep political or historical connotations, and individuals often have a strong preference in how they identify. Do some research about the local area and listen to how people identify themselves before making assumptions. Don't be afraid to ask respectful questions.

Keep in mind that you are only there for a short time, so you want to make the most of your time in Ireland.

Health & Safety

Health Insurance

You are responsible for ensuring that you have sufficient health insurance coverage while abroad. You should contact your insurance provider to understand their coverage abroad. You will also need to show proof of insurance for the immigration process. Please refer to the [Insurance Coverage](#) page in the handbook for more information.

Non-Irish or EU residents should anticipate having to pay for all health services. These charges can be quite high, in some cases higher than in the US, so it is important that you understand what is covered by your insurance and what other insurance options exist if you are interested in more coverage.

DU students studying abroad must meet the standard DU medical insurance requirement. It is important for you to maintain coverage in the case you require any short or longer-term care abroad, need to continue care at home, travel outside Ireland, or come home mid-term for any reason. DU's health insurance is valid overseas and can provide additional coverage while abroad. If you typically waive DU health insurance, we recommend that you contact your current health policy provider to find out what type of coverage it offers while abroad. Make sure you understand how to process any claims and what you may need to pay up front.

Vaccinations

You should check with your doctor for any recommendations. If you plan to visit other countries while you are abroad, check with one of the following to find out what vaccinations, if any, may be required:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [DU Health and Counseling Center](#)
- [International SOS](#)

Homesickness, Mental Health, and Culture Shock

U.S. students in Ireland often experience a high level of culture shock because they expect it to be similar to the US. Although Ireland is English-speaking, there are still many differences that you will encounter. For example, you will notice a very different mentality regarding customer service, convenience, and consumerism. You may find that stores in Ireland are open less frequently and seem to be less helpful to their customers.

Another common source of struggle for DU students in Ireland is the weather. With approximately 300 days of sunshine in Colorado, it can be very difficult adjusting to the typical gray, rainy weather of Ireland. Remember that you'll be just as far north as Canada.

Student unions often offer counseling services. If you are seeing a counselor here, you might want to consider seeing one abroad too. Culture shock and homesickness tend to exacerbate, not resolve, depression, anxiety, and many other emotional concerns and mental health issues. Even if you're not accustomed to meeting with a counselor, you may consider meeting with one while you're abroad, even if you just want to talk through and process how you're adjusting to your new surroundings.

Emergency Number

The standard emergency phone numbers in Ireland are **112 or 999**.

U.S. Embassy & Consulate General in Ireland

Americans living abroad are encouraged to register with their nearest embassy or consulate through the US Department of State's [STEP \(Smart Traveler Enrollment Program\)](#) website. By doing so, you will receive updated information on travel and security within the country to which you are heading.

Crime

Ireland has a relatively low rate of violent crime. Petty crime and residential crime are much more common, especially in urban and tourist areas. Rates for residential break-ins, theft, burglary, and purse-snatching have all risen in recent years, and thieves often target tourists, particularly near tourist attractions.

In rare cases, these crimes have involved physical assault or violence, more commonly in Dublin or larger city centers. Additionally, avoid parks after dark, guard your valuables (i.e. passport and wallet), and avoid showing signs of affluence. Do not leave your drinks unattended at bars or restaurants, as there have been reported incidents of drinks being spiked with illegal substances, leading to robbery and sexual assaults.

Be cautious and aware of your surroundings, like you would be in Denver. [International SOS \(ISOS\)](#) has detailed information for cities, occasionally down to the individual neighborhood. They can also help in situations involving crime and health.

Medical Facilities

Quality medical care is widely available, but waiting lists exist for certain types of treatment. Serious medical problems requiring hospitalization and/or medical evacuation to the United States can cost thousands of dollars. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for health services.

Natural Disasters

Ireland is not prone to regular natural disasters; however, severe storms and flooding can occur in certain areas. The [U.S. State Department](#) offers resources to help you plan in the case of an emergency overseas.

Traffic Safety and Road Conditions

All traffic travels on the left in Ireland. In urban areas, roads can be very congested. This is especially important to remember on two-lane roads. Proceed carefully through crosswalks and be wary of drivers who may run yellow and red lights. **Pedestrians are advised to look carefully in all directions before crossing a street or roadway. Traffic always yields to the right and pedestrians do not have the right of way except at crosswalks...and usually not even then!**

Driving Abroad

The University of Denver and our Irish partners discourage students from driving because it can be difficult and dangerous.

Criminal Penalties

While in a foreign country, U.S. citizens are subject to that country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and do not always afford the protections available under U.S. law. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than those for similar offenses in the United States. Persons violating Irish laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking of illegal drugs in Ireland are severe, and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines. **Some materials that are legal in the US are illegal to carry in Ireland.**

Ireland and Alcohol

Please see the [Safety & Security Considerations](#) page in the Handbook.

Communication

Calling Home

Give your family your abroad phone number, email address, and mailing address so they know how to reach you in the event of an emergency.

To make a [direct call to the US](#) using a phone that provides a direct dialing option, dial: **00+ 1 + area code + phone number.**

Time Differences

Generally, all locations in Ireland are 7 hours ahead of Denver. However, be mindful of the time change in the spring and fall. While Ireland does observe daylight savings time, the exact date of the change may differ from the US.

Mobile Phones

Many students purchase a pay-as-you-go SIM card while in Ireland. Please be sure to unlock your phone before going abroad if you would like to use this option. You can also purchase a local mobile phone that gives you a local number that can be used off Wi-Fi.

Email

Your Irish university may provide you with a local email account. Please make sure that you continue to check your DU email regularly (or forward it), as this is how the OIE will most likely maintain communication

with you. Again, be mindful of internet access and check your housing and host university's websites to find out about internet access where you'll be studying.

Money

Irish Currency

The Irish currency is the “Euro”. The Euro (€) is made up of 100 cents (sometimes called Euro cents). Notes come in denominations of €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200, and €500 and differ in color and size. Coins come in €2, €1, 50c, 20c, 10c, 5c, 2c, and 1c, and differ in color and size. Start to familiarize yourself with the currency, both notes and coins, as well as [exchange rates](#).

We suggest you carry a small amount of local currency before you leave, roughly €200, for the first few days, and especially if you plan to arrive on a weekend. You can exchange money at a U.S. bank or airport before departure or at an Irish airport upon arrival.

Cost of Living

Cost of living in Ireland is generally higher than in the US. Remember that as part of your immigration process, you will be required to show proof of funding to support yourself. Please refer to the immigration checklist in your DU Passport. Many host universities will also have cost of living calculators on their websites or in their visiting student handbooks to help you determine a feasible budget during your time abroad. Program returnees are also a good resource for suggestions. Remember to account for what is not included in your program.

Bank Account in Ireland

It is not always possible for short term students to open a bank account in Ireland, though some banks will allow it. If you are interested in the option, ask the international office at your host university for further information and advice.

ATM & Credit Cards

Make sure you know how to contact your US bank from overseas. Find out if they offer a 24-hour customer service help line and **what their emergency phone number is for calls from outside of the US** (1-800 numbers do not work outside of the US).

If your bankcard is lost or stolen, you should notify your financial institution immediately. We recommend making a copy of the front and back of the cards you are planning on taking and leaving one at home with a trusted family member or friend and bringing the other copy with you.

Most major credit cards (MasterCard, Visa or American Express) can be used in Ireland, as well as worldwide. ATMs are widely available. International credit cards and ATM cards will work as long as they have a four-digit PIN encoded. Check with your bank before leaving home.

General Information

Electricity

If you plan to bring any electrical appliances with you from the US, make sure that you bring a voltage transformer **and** an adaptor. The Irish adaptor has 3 prongs (2 horizontal and 1 vertical). The electrical current in Ireland is **230 volts**, while it is only 110 volts in the US.

You need not only an adaptor to change the shape of the plug, but also a transformer to lower the voltage for American appliances. If you are planning on bringing some heating elements (i.e. hairdryers, straighter, etc.), keep in mind that they get dangerously hot, even with a transformer. Consider purchasing these items once you arrive in Ireland to avoid blowing out a socket.

Weather

Ireland uses Celsius (not Fahrenheit) as their system of measurement for weather. [Weather in Ireland](#) is generally cool, though it can get quite warm in the summer and very cold in the winter. Pack according to the seasonal conditions of your host city. This means bringing warm clothing, including hats, gloves, a winter coat, and scarves. Your warmest sweaters and trousers will also be necessary. Fleece is a practical accessory as is an umbrella. Even within your housing, you may find the temperature colder than you're accustomed to in the US. A good sleeping bag and a pair of thermal underwear will help combat the cold. Libraries are popular havens in colder weather because they are generally well heated.

Irish Slang

You'd be surprised how different English can sound in Ireland! Google "Irish Slang" to get an idea of some common phrases you'll likely hear.

More Info

For more information on Ireland visit the [US State Department's site](#).

Important Contacts

Maynooth University

International Office, Humanity House
South Campus, Maynooth University
W23 X021
Ireland, Republic of
Tel: +353 1 708 3868
Email: studyabroad@mu.ie
Website: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/international/study-abroad-programme>

University College Cork

International Education Office
University College Cork,
'Roseleigh', Western Road,
Cork, Ireland
Tel: + 353 21 4904734
Fax: + 353 21 4904735
Email: isoffice@ucc.ie
Website: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/international/>

