SETU Wateford Ireland

Exchange Report

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COMPUTER SCIENCE

Introduction

My name is Rasmus Jessen and I am 25 years old. I am studying Computer Science at KEA (Københavns Erhversakademi), and I have just finished my 4th Semester abroad in Waterford, Ireland at SETU (South East Technological University). In my 2nd Semester I got the idea that I want to go on exchange, because I have heard from so many of my friends that have been on exchange, that it has been one the best experiences in their life. So, when I saw you could go on exchange in your 4th Semester, I was immediately on board with it.

I choose Ireland, because I always wanted to go there, and one of my friends was also on exchange in Ireland, and she told me what a great experience it was.

My modules and the overall Academic Experience

I thought it would be easy to choose our modules, but I was very wrong. The modules I had chosen with my learning agreement back home, all overlapped with each other, mostly because there were on different courses. The timetables were so annoying to navigate through, and even more annoying if you chose from different courses. But the teachers and coordinators really helped me get through it all, so everything could fall into place, especially our International Coordinator Alan Aylward.

My plan was trying all kinds of different modules in the degree called **Computering and Mathematics**, and choosing the ones I found interesting, and were in some ways an extension of what I have already learned back at KEA. The first two weeks of the school we were allowed to attend all of the classes we wanted to, so used that time to go to the modules I had chosen, and also some other ones that sounded interesting. In the end, ended up choosing the modules I thought was interesting, but mostly I choose them, because I really wanted all of my modules to not overlap with each other, and therefore creating my schedule.

The modules I ended up having was **Introduction to 3D Game Development, Introduction to Computer Security, Computer Systems 2, Web App Development 1, Mobile App Development 1, Technology Entrepreneurship**. The modules were in general a very good mix of both lectures and practical work in the different labs they have around the school. You would usually have 2 hours of lectures and then 2 hours of practical work with different kind of exercises. All of them were a bit spread across different courses in the degree, so there were a lot of variety.

Introduction to 3D Game Development was a really fun experience where we learned about using the Unity Game Engine to design, develop, animate and coding scripts with C#. It was overall a really fun experience, with our teacher "Brendan" who was really good at structuring a good class and were always there to help you when you needed it. I always liked games, and I had used Unity before, so it was nice to revisit it again. I do know for a fact, that I am never going to animate or design stuff, which was properly my least favorite thing about the module.

Introduction to Computer Security was properly the heaviest module I had, but in the end the most rewarding one. It was generally about the most basic things revolving around computer security like different kind of encryption and decryption, public and private keys etc. I did have some of the knowledge from my last semester, so I did have some knowledge of what the teacher was talking about. Our teacher David Power was a really good teacher, and you were not in doubt that this guy knew what he was talking about. It was most of the time very heavy stuff that might had been very boring with the wrong teacher, but David managed to make it very interesting.

Computer Systems 2 was properly the module I disliked the most. It was one those modules I mostly choose because it didn't overlap with any of my other modules, and it seemed simple enough. Lot of it were very basic stuff about operating systems, Linux, processes etc. Some of it were still new to me, so I did end up learning something. But it was it just really boring, and it didn't really speak to me.

Web App Development 1 was a really nice class to have. It revolved about building a Web App with the HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Node and Express.js. This class were properly the easiest one I toke, because I already knew quit a lot about HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, and I have to tried to work with Node and Express.js some time ago. But it was also very nice to have a module that wasn't so demanding.

Mobile App Development 1 was also one of my more disliked modules. It was about building a mobile app in Android Studio with Gradle, Kotlin and XML. Kotlin was like Java, just with different syntax, which in my opinion made it so annoying to use. There were always problems with Android Studio, which is what I used to code in, and had so many troubles making sense of it. But the teacher Siobahn was very kind, and very good at helping us. So, in general it was mostly because I didn't like the programming language and the tools we used.

Technology Entrepreneurship was kind of a chill, but also a very funny and different experience that what I have been used to. The module revolved around creating a product in the technology area. You had to be in a group where you together came up with an idea, while also covering other areas like the cost of the product and how can you get it out to your customers. The group I ended were a group of really nice guys and we had a lot of fun coming up with our idea. We came up with an app that helps people with vision loss navigate around new areas.

Practical Experience

The application process was not bad at all. Both my international coordinator at my home university was great at helping me, and SETU was also very helpful with the process.

The biggest issue I had was finding accommodation. Ireland is in general a very hard place to find accommodation. The opening for student dorms opens up way after you start your application process, which makes it nearly impossible to get rooms at the dorms. Luckily SETU also have a platform called **Studentpad** where you can find private accommodations in a specific area. It was

quite a struggle, and I ended up getting a lot of rejections. I generally didn't have problem with scammers, but I was of course careful with who I was in contact with. I ended getting a room in a small house, where I first was rejected because it was taken at first, but then the landlady who owns the house wrote to me and offered me the room. The house itself was not very nice. It was messy, there were things lying around everywhere and there was no central heating, so everything was heated up with expensive heating devices. I lived together with 2 other guys. One of them usually minded his own business, and the other guys who was from France, I talked quite good with, and he was a very nice person.

I ended paying 550 euros for rent, which was a bit more expensive than what I usually pay back in Denmark, since I live in a dorm room outside of Copenhagen. My expenses were very similar to back home in Denmark, and between my SU, Erasmus grant, some money I had saved up on a savings account, and bit of help from my parents, I manage to get by there. I am person that like to experience as much as possible, so much of my money were spent on traveling to different places in Ireland. Also, I might also had spent a pretty penny on going out to pubs, but I guess that just me who like to go out a lot.

Cultural/Personal Experience

The Irish people are in general very nice people. It was not uncommon that when you walk down a street, and some random guy says "Hi, how are you?".

One of my first memories here, was when I just arrived in Ireland. I was in the very unfortunate situation, where the flight company lost my luggage, and I had spent my entire day out in the city looking for new clothes to replace the one I lost. Fortunately, I ended up receiving a phone call from a guy who told me that he was on his way with my luggage, which I was incredibly happy fore. After I had received my luggage, I really felt like to go out and take a beer. And since I didn't know anybody in the country yet, I went out alone. So, I went out to a pub near the place I lived, and I order a good old-fashioned Guinness. The bartender gave me a special drink he created, and he said, "Welcome to Ireland", and I also ended up talking a guy at the bar for most of the night. That night gave me an overall good experience for what to expect from Ireland and its people and made me even happier for choosing this country. The pubs in general are a great way of interacting with the Irish people, which is very easy, because all of them are general very open and easy to talk to.

The public transport in Ireland is really frustrating. It almost always delayed, and you can easily end up waiting for a very long time for the bus to show up. It also rains a lot in Ireland, so having waterproof/resistant clothes is very much recommended.

Ireland itself is a very beautiful country with a lot of rich nature, and so many beautiful places to visit. I think the best place I visited was Galway. It's a very nice city with a lot of culture and had a beautiful location at the harborside. Also, a lot of opportunities to visit beautiful nature areas like

Cliff of Moher and Connemara National Park. I think of those places, I think Connemara National Park is properly the best thing I saw nature wise here in Ireland. I also ended up taking the Green Way bicycle ride from Waterford to Dungarvan, which is a great opportunity to see more of Irelands beautiful nature, and it's a very relaxing and joyful ride.

The Erasmus community itself in Ireland, its properly the best part of the exchange. I made so many acquaintances from all kinds of different countries. The Erasmus community is very a good an organizing all kind of different social events, like trips to different cities, hiking trips, parties or just going out to grab a beer at one of the pubs. There were also people who had been here the last semester, and already knew each other, but there were really good at including all of us who just arrived and showed us the places to go to. One of the many good memories I have, was when they would arrange international parties, where they would book a place called the Lounge in Waterford for all Erasmus and International students, and then we all could there, and we would an awesome party together. The friends I made here were mostly international students, and we always had an awesome time together, whenever it was to go out to one of the pubs or going on a trip together.

Conclusion

I had an incredible time studying abroad, and I can honestly say that it was one the best times of my life. If you every have the chance to study abroad, I say do it. It's an amazing experience that can really broaden your horizon and give you experiences and friendships that will last a lifetime.