



exams (or with exams in the last week of the regular class period) so I didn't need to wait until mid-term to know my last day and book my flight home.

I was fortunate to get a spot in UCD residence, so I didn't need to worry about finding housing off-campus. The easiest way to get from Dublin Airport to UCD is by taking the [Aircoach](#) bus. You can book tickets online in advance for a discounted price, or you can pay with contactless credit/debit cards on the day of travel. The stop you'll want to get off at is called "UCD Slip Road," and it's about a 10-15 minute walk to the main residence reception at Merville.

This was the path I walked down every day on my way back from class.

I received emails from UCD international about housing and course enrolment during the summer, and they typically contained PDFs with screenshots of the application processes before applications opened. Once I got accepted in residence, there was a series of short videos about residence rules & regulations, how to pay our fees, and how to check in when we arrive in Dublin.

I should note that I think I got lucky with residence, as the international office said in all their emails that spaces are very limited and I know a lot of students did not get a space in on-campus housing. UCD provides website suggestions to look for off-campus housing and advice for how to avoid housing scams, but Dublin is a very difficesryis

now. If you don't manage to get a space in on-campus housing, I recommend looking for off-campus accommodations as early as you're able to.

My application process started with signing up for the residence wait-list at the beginning of June. All applicant names get put on this randomized list, so getting into residence is a lottery system. I believe they have a certain number of spaces reserved for non-EU students as well as Erasmus students. I got offered a spot in mid-June, accepted it as soon as I got the email (you have to do so within 72 hours), and selected my residence building/room from the spaces that were available. I paid a €400 booking deposit at this time and had to pay all of my residence fees for the semester prior to arrival at UCD. If you have a scholarship which is given out after term begins, you should know that you will need to cover your housing fees prior to getting reimbursed by any funding; for me that was approximately \$5,700 CAD for one semester.

I was very happy with my space in residence at UCD in Belgrove. I had my own room, but shared a bathroom with one other student and a kitchen with three others. Living in this shared space helped with making friends early in the semester. UCD has a list online of what's included in your residence so you know what you'll need to provide yourself prior to check-in. The residence staff was very quick to reply to emails and answer questions. The only unexpected things I found in residence were figuring out how to get hot water (you need to turn a boost dial to heat the water up), and the fact that there was one mini-fridge (and a separate freezer) provided in the shared kitchen, so one mini-fridge per 4 students. I ended up buying a mini-fridge for my own room from Ikea when I arrived because I was cooking all my meals and wanted more space. All rooms in my building are individual, with shared co-ed bathrooms and kitchens, and all the facilities seemed new / in good quality.

Probably the biggest difficulty facing exchange students is booking their GNIB appointment. There has been a lot of discussion in the past few months about updating and improving the system for obtaining an Irish Residency Permit (IRP), but when I went to Ireland, students were required to go online to book an appointment and then go to an appointment in town. Details can be found [at this link](#). If you struggle to get an appointment, UCD has excellent support and information for students about the registration process. Check their Facebook page for advice on how to maximize your chances of securing an appointment!

I loved studying at UCD and exploring Ireland for the semester. I made friends from all over the world, and I'm so happy I got to experience living in another country for four months. My main piece of advice to future exchange students is to make sure you get to know other students – international and local. It's easy to meet other exchange students at orientation events, but it can be difficult to meet Irish students at first. I'd recommend talking to people you sit with



This is my favourite spot to study at UCD, on the second floor of the James Joyce Library overlooking the pond.

Also, make sure to explore the city and the country outside of Dublin! There are multiple busses that run straight from UCD into Dublin city centre (39a, 145, 46a). I loved seeing the scenery in West Ireland and it's possible to book trains or bus day-tours to explore. If you want to explore but don't want to be on the train too long, I loved taking the DART train to Howth, where you can hike along the cliffs and only have to transit for about an hour to get there.

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UCD is a great school and I enjoyed my classes, but the things I'll remember most from my exchange semester are the trips I took with new friends. If you're able, take advantage of cheap flights to other places in Europe – there will certainly be other exchange students looking to do the same thing, and clubs like the Erasmus Student Network and the International Student Society organize trips to other cities and countries as well. I'm so happy I got the opportunity to study and live in Ireland. Everyone I met from UCD (students and staff in the international office and in the English Department) was extremely welcoming and helpful. My exchange semester was one of the best experiences I've had during my undergraduate degree, and I definitely recommend studying at UCD if you have the chance to do so!