# EXCHANGE REPORT

## Waterford Institute of Technology

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## Preface:

This report is made for any future exchange student thinking about studying at Waterford Institute of Technology(WiT) in Ireland. It is based on my experiences during my semester in Ireland and hopefully it will help with any questions you might have regarding studying abroad in Ireland at WiT.

## Introduction

My name is ... and I am studying Computer Science at Københavns Erhvervsakademi (KEA). In the fourth semester we were given the opportunity to study abroad rather than taking the optional courses offered at KEA. For me, the opportunity to see and to study in another country were too great to pass up, also I had no job and no girlfriend, so if there were ever a time to do it, now was it. I also felt like everyday life for me in Denmark had become repetitive and stale, so I needed a change for a while. The reason I decided to go to Ireland was mainly because I wanted to be sure that the people there understood English as well as the other exchange students, but in that regard, Canada would also be an option. I had always loved the idea of Irish culture and I heard from reliable sources that the Irish people are very friendly, so I decided to make Ireland my priority.

## Academic Experience

The first few weeks of attending WiT was a bit chaotic due to the way you choose which courses you are going to take. As an exchange student you can take courses from multiple different programs, and the first couple of weeks you can attend the classes you want, to see if the course is something you want to do or not. The timetables for each class can change at any time during these first couple of weeks and if you want courses from different programs it can be difficult to make a timetable for yourself without any clashes of different classes in it. If there is a course you are sure you want to take, start attending the classes as fast as possible cause if for some reason the course cannot have any more students in it will be first come first served. I wanted to take Introduction to Cloud Computing but could not because the course was full. The module description could be a challenge to figure out as well as the online timetables for the programs once they were released, thankfully, there is both your fellow students, the international office and the students' union which are all very helpful should you need it.

The courses I ended up taking was the fallow:

- User Experience Design
  - This course was about the study of optimizing the users experience when using your product and how to design products with the user as the main focus.

- Enterprise Applications
  - In this course we were taught how to use the SAP ERP system and the benefits of ERP system for businesses. This course also focused heavily on business concepts such as Supply Chain Management and Customer Relationship Management.
- Website Development 2
  - Basic website development skills with JavaScript, JQuery and other frameworks.
- Data Structures & Algorithms 1
  - Basic data structures and algorithm learning in java. We also learned about JavaFX as we used it for the GUI's for the programs we created.
- Introduction to C++ for Games
  - In this course we learned C++ from scratch and we programmed video games with C++ and SFML (Small Fast Media Library) which helped us render graphics etc. We also learned about basic game development concepts.
- Computer Networks
  - In this course we learned about all the most necessary computer networking concepts.

The courses consist of both practical classes and lectures, which means you will most likely have 2 practicals and 2 lectures in each course. Depending on the course you might have more in one or the other or the course will consist entirely of practicals. The practicals are the classes where you will work hands on with the whatever the course is about, and the lectures is the teachers teaching from a PowerPoint while taking questions throughout the class.

One of the most rewarding courses for me was Introduction to C++ for Games. I have always been a gaming nerd and I always thought it would be cool to develop games, so I really wanted to do this course. C++ is widely used for game development so knowing the basics is great if you're interested in doing that when you graduate. This course was only practical classes. The classroom was equipped with iMacs which were free to use if you so choose and the teacher Brendan was a nice guy and a great teacher. I highly recommend this course to anyone who has an interest in game development or if you just want to learn about C++.

Website development was also a great course. Most of it was easy to understand being a 4 semester Computer Science student. But I liked it because the things we learned in this course like JavaScript and

JQuery was something that we had not learned back home at KEA and yet it felt like in a lot of the projects we made at KEA it would be helpful or it was expected of us to know these things.

Computer Networks was also one of the more rewarding courses for me. The teacher David Power was incredibly good at explained the different network concepts I might have had difficulty understanding before. At the beginning of each lecture he made us do an IP addressing calculation to find Network Address, Broadcast Address and range of hosts etc. This was essential as a part of the exam and practical assessments and it really helped with the understanding getting to do it more often, also it was a great start to a lecture since you would usually just sit and listen for an hour, at least I thought so.

One course I think you should avoid is Enterprise Application, depending of course on what you like and what you study. But when I chose this I thought it had something to do with how you program large scale applications. It does not. This is a business class that teaches you the basics of using the SAP ERP system, unless you for some reason expect to be working with this specific system it is completely irrelevant to you. As a Computer Science student, I did not learn anything useful in this class, and besides this, the lectures were dreadfully boring. I only ended up with this course because Introduction to Cloud Computing was full and it fitted my timetable.

## Social and Cultural

When your application gets accepted you are invited to join a Facebook group for all the international students going to WiT I highly recommend you do this, there will most likely also be a messenger group with most of the students going the same semester as you. This is a great opportunity to meet your fellow exchange students and if you have any questions they might be able to help as well.

In the first couple of weeks there will be a lot of events and parties going on. This is a great way to make new friends and the exchange students events are great, because everyone is trying to make friends in the beginning, so it will be easy to get to talk to people. You should attend as many as these events as possible. One of the greatest things about going on exchange is making new friends around the world. Another way to meet new people is to join a society. There will be an introduction day where you can go around and talk to members of the different societies. It will probably cost around 5 euros to be a member for the rest of the semester, I did it and I had a lot of fun and got to meet some cool people, so I recommend you take a look and see if there is a society you like.

I was lucky enough to befriend someone who brought his own car, so it was easy for us to go on trips around Ireland. I got to see a lot of beautiful places in Ireland and even in Northern Ireland too. Even if you are not as lucky as me there is still a lot of options for travelling around with bus in Ireland, you should see

as much as you can of this incredibly beautiful country. The best part of Ireland is probably the people, they are all polite and they have an incredible sense of humor, but the greatest challenge you will face during your stay in Ireland is understanding the locals. Their accent and the slang they use can be difficult to understand at times, and the accent varies a lot from town to town, so even for someone who is great at speaking English it can be a challenge. For instance, when they use "How are you?" as a greeting, they are just saying hello and not asking you how you are. They also use the word "Fag", not to be disrespectful to gay people, but rather as slang for a cigarette. The thing we know as chips, is called "Crisps" and our fries is called "Chips" to them.  Luckily, none of the teachers had a hard-Irish accent, so it was never a problem to fallow the classes. Finally, the pubs, the pubs in Ireland is everything you hoped. The interior and the decorative style of every single one of these places is incredible, a lot of the places also regularly have live music with local bands and they are generally very talented, so it is always a good time when the band starts playing. I was amazed every time I stepped into one of these places and I am going to miss it so much now that I am back home to the regular Danish bars.

## Practical

I advise you to start looking for accommodation as soon as you get the acceptance letter, I stayed at WiTs own accommodation Manor Village which I enjoyed a lot, but housing is a bit of a problem in Ireland and I know some of my fellow exchange students had troubles finding a place to stay because they waited too long. But you will get information on this a soon as you are accepted. The pricing itself is not that different from Denmark. Ireland in general is not that different from Denmark when it comes to pricing, but I ended up spending less than I anticipated because my only real expenses was alcohol and food. I do not find it necessary to get a bank account in Ireland either, especially if you are only staying for 1 semester.

## Conclusion

Going on exchange is one of the best decisions I have ever made, and Ireland is an amazing country that you should visit whether it be on exchange or not. I had so much fun during this semester and I made friends from all over the world. I strongly recommend that you go on exchange as it is an experience of a lifetime and one you will one be able to get while you study.