

# My trip to Ireland

13.3.2105-23.3.2015

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This trip to the Emerald Isle came with many FIRSTs.

*My first trip to Ireland.*

*My first visit to all universities in Ireland.*

*My first time watching the St Patrick's day's parade LIVE.*

*My first time watching solar eclipse with my naked eyes.*

*My first time seeing one of the wonders of the world- the Cliff of Moher.*

*My first surprise Irish birthday party with respectable educators.*



14.3.2015

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We set off on 13.3 midnight via Dubai to Dublin. A long flight that was but the cold chill in the airport woke us up. It was actually like noon that we arrived Dublin city. All of a sudden, we found ourselves in a patch of natural green in Phoenix park and later a festive marketplace dotted with green and orange. Our drained bodies were soon moisturized by the smiles and music along the streets. Honestly, I never expected Dublin to be that 'busy'.





## 15.3.2015

This day was a special day for me as it's my birthday! I was treated to a birthday drink - a fresh glass of Guinness that I filled up for myself! I even got a certificate for that. The taste of the beer certainly came different. Perhaps marinated with the Irish heritage building and the rich history, the liquid came much creamier and less bitter than the ones I had before. What amazed me too was the long history of beer-making and the science that's put into the process. How can people in the past be so smart?! For lunch, I got to try the famous salmon which was another Michelin dish in Ireland.

The highlight of the day was a total surprise when the team took out a gorgeous birthday cake during dinner. I was pampered by kisses and birthday songs in three languages! Yes, two Irish ladies next to our table sang the song in Irish. What a present! What a cultural medley! My heartfelt thanks to everyone in the team!





16.3.2015

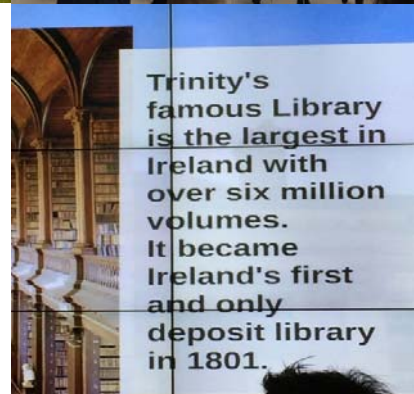
The first university we visited was the **University College Dublin**. Their international recruitment officer has come to our school few months ago to give us a presentation. The university ranked high not only in Ireland but worldwide. Among the 25000 students, 5000 are international ones. Their curriculum is diversified and among the subjects they offer, there are some which are not available in Hong Kong, like veterinary medicine and agriculture. . Some of their popular departments are Nursing & Midwifery and architecture. The entrance requirements are rather competitive- 3 Level 5 and 3 Level 4 subjects would be the minimum grades. Level 3 for English is basic or equivalent English language competence tests. Tuition fee is acceptable, having a range from 14850 to 20000Euros a year

[www.ucd.ie/international/china](http://www.ucd.ie/international/china)



The next university we went to is right at the heart of Dublin city- **Trinity College Dublin** which was one of great history, established in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The officer who did the introduction was an alumni of Trinity and so his narration and tour explanation had lots of human touch in it. One could feel his passion and ownership to the school. Their specialty is commerce and Biomedical science. Of course they have a good history of doing performing arts and lots of other subjects. Again, this is a high ranking school so their requirements are very high too.

<http://www.tcd.ie/>





### Careers after Trinity

**Trinity Careers Advisory Service**

- Career planning
- CV and interview preparation
- Internship placement assistance

**Gain international work experience for a global economy**

- International students can work up to 20 hours a week
- Stay-back work visa for 3 year
- 93% of Trinity graduates in employment or further study
- Trinity graduates employed in 130 countries

**Ireland is a hub for innovative, multinational companies:**

- EU HQ for Google, Facebook, Twitter
- Digital Hub supports startups and SMEs
- Entrepreneurship training available

### Accommodation and Cost of Living

**College Campus**  
750 places. Reserved for 3rd, 4th year students and Scholars

**Trinity Hall**  
1,000 places. College owned campus 15 minutes from City Centre. All 1st year international students allocated rooms here.

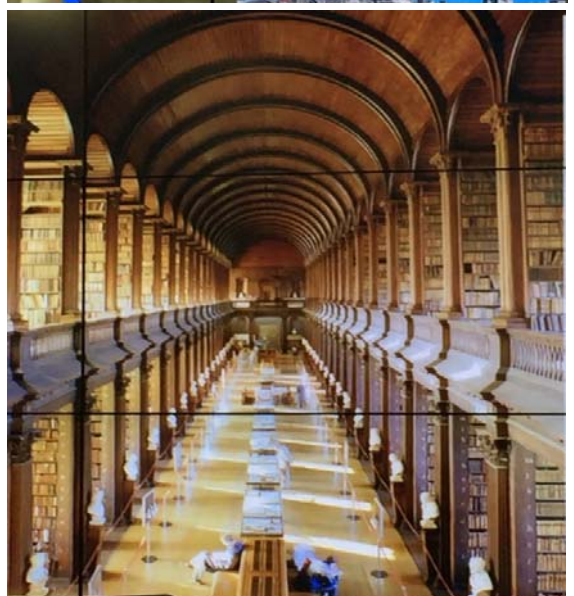
**Estimated living costs: Euro €**

Rent	5,400
Food	3,600
Utilities	600
Commuting	800
Textbooks	1,000
<b>Estimated total annual costs</b>	<b>€11,400</b>

### Requirements

Dependent on course:

- Standard 12: minimum 85% to 95%
- IB: 30 - 40 points
- IGCSE: BBBB - AAAB
- IELTS: 6.5, no band below 6





17.3.2015

Green Green Green!

I wander among the patches of green  
Reminiscing the pipers, the cheers  
Eyes sparkle with kindness  
Laughs and chimes dangle in the  
madness of  
Abundant affection  
Newly buried is the shadow of my soul  
Diminished, decomposed



St Patrick's Day is a huge celebration. Even visitors like us got into it so quickly that we merged in the green and cheers in a second.

I kept thinking of the magic that brings the people together so frantically for their country. I wonder whether I could have such a magic wand to bring back to school to make everyone in the school work as, if not more passionately for our school as ONE!

We ended the day with a game of Hurling in Croke Park which's new to me. A good mix of sports and arts, making it a very memorable day! Big exposure to various facets of Irish culture.



18.3.2015

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We started our visits in a frosty morning. We went to [Dundalk Grammar School](#), going in and out of the classrooms to understand the curriculum, pedagogy and everything about the school. We managed to visit their Carpenter, Science, Art and Design & communication Graphics class in which students explained their projects to us. The learning approach is similar to the IB where students have to record their design process in a portfolio and keep track of each and every step towards their final deliverable. I was impressed by the articulation and confidence of each student in the class. The teacher was also very proud of the students' performance.



Same scenarios in Home Economics class where a couple of kids were having HE as an elective in their transition year. Their smiles coupled with their knowledge in what they're doing impressed me most. In the French class, the students were using a software to practice their vocabulary. I think we could do that for our Spanish students too.



The highlight came from the music class where the teacher and some students played us a beautiful piece with their star student playing accordion.

In Ireland, students after Level 4 can choose to have a transition year where they could choose whatever they like to study, perhaps like Business, or arts or design or food science or on an engineering project. We should consider this arrangement as students could then have a gap year to enrich themselves without any academic pressure.





In the afternoon, we visited two universities: the Dublin City university and the Maynooth university. As the name suggests, the DCU is more urban and the Maynooth is characterized by its architecture and buildings. Sometimes, I can't help but thinking: environment is really another teacher in learning. With a big, peaceful and green environment, one is more prone to reading and thinking. At least the place allows space for meditation and collaboration.



The Maynooth university shares the campus with St Patrick's college which has an iconic historic church. That is stunning. The piece of lawn also caught our eyes and one would just like to sit there or under the vine with books to while away the time. Perhaps Newton and other scientists too had their revelation, motivated by similar natural scenic 'moves'.



<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/>

Another thing that the two universities share in common would be their emphasis on soft skills which comes more and more prominent in university curriculum.



Tuition fees and accommodation costs are basically similar too.

<http://www.dcu.ie/>

19.3.2015

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Another frosty morning it was! We did a bit of travel to the two universities in Cork and Limerick.

Both **University of Limerick** and **University College of Cork** impressed us with a scenic campus. I did feel myself in Cambridge when I stepped on the welcoming bridge in U of Limerick. They led us through the south wing to the north wing where the whole place was lined by the River Shannon. One just has to be gentle and noble with such a stage of beauty spots. Perhaps that's how we nurture manners?!

They also owned a superb music center and an English country house which they turned it to be the Prassey House, where they hosted guests and did administration work.

<http://www.ul.ie/>

Tuition fee and accommodation fee were all similar to the previous ones we visited, if not cheaper. This university was popular as they had lots of networking industries which could offer intern services to the undergraduates.

The one in Cork also owns heritage buildings but they differ from the Limerick one as they have lots of connections with China. The percentage of Asian students is comparatively larger than the others in a way. Their medical faculty is one of the most popular ones.

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/>





20.3.2015

This certainly was a very special day as out of everyone's expectation, we managed to have a glimpse of the solar eclipse- first time in my life- on our way to Galway! Unbelievable!

That started our day to **Knocknacarra national school** which is a primary school. We were welcomed by the Principal and a whole team of student ambassadors. Each of us was led by a student for a quick school tour. I was lucky to join a level 6 language class where the students were doing story telling with a tutor. The students told me that they had already submitted their scripts three times, after improvement done each time with teacher's feedback. Then in the class, they took turn to tell their story. Classmates and the tutor would give them verbal feedback and then they would do that again, trying to improve according to the feedback. What a great demonstration of assessment for learning.

Then we had the chance to join their hall assembly where a class performed various things including choral verse speaking and singing and dancing. What moved me would be the solo slot that the teacher gave to an individual student with special needs. The teacher was next to the student and helped him do the whole piece. That's respect and celebration for diversity! How touching!

During the assembly, the teachers also took turn to appreciate two kids at a time for the good deeds or improvements they made during the last week. Again, very inviting indeed!



After the visit, we went to the city Council of Galway to meet the mayor who is very kind and respectable. We also managed to go to a tertiary institute, something like a foundation school on hotel and catering. There, I met two alumni of LTPSS. They were so much different from two years ago when they left us. They are now more confident, more aware of what they are to do in future and very determined. I hope they could talk to our students and inspire them to think more long-term and be more focused. It's a pleasure to see the two teenagers now so well settled.



Our last stop is the National university Of Ireland Galway where we were received by two girls from Hong Kong. They chose to stay in Ireland as they could study the subject they wanted, e.g. medicine. According to what they said, they could practice medicine in London as well after graduation.



<http://www.nuigalway.ie/>

**Entry Requirements**

**HKDSE (preparatory)**

Undergraduate programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically: 5/4 minimum, based on             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 elective subjects or</li> <li>2 elective subjects and Mathematics (Core) or</li> <li>1 elective subject + Maths (Core) + Liberal Studies (Core)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Additional requirements for Mathematics for some programmes</li> <li>Required pass in Mathematics (Core) and English (Core). No requirement for Chinese language (Core).</li> <li>HKDSE English can be used for English language requirement</li> </ul>
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**English Language Requirements**

Subject	IELTS*	TOEFL (PBT)	TOEFL (iTP)
Arts/ Humanities	6.5	92	577
Science/ Engineering	6.5	80	550

\*not less than 5.5 in any component



The whole visit ended on 21/3 where we travelled from Galway to Dublin then to Dubai, arriving Hong Kong on 22/3. On our way to Dublin, we managed to visit one World wonder- the Cliffs of Moher. Standing on the edge of the cliff, one feels so humble in front of the wildness of Nature and the creation of the world! If we have to make the best of our life, we need to be always focused on our goals in life and be very persistent, like the waves under the cliff!

Back to my impression of Ireland, I feel that it is a place where I would recommend students to come and study. People here are friendly and helpful and the place is less snobbish nor commercial. A peaceful and cozy neighborhood as I would say, which offers little distraction to students. The best is that the cost of living seems lower than in London and Australia, and therefore more affordable! Let's explore more about the place!

