Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the 2019 edition of the University of Limerick’s International Education Division (IED) newsletter. The aim of this newsletter is to share the highlights of the University of Limerick (UL) international activity with the campus community and our partners around the world.

UL welcomed 3,043 international students during AY 2018/19. Of these, 1,768 were degree-seeking students; the remainder came to UL as visiting students through the Erasmus or Non-EU Exchange programme (760) or the Study Abroad programme (515).

This year we started to promote UL as a PhD destination in our key territories of activity. The IED team continues to promote UL for undergraduate and postgraduate taught studies and student/staff mobility in our key regions: Europe (mobility), North America, India, South East Asia, the Middle East and West Africa. This newsletter highlights a number of the promotional visits undertaken over the year. We are grateful for the participation of university staff at these events and I would like to take this opportunity to invite UL colleagues to attend future international visits with IED to promote UL as an education destination and develop international collaborations. These international collaborations are essential to enhancing our academic reputation and delivering on our global engagement ambitions.

Our Erasmus success continues apace, with UL receiving the largest Erasmus+ budget in Ireland from the European Commission, which exceeded €1.8 million, our highest allocation of funding in our thirty-year history of the Erasmus programme. This project budget supported 725 outbound Erasmus+ mobilities and 53 teaching and training staff mobilities within the EU, as well as international cooperative education placements. As part of this, the Erasmus International Credit Mobility project attracted €529,678 to UL in 2019 to facilitate 149 student and staff mobilities within the EU, as well as international cooperative education placements. These international collaborations are essential to enhancing our academic reputation and delivering on our global engagement ambitions.

IED works with our students to celebrate key international cultural events such as Diwali, Chinese New Year, Eid and Thanksgiving. These events provide an opportunity for students from different cultures to come together to celebrate home culture as well as providing opportunities for domestic staff and students to learn about and appreciate the culturally rich environment in which we work, research and study.

The IED team would like to thank the university community for the continued support in our global engagement work and the phenomenal student care afforded to international students. The latter is not always sufficiently recognised but is invaluable in making UL a desirable place for international students. Delivering a positive student experience is not only good for our students but it also builds the university’s reputation both locally and internationally.

I look forward to working with you in 2020.

Josephine Page,
Director,
International Education Division

UL Ranked World No. 2 for International Student Happiness

The University of Limerick continues to be a leading higher education institute (HEI) globally for attracting and supporting international students. According to the I-Graduate International Student Barometer (ISB), a global benchmark for the international student experience, UL has scored the top mark out of every participating institution worldwide for social activities, clubs and societies. In addition, 94.5% of international students who studied at UL responded that they were happy with their study experience, placing UL 2nd out of 199 institutions across the globe.

The I-graduate results for autumn 2018 were officially launched in March 2019 and UL benchmarked extremely well against 6 Irish HEIs, 51 UK universities and 199 global universities. The UL International Office was ranked number one out of 51 UK and Ireland universities. UL also scored highest for pre-arrival information for international students. Nationally, UL boasts the best access to and quality of accommodation; the best campus environment; the best multicultural learning environment; the best library; the best internet access on arrival; the best formal welcome; and the best sports facilities.

Speaking about the results UL President Dr Des Fitzgerald said:

‘It is no surprise that UL continues to lead the way in terms of student experience for international students. The staff at UL work closely with the UL International Education Division to ensure that every international student at UL returns home having had an excellent personal and academic experience at UL.’

Some of the survey highlights...

- UL voted Ireland’s No. 1 university
- UL ranked World No. 1 for international student happiness
- Best accommodation quality and access in Ireland
- Best International Office in Ireland and the UK
- Best library in Ireland
- No. 1 globally for social activities
- No. 1 for multicultural classroom

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IED Promotes Around the World

In 2019, IED staff and UL faculty travelled all over the world promoting the University of Limerick, recruiting students, signing new partner agreements and attending fairs, schools and conferences. This market activity has led to a 32% increase in postgraduate taught non-EU student enrolments in UL for 2019. To continue this growth in student numbers there will be increased promotional activity for the 2020/21 recruitment period and the IED plans to visit 17 counties.

The key territories are visited multiple times including India, China, USA, South East Asia, Middle East and West Africa alongside emerging countries such as Kenya, Colombia and Mexico. Visits take the form of education fairs and agent visits, partner university visits, study abroad fairs and government-led missions.

This year the IED is tasked with promoting UL as a destination for international PhD candidates, and will look to countries where international government scholarships are available, such as Indonesia (DIKTI), Vietnam (VIED), Saudi Arabia, China (CSC) and Brazil (Print).

Caitriona Conway, International Recruitment & Partnerships Manager, IED; Dr Abdulaziz Alsayegh, Applied Linguistics PhD UL alum; and Prof. Rachel Msetfi, Dean, Education & Health Sciences, UL.

UL was part of a delegation of Irish HEIs that traveled to Colombia to launch Education in Ireland in Colombia at the residence of the Irish Ambassador, Alison Milton. It was a successful launch and as part of the visit UL participated in BMI educational fairs in Cali and Bogotá and an agent-networking event set up by Education in Ireland.

Vice President Prof. Kerstin Mey at the TAR UC 50-year anniversary celebration where she participated in a round-table discussion on internationalisation and delivered a presentation on creativity in education.

Student recruitment fair in Pune, India. Liam Ryan meeting with a prospective student for a master’s programme in Kemmy Business School.

Partnership visit to UCSI in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Vice President Prof. Kerstin Mey and Liam Ryan, International Education, Full Degree Manager, meet with Prof. Mabel Tan and team from UCSI in Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia to discuss future collaborations between both Universities. UL and UCSI currently have agreement to collaborate in the areas of Computer Science and Business with Vice President Prof. Kerstin Mey and Liam Ryan meeting with President Prof. Mabel Tan and Ernie Dzureen.

Katherine Martin, Study Abroad Manager, and Claire O’Donnell, course director of the International Nursing programme, attended the Forum on Education Abroad annual conference in Denver, Colorado, March 2019, where they co-presented with the University of Minnesota on our joint Nursing Study Abroad Programme. Pictured are: Katherine Martin; Claire O’Donnell; Eric Leinan and Carol Flaten of University of Minnesota.
This year UL was part of a delegation of Irish HEIs that travelled to Mexico to promote Irish education to Mexican students. As part of this trip, UL staff met with students to discuss the opportunity to study a postgraduate programme in Ireland.

Dr Hannah Fahey and Dr Kathleen Turnov attended the Young Musician concert in Ningbo/Shanghai and auditioned students who are applying to study in the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance next year.

In September 2019, Herveline Roche and Sinead Loughran represented Erasmus and Exchanges at the European Association for International Education annual conference in Finland where they met partners from across the world, discussing and exchanging practices, updates to agreements and negotiating new subject areas.

In December 2018, UL was successfully added to the Kuwaiti Scholarship programme list, administered by the Ministry of Higher Education in Kuwait and managed by the Dublin-based Kuwaiti Cultural Bureau. The scholarships align higher education with the needs of the Kuwaiti economy and in areas of national priority. External scholarship recipients can apply for undergraduate degree programmes related to subject areas such as business, engineering and computing. The most popular UL programme for Kuwaiti students is currently BEng Aeronautical Engineering. The first students under this programme arrived in UL in September 2019.

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The recent AACSB International accreditation earned by the Kemmy Business School (KBS) is testament to the hard work and effort by our colleagues in KBS. AACSB accreditation provides a framework of 15 international standards against which business schools around the world assess the quality of their educational services. AACSB-accredited schools have successfully undergone a rigorous review process conducted by their peers in the business education community, ensuring that they have the resources, credentials, and commitment needed to provide students with a first-rate, future-focused business education. The potential impact that the accreditation will have for the Study Abroad and Non-EU Exchange enrolments to UL could be significant, as increasingly accredited US institutions will approve students to study only at other accredited institutions.
On 21 May 2019, the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) and the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance (IWAMD) hosted the Irish premiere of the Erasmus+ documentary Citizen Europe, featuring the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility partnership between the IWAMD and the Yared School of Music, Addis Abba University, Ethiopia. The film was launched by Professor Kerstin Mey, Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement, UL and attended by a range of local community and educational organisations as well as the Irish national agencies for Erasmus+ Léargas and the Higher Education Authority.

This event was part of the pan-European launch of the film, with events taking place in over fifty venues across Europe, with the main event in Athens. The aim of the pan-European launch was to form part of a wider objective to spark debate and discussion about Europe among people and to consider and promote active citizenship, inclusion and democracy. This was highlighted in the panel discussion featuring Cian Guerin and John Real (Limerick Youth Service), Aine Dinn (Co. Limerick Youth Theatre), Suzanne Kavanagh (Project Officer European Solidarity Corps, Léargas), Dr John Hogan (Department of International Relations and International Organisation, University of Groningen, Netherlands), Dr Kathleen Turner (IWAMD) and Mamobo-Oghene Ogoro (University of Sanctuary, PhD Fellow University of Limerick). Their varying perspectives and experiences with Erasmus+ covering volunteering, study, youth exchanges and teaching, ensured a very interesting discussion moderated by Dr Máiréad Moriarty, Assistant Dean International, AHSS.

The documentary captures the lives of five Erasmus participants who work, study or volunteer across Europe. The film’s young characters leave their hometown for the first time, to prove they can survive in a foreign environment. From France, Germany, Poland, Bulgaria and Ethiopia to Lithuania, Finland, Greece and Ireland, they must adapt to different cultures and mentalities. The experiences of these young characters is juxtaposed with the memories of the first Europeans to take part in Erasmus, an ambitious mobility programme created in 1987.

Sharing photographs and amateur films, they recall what Europe was like and how the experience changed who they have become. Set against the current European crisis, fuelled by unprecedented youth unemployment, uncertainties around the refugee crisis and Brexit, their journeys offer a bird’s-eye view of a continent in transition and a ground-level understanding of the many faces of Europe.

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Campus Visitors

Throughout 2019, the International Education Division has been delighted to welcome visitors to the University of Limerick from all over the world to our Erasmus, Study Abroad and full degree teams.
Vietnamese Ministry and Universities Visit UL

As part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ireland-Vietnam dialogue on Education, Research and Innovation a high-profile group from the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Vietnamese Universities visited UL on 16 October. The group met with Josephine Page, Director of the International Education Division and received a tour of the Nexus Innovation Centre. Following the visit Josephine Page stated: ‘The visit provided an opportunity to meet current and new partners and to discuss potential collaborations in conjunction with our colleagues at the Embassy of Ireland and Education Ireland in Vietnam.’

Indian Ambassador. His Excellency Mr Sandeep Kumar Visits UL

The University of Limerick was delighted and honoured to welcome the Indian Ambassador to Ireland Mr Sandeep Kumar on campus. During the visit Mr Kumar met with some of our Indian students and spoke to them about the great opportunities that will present themselves while studying at UL. He also spoke very highly of the Indian community living and working in Limerick and encouraged the students to build their networks and focus on building lasting relationships.

Kenmy Business School Hosts a Chinese State Delegation Visit to UL

In September, the Kemmy Business School hosted a 14-strong delegation from State Administration for Market Regulation in China. The purpose of their visit to Ireland was to attend the training programme for attracting Foreign Direct Investment, including policy support and the regulation on intendancy at the government level.

Dr Briga Hynes, Head of Department of Management and Marketing, gave a lecture on ‘The Business Environment of the Enterprises: policy, current and future development – case studies in Shannon Region’. In the afternoon, the delegation visited the Nexus centre.

UL Welcomes the Annual Education in Ireland US High School Counsellors Tour to Limerick

The US High School Counsellors Tour welcomed 15 US counsellors from all over the United States to UL on 25 February 2019. The counsellors learned about UL’s undergraduate programmes, our Cooperate Education semester, the awards UL has received this year and UL’s 97% graduate employment rate. They also learned about how affordable UL’s world-class education is to US students, coming in at an average cost of $25,000–$30,000 per year depending on the programme of study. They experienced what it is like to be a student at UL and what Limerick city has to offer by visiting our medieval Kings John’s Castle located in the heart of the city and dining at Bunratty Castle’s medieval banquet.
International Orientation September 2019

The International Education Division warmly welcomed over 1,300 new International students to UL in September. Our seven-day orientation programme commenced on Monday 2 September, with a host of activities throughout the week, including Shannon airport collection, coffee mornings, traditional Irish music night, campus run, mindfulness workshop, and a variety of workshops to help students adjust to the UL academic system. A further 600 visiting students will arrive in January 2020 for the spring semester.

At UL the real Irish welcome is extended to students from abroad, with a Welcome Address, followed by an Irish music performance from Celtic Steps who come from Co. Kerry to give new students a real taste of Irish culture; this always proves to be the highlight of the week for students.

We ended the week by taking over 700 International students into the market in Limerick city on Saturday morning, which gives the students a chance to explore the city centre.

The aim of the International Orientation Programme is ‘to ensure International students have a smooth transition and integration into the campus community’.

This year Campus Life Services piloted a Dublin airport ‘Meet & Greet’ service. As many of our international students fly into Dublin airport, guides were at the terminals on Saturday 31 August and Sunday 1 September to welcome international students to Ireland and guide them to the green bus that will bring them directly to the campus.

On arrival to UL, students could avail of a complimentary car service to take them to their accommodation both on and off campus. This new initiative was very much appreciated by our new international students.

Campus Events and Celebrations

Thanksgiving Celebrations

Thanksgiving is an American holiday where families come together to celebrate. It can be difficult for our students being away from home at this time of year.

We wanted to make sure that our students had their very own special Thanksgiving celebrations here in UL.

We got appropriate decorations, including flags, bunting, hay and ‘Diva Scarecrow’, and our carefully prepared menu included baked sweet potato pie with marshmallows. We wanted to bring a little bit of home into the students’ lives and enjoy celebrating their special day with them.

There was plenty of fun and games, laughter and a few tears as we chatted, ate the turkey and enjoyed each other’s company as we reminded ourselves to be thankful not just on Thanksgiving Day but on every day throughout the year.

Lunar New Year Celebrations

UL staff and students came together to celebrate the Chinese new year of the pig on Wednesday 30 January at the Jasmine Palace Restaurant in Limerick city. Our president, Des Fitzgerald, opened the celebrations along with Kerstin Mey, Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement. It was a fantastic opportunity for staff and students to share and appreciate Chinese culture and enjoy some great food. Students from Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, Japan and Indonesia joined the party as they share the same lunar calendar. Dinner was followed by some traditional games, spot prizes, and some fantastic student musical and singing performances.
Farewell Event for International Students

On 10 April the International Education Division hosted a Farewell Event for international students whose time in Limerick was drawing to a close. The annual Farewell Event is a celebration of UL’s cultural diversity and an opportunity to wish the university’s international students the very best in their future studies and careers.

Over 650 students attended the event, representing in excess of 60 countries and includes students that came to UL under the Erasmus, Non-EU Exchange, Study Abroad programme, as well as those who came to UL to pursue a full-time undergraduate or postgraduate degree.

The Farewell Event in the university concert hall featured the band Ruaile Buaile, a young four-piece modern-day trad/folk group from Offaly. The International Office also launched a ‘Win a free flight back to UL’ competition. When the music finished, students gathered in the atrium to enjoy some food and had great fun in our photo booth.

#ErasmusDays

Once again, international mobility and European citizenship were at the heart of #ErasmusDays 2019. In celebration of the third annual #ErasmusDays and building on the screening of the documentary at the Irish Film Institute Documentary Festival in September 2019, the International Education Division provided the opportunity for our new international and Erasmus students to see the film. Prof Helen Kelly-Holmes welcomed the attendees and highlighted the value of international mobility: ‘We believe in the value of giving our students and staff the opportunity to study, train and work abroad. We are all aware of the substantial benefits, which a period of study, work or volunteering can bring to students and staff in terms of their broad academic experiences, their cultural and linguistic competences, their self-awareness and life experiences, and the vibrant international campus created by visiting students and staff across the world.’

UL Hosts International Intervarsity Gaelic Football Tournament

The fourth annual Go Gaelic Tournament took place on Saturday 19 October and was hosted by the International Office in UL and the Go Gaelic team. The tournament featured teams of international students from all over Ireland and provided people of all abilities with the opportunity to play Gaelic football in a relaxed, fun environment.

Eleven teams representing eight colleges from around Ireland took part in the tournament, which saw Limerick Language Centre winning the cup for a second time. Teams of international students from Tralee, Carlow, Athlone, National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG), National College of Ireland, Limerick Institute of Technology, UL and Limerick Language Centre took part in this one-of-a-kind tournament.

As in previous years, the most satisfying aspect of the day was witnessing so many international students from all over the world playing Gaelic football, making friends and experiencing first-hand the importance of Gaelic games in Ireland.

For the last number of years, the International Education Division in UL has availed of the services of a Clare-based organisation named Go Gaelic to put on a workshop for our newly arrived international students as part of our wider orientation week activities. In the workshops, students are given an introduction to gaelic football and hurling. The numbers signing up for the workshop have increased year on year and it is always one of the highlights of orientation week for our students.

This tournament has grown from strength to strength every year, thanks to Eoin Vaughan and the Go Gaelic team. In addition, many thanks to Ronan from UL GAA, UL Sport, Munster Council GAA and the GAA Future Leaders team from Colaiste Chiarain in Croom and their teacher Mr Hanley, who coordinated the tournament on the day. Many thanks to all involved and to TG4 for filming the event on the day.

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Diwali

On 24 October, the International Education Division at UL hosted its very popular annual Diwali celebrations for our Indian students on campus. Once again, the event was a great success, with very special thanks to our wonderful students and ambassadors for making the celebrations so special. Among the celebrations were traditional prayers, illuminated candles and lots of very spirited traditional dancing. Diwali is the Hindi festival of lights and celebrates the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. During Diwali, Hindu homes and temples are richly decorated with rangoli and lit with lanterns and candles. For Indians, Diwali is like Christmas time in Ireland and the International Office was delighted to bring some of the festive spirit to our students during this special time.

Seventh Annual Meeting of the Irish EU Reference Group of Agencies of the Department of Education and Skills

On 8 October 2019, the International Education Division hosted the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Irish EU Reference Group of Agencies of the Department of Education and Skills chaired by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Josephine Page, Director of the IED, welcomed participants from a range of key stakeholders involved in European initiatives across education, training and youth. This is an important gathering, providing an opportunity to discuss and reflect on how current initiatives, projects, policies and tools used are implemented to deliver on the common objectives for quality, transparency and mobility in education and training. Last year’s meeting focused on supporting and promoting mobility; this year we focused on digitalisation of skills and qualifications, highlighting the importance of collaboration across the different sectors of education and training. This meeting provided updates on the work in Erasmus+ across all fields of education and training from Léargas and the Higher Education Authority, opportunities and developments among the Euroguidance Network from the National Centre for Guidance in Education, as well as updates on Europass, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and other European initiatives.

We were delighted to meet with Mr William O’Keefe, Policy Officer at the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion at the European Commission, who is also a graduate of the University of Limerick. William provided an update and information on how the European Commission is working to digitalise the mobility of skills and qualifications in the EU and the Europass Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI).

Visiting Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility students from Vietnam, Malaysia, Lebanon and Georgia had the opportunity to meet with key national stakeholders in education and training in Ireland and share their experience of undertaking a study semester abroad.
Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility – A Snapshot of the Year So Far

The Erasmus+ KA107 International Credit Mobility (ICM) programme continues to grow, expanding the number of international partners outside Europe. From September 2015 to July 2022, 609 people will have benefited directly from ICM: 416 staff and 193 students will have had the opportunity to travel to or from UL, from or to one of our 60 partners across 32 countries with €2.1 million in funding. This is the largest ICM programme in Ireland, receiving approximately 30% of the overall funding allocated in Ireland through a competitive application process. Recent and current projects include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Year</th>
<th>Number of Mobilities</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Countries</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2017 to July 2019 (26 Months)</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>€433,392</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, Israel, Lebanon, Malaysia, Russian Federation, Ukraine, South Africa and Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2018 to July 2020 (26 months)</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>€500,966</td>
<td>Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Algeria, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, Hong Kong, Israel, Iran, Japan, Lebanon, Morocco, Malaysia, Palestine, Paraguay, Russian Federation, Ukraine, Vietnam, South Africa and Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2019 to July 2022 (36 Months)</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>€529,632</td>
<td>Morocco, South Africa, New Zealand, Algeria, Ethiopia, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Russian Federation, Georgia, Tanzania, Belarus, Palestine, Australia and Ghana</td>
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ICM Students

As the summer came to an end, we said goodbye to our ICM student, Nandita Biswas, a postgraduate student from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Bangladesh, gained valuable learning in the Bernal Institute. This was Nandita’s first time abroad and she explored Ireland with the UL International Student Society. She summed up her time here:

‘I have explored many places in Ireland like Cliffs of Moher, Aran Islands, Ring of Kerry, Blarney Castle and Blarney Stone and so many more. I must say the more I travel the more I am mesmerised with the beauty of Ireland. The most important things I am going to say about the people of Ireland, is that in my childhood, I used to watch a cartoon named “Casper” and this cartoon said that the friendliest people are living in Ireland. After spending couple of months here, I found this to be true. Literally, the behaviour and helping mind of people from UL as well as outside is praiseworthy. UL and Ireland changed my thinking about the life abroad for the best.’

We welcomed new postgraduate students Nahid and Auditee from BUET, whose first impressions of UL in October 2019 were:

‘In terms of natural beauty, Ireland is a very beautiful country. And this time of the year, it is all colourful like a painted picture. I am from Bangladesh, which is a country of 170 million people. In comparison with that, Ireland is a way less crowded and quiet place. The whole infrastructure of UL is jaw dropping! That was the first impression. Then the facilities and well-equipped laboratories is very captivating.’

Tashin Marshid, Bangladesh

Tahsin Islam, a visiting postgraduate student from BUET, completed his activity in May 2019 and returned to Limerick for the 17th International Symposium on Electrets in September 2019. Tahsin won the prestigious Dilip Das Gupta Award for Best Poster Presentation Made by a Scientist or an Engineer of the Age Below 35 Years. This result was possible due to access to materials and experiments while in UL.

In September 2019, our ICM students from Vietnam, the University of Malaya, Management and Science University, and Tbilisi State University, Georgia arrived, reflecting on their time at UL, they stated:

‘I have never seen such a student-friendly campus, which combines everything starting from study areas to the ones of entertainment. In addition, even though it is this big, I feel safe here. My favourite place is the university library, which appears to be the most technologically advanced library in Europe. … This makes the studying process more comfortable and less time-consuming. I could not ask for a better study environment. Ana Kekoshvili, Tbilisi State University, Georgia

‘Firstly, without this scholarship I would not be here. It has given me an invaluable opportunity to broaden my experience by interacting with students all over the world and learning modules in a different manner. The university is perfect for me, including campus, style of delivering lectures, and student life. George Vashklevich, Tbilisi State University, Georgia

I was informed by my Mentor in Malaysia that I was selected to be here under the Erasmus scholarship. … I have the best opportunities to experience studying abroad, mix with students and people of totally different backgrounds and cultures, different classroom concepts and systems, different traditions and ethics and many other sweet things. I am looking forward to having an everlasting relationship with all my friends, lecturers, classmates, course mates, housemates, administrators and others here. Erasmus really draws a wonderful and colourful experience in my life. Mikhail Abdul Bin Ghani, Management and Science University, Malaysia

Meena Louis, University of Malaya, Malaysia

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Meena Louis, University of Malaya, Malaysia
The Irish World Academy of Music and Dance (IWAMD) continued to expand the partnership with the Yared School of Music, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, hosting Dr Erzra Abate Yimam, Dean of Graduate Studies, and Selamawit Aragaw Erkikhun, Director of the Yared School of Music in April. Pamela Cotter and Dr Niall Keegan returned the visit to Yared in May, where they taught and met with prospective ICM students for 2020.

Dr Jim Buckley, Dr John Noll and Dr Sarah Beecham from the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems (CSIS) UL taught software architecture and maintenance in the Department of Computer Science, Addis Ababa University and welcomed two professors from Addis Ababa to UL for a week of teaching in November.

Dr Nik Nikolov, CSIS, UL welcomed Professor Arsalane Zarghili, Director of the Laboratory Intelligent Systems and Application, Université Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah, Morocco, who spent two weeks teaching in CSIS. Dr Nik Nikolov said goodbye to his four PhD students from Université Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah, Morocco, who had been studying under his supervision since January 2019. Dr Nikolov visited Morocco for a week of teaching in October 2019 and continued to develop the next phase of the project with Morocco.

The ICM relationship with the University of Cape Coast (UCC) Ghana continues apace, building on the partnership developed by Dr Claire O’Donnell and Dr Andrews Druye, UCC, Ghana in molecular structural biology under the guidance of Professor Tewfik Soulimestone, Head of Department of Chemistry. Professor Soulimestone made several visits to Algeria and the University of Tlemcen. The Department of Chemistry’s Dr Witold Kwapisnki received six visiting staff members from the Faculty of Chemical Technology, National Technical University of Ukraine, Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, Ukraine, two visiting staff members from Faculty of Chemical Technology and Engineering, Belarusian State Technological University and one staff member from American University Beirut.

Kasmlina Modh, a lecturer from the School of Physiotherapy, AIMST University, Malaysia, was hosted by Dr Karen McCreesh, Senior Lecturer and Course Director BSc Physiotherapy, School of Allied Health. Kasmlina visited students on their clinical placements, an integral part of their training, providing opportunities to integrate theoretical and practical knowledge under supervision, where best practices in placement education were exchanged and discussed. Professor Siti Khalidah Md. Yusoff said: ‘I bring back wonderful memories of my visit to UL, the wonderful people I met, the knowledge-sharing sessions we had were truly amazing and will definitely trigger new things to be implemented at MSU. This collaboration is a success. The kindness and warm hospitality of everyone at UL definitely makes me want to come back to Ireland.’

UL’s International Education Division had the pleasure of welcoming the Erasmus+ Officers from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine partners. Albina Zamalieva, Coordinator for Erasmus+ and Liliia Khalirutdinova, Head of Academic Mobility from Kazan Federal State University, Russian Federation shadowed our mobility activities and projects, while meeting UL staff from the First Seven Weeks Programme, Student Life.

Coffee Break During CSIS visit to Addis

Kathleen Markey, Department of Nursing and Midwifery spent a week at UCC. In July, UL’s Dr O’Donnell and Dr Markley hosted their colleagues Dr Evelyn Asamoah Aampofo and Dr Andrews Druye, UCC, Ghana to discuss developing strategies for best practices in midwifery education.

The Department of Chemistry, UL continued to train three visiting staff members from Abou Bakr Belkaid University of Tlemcen, Algeria in molecular structural biology under the guidance of Professor Tewfik Soulimestone, Head of Department of Chemistry. Professor Soulimestone made several visits to Algeria and the University of Tlemcen. The Department of Chemistry’s Dr Witold Kwapisnki received six visiting staff members from the Faculty of Chemical Technology, National Technical University of Ukraine, Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, Ukraine, two visiting staff members from Faculty of Chemical Technology and Engineering, Belarusian State Technological University and one staff member from American University Beirut.
University of Limerick Representation in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

UL has recently opened an office in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to assist with student recruitment, partnerships and development within the ASEAN region. Celine Wong has joined the team as International Education Regional Officer in Southeast Asia. She will be working closely with the IED team to assist with student recruitment from SE Asia. This will primarily involve attending fairs, counselling and marketing within the region.

A key action within ASEAN is to market Ireland and especially UL as an education destination. Awareness plays a big role in decision-making for the majority of parents and students in choosing an education destination. People are not as well aware of Ireland as they are to the other well-known destinations such as USA, Australia, UK and Canada. In addition, SE Asia is becoming very competitive and so it requires institutions to provide very strong support to students and education agents or they may choose another destination. Celine’s role is to intensify the level of support that UL provides to stakeholders within the regions in order to strengthen UL’s brand awareness.

Celine has completed a degree in Communications and Public Relations in Dundalk Institute of Technology and so has an excellent knowledge of the Irish education system and has a deep appreciation for the country and people. She is looking forward to delivering her experience and insights to all SE Asia students in choosing University of Limerick as an education destination.

International Buddy Programme

There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the Buddy Programme for the autumn semester 2019. We matched 159 UL students with 684 incoming international students based on common interests and university courses.

So far this semester the International Office has organised a number of events for our buddies to get to know each other, including a pizza party, a trip to King John’s Castle and several movie nights.

Over the past few weeks, our buddies have also regularly met for coffee and shown their international buddies around Limerick city. Our buddies have been very enthusiastic about the programme and have built solid friendships while integrating with a new culture.

International students have reported that their UL buddies have been a significant help in adjusting to life here, while our UL buddies have had a great time getting to know people from other countries that they would not otherwise have had the chance to. The programme is a great opportunity for international and domestic students alike.

Student Alumni Profile

Wong Zhi Xuan, Malaysia,
Master of Arts in Ethnomusicology

I love my programme in UL. The Master of Ethnomusicology programme offers a lot of participation opportunities to students where students get insightful experiences about the Irish culture and a glimpse of what the other musical cultures of the world look like. There are weekly performances and seminars at the Irish World Academy provided to students, which I greatly appreciated. The faculty are experts in their own respective fields of study and are very helpful by sharing their deep knowledge and experiences that has helped me to explore a world of musical knowledge. This programme has given me all the preparations needed as an independent researcher and provided me with the knowledge required as a master’s student in ethnomusicology.

My favourite thing about UL is the calm and relaxing campus environment where it is greatly attached to the Mother Nature. Riding a bike alongside the Shannon River is enjoyable and the scenery is mesmerising. The university is grand and safe, with many corners for students to discover by themselves. The environment is full of scholars, which motivates me to learn and explore new knowledge with them personally and professionally.

Since graduating in 2018 I am currently a PhD candidate at University of Malaya to further my studies in Ethnomusicology, and at the same time I teach and perform music in Kuala Lumpur. In the future, I would like to explore more musical knowledge of other cultures and share my knowledge and experiences to the next generation.

Imke van Zon, The Netherlands and Carlotta Schmidt, Germany

Wong Zhi Xuan, Malaysia
NAFSA

The University of Limerick attended the recent NAFSA Annual Conference in Washington DC. In attendance was the President of UL, Dr Des Fitzgerald, along with representatives from the Study Abroad Office and UL faculty. NAFSA: Association of International Educators is the world’s largest non-profit association dedicated to international education and exchange. NAFSA has over 10,000 members located in more than 3,300 institutions worldwide, in over 150 countries. There was an estimated 10,000 attendees this year. This was a big year for UL with the IWAMD performing at the opening plenary. As well as meeting over 90 partners individually throughout the conference, UL also hosted a very successful partner lunch attended by the Minister for Education, Joe McHugh, the President of UL, Dr Des Fitzgerald, and over 60 representatives from Study Abroad and Non-EU Exchange partners.

Erasmus+ Staff Mobility and DELTA Scholarships

Erasmus+ Intra-European staff mobility continues to increase at the University of Limerick, with 54 staff participating in teaching and training activities at one of our European partner institutions. Funding is provided as a contribution towards travel and subsistence. It allows staff to enhance their teaching experience and expertise; it also offers valuable opportunities to develop connections with international colleagues through participating in a teaching or training exchange with one of our European partners. The training opportunities abroad offer new perspectives, ideas and approaches contributing to professional development and area of work.

The Erasmus+ DELTA Scholarship is a new opportunity to engage with the existing Erasmus+ mobility programme for staff in higher education. This initiative is the result of a partnership between the National Forum and the Higher Education Authority, building on the success of the existing Erasmus+ mobility programmes. DELTA stands for Disciplinary Excellence in Learning, Teaching, and Assessment and is a core concept of the work of the National Forum. The Erasmus+ DELTA Scholarship focuses on supporting the professional development of staff in Irish higher education, with a focus on the enhancement of teaching and learning within and between disciplines.

Dr Liam Murray and Dr Marta Giralt, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences both completed the Erasmus+ DELTA Scholarship in May 2019. They were seeking to gain expertise in the area of Audio-Visual Translation (AVT) across three languages and sought to expand the use of AVT as part of the programmes. Building on previously attended workshops funded by the National Forum for Teaching and Learning and participation in a training course run by University College London called AVT and the use of Specific Software for Subtitling; they sought on-the-ground training after identifying good practice at the University of Malaga, Spain. They received training in AVT, addressed challenges experienced at the University of Malaga, catalogued and documented good pedagogical practices and curriculum development knowledge. On 4 October 2019, Dr Liam Murray and Dr Marta Giralt attended a ceremony at the National Forum to mark the receipt of Digital Badges for Erasmus+ DELTA awardees along with awardees from Dublin City University, Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, National University of Ireland Galway and University College Cork.

IDP Education

The University of Limerick has agreed a partnership with IDP Education, which will put UL on the radar of internationally mobile students, particularly in South East Asia. IDP is one of two global organisations that administer the IELTS English language exam in countries around the world. This partnership with IDP will increase the global reach of the University of Limerick as well as giving international students the opportunity to access high-quality and affordable education in UL.

Dr Liam Murray and Dr Marta Giralt receiving their Erasmus+ DELTA Scholarship with other recipients from DCU, IATD, NUIG and UCC

Alli McNamara, International Education Division, Nguyen Tuan Anh, IDP Hanoi, Liam Ryan, International Education Division and Nguyen Tu Linh, IDP Hanoi
The internationalisation of Irish higher education is a key element in the delivery of a quality teaching, learning and research experience for students and staff and for building international engagement for the sector. The programme, introduced in 2017, is managed by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). At the University of Limerick, the four Assistant Deans International – Dr Dónal Palcic (KBS), Dr Anca Minescu (Education & Health Sciences), Dr Máiréad Moriarty (AHSS) and Dr David Tanner (Science & Engineering) – and the Director of the International Education Division, Josephine Page, welcomed the additional opportunities for staff to undertake a range of activities which will lead to sustainable collaborative cooperation and results between partners and lead the internal selection for applications to be put forward to the HEA for evaluation. In 2019, four projects commenced with a total budget of €49,157. These projects include: Dr Mariano Paz, School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics, who is working with partners in Brazil and Peru with a focus on the creation of new partnerships between the Ralahine Centre for Utopian Studies at UL; and Dr Romina Gaburro, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, who is working on cross-national research and teaching collaborations with Italy and the USA.

Dr Muireann McMahon, School of Design, outlines her project:

“As part of the GOI International Mobility we have been travelling to design schools in Northern America (OCAD, Toronto; Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh and Parson’s New School of Design, New York) to understand how they deliver design courses that prepare graduates for the changing field of design practice. The visits have involved delivering and observing classes, participating in workshops and design critiques, reviewing student work, conducting meetings and having discussions with both students and faculty members. It has been both informative and enjoyable discussing design futures with some of the most influential researchers and practitioners in the field. The lessons learned from these visits will help inform changes to existing courses and in the development of new courses in the School of Design at UL.”

These projects end on 31 December 2019 with a final report submitted to the HEA and options explored to continue to the successful outcomes to date.

The purpose of the toolkit is to set out a University of Limerick approach to collaborative and transnational arrangements and to outline the parameters for evaluating proposals for partnerships with international institutions. The variety of models and complexity of collaborations will continue to expand and it is anticipated that this will present new challenges for UL. International collaborations carry risk and give rise to high human, financial and legal costs. It is incumbent on UL to assess the risks involved and manage the process appropriately. The toolkit provides direction to faculty and staff in evaluating complex proposals, drafting agreements and developing new and existing collaborations.

The toolkit will provide information and clear guidance to colleagues about initiating and developing different types of partnerships. It defines the collaborative partnership models that can be discussed and explored with other institutions, along with information about University of Limerick policies and procedures that are in place for approving, monitoring and reviewing collaborative arrangements. The role of the signed agreement is explained, and there will be agreement templates and resources that aim to encourage consistency, transparency and good practice across UL.

A new memorandum of understanding (MOU) that links the University of Limerick with Trent University Canada was signed in Limerick. As part of the MOU, the two institutions will develop pathways for Trent University students to transfer to undergraduate and graduate-level programmes at UL. The agreement also encourages and promotes faculty and administrative exchanges, partnerships in innovation and applied research, distance education and more. Future articulation agreements linking several Trent University degree programmes to bachelor’s degree programmes in Limerick are currently under development in a number of different fields.
University of Limerick – School of Design and National Institute of Design, India Announce Major Partnership

A memorandum of understanding was signed between the School of Design at the University of Limerick and the National Institute of Design (NID), India, in order to develop current research and teaching activities and to facilitate the exchange and mobility of staff members, researchers and students.

Both NID and UL School of Design are recognised internationally to be at the forefront of educating highly skilled graduates who operate effectively in the global workforce where creative expertise in environmental, technological and social problem-solving are critical. This partnership aims to build on these strengths to further enable graduates to be global citizens, design entrepreneurs, community design facilitators and some of the industry leaders into the future.

The signing of the partnership agreement between NID and the UL School of Design aims to provide a further study pathway for undergraduate design students to further their studies while learning from each other’s sociocultural contexts in India and in Ireland. It also aims over time to build a shared design research capacity through joint supervision of research, exchange of faculty and researchers.

Elaborating on the association, Dr Adam de Eyto – Head of School of Design, University of Limerick, said: ‘Our interests in design are very similar but our social and cultural contexts are each distinctly different. This provides us with a unique opportunity to collaborate with our NID partners, to learn from each other and develop new design approaches to positively influence our fast-changing world.’

Speaking about the association, Professor Kerstin Mey, Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement, UL said: ‘Design is a vital catalyst for the development of solutions to complex societal challenges. The cooperation between UL and NID will create a fertile ground for sharing ideas and insights, stimulating research and knowledge exchange, and promoting staff and student mobility in the service of social change and innovation and the education of the next generation of leaders in design.’

Mr Praveen Nahar, Activity Chairperson of International Programmes at NID said: ‘India and Ireland have similar foundations of design; it will be very interesting for NID and UL School of Design to build collaborative research and academic exchange initiatives and common areas of interests in design.’

HE Brian McElduff, Irish Ambassador to India, signed on behalf of the National Institute of Design by Activity Chairperson of International Programmes at NID - Prof. Praveen Nahar and the Officiating Director Prof. Vijai Singh Katiyar. On behalf of the University of Limerick by the Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement - Prof. Kerstin Mey and Head of the School of Design, Dr. Adam de Eyto.

Summer School at UL

Study Abroad hosted another very successful International Summer School from 22 May to 12 June. Over 100 students from US partner universities participated in the three-week programme. With a multitude of choices on offer, including Irish Studies, Business, Health & Fitness, and Irish Theatre, the students had the opportunity to have an accredited study abroad experience to study and experience Irish culture first-hand. Included in all of the modules is an off-campus excursion linked with the topic at hand; this year students visited the Skellig Islands, where Star Wars was filmed; Spike Island, an ex-correctional facility; and Lough Gur, one of Ireland’s most important archaeological sites. In addition to the off-site visits, students had the opportunity to do some sightseeing and visited the Book of Kells, the Aran Islands, Blarney castle and Galway city.

Summer school students enjoying a trip to Bunratty’s Castle.
University of Limerick Wins Best Erasmus Programme for the Second Year Running

The International Education Division is delighted to have received the award for Best Erasmus Programme at the Irish Education Awards for the second consecutive year, 2018 and 2019. The Education Awards have been designed to recognise, encourage and celebrate excellence among third level education providers across the island of Ireland. The Academic study placement abroad forms an integral and mandatory part of seven degree programmes in UL while further degree programmes offer a voluntary academic placement. These academic placements are all awarded credit and appear on the student’s final transcript. In the past twelve months, our current data reflects a 22% increase in the number of outgoing students from a wide range of subject areas, with almost 500 students availing of the Erasmus KA103 funding, to allow student mobility. A further 600 students availed of the Erasmus+ academic programme in the University of Limerick in 2018/2019.

From our current statistics regarding outgoing students, it is evident that traditional countries such as France, Italy, Germany and Spain continue to increase in popularity, with student mobility in the UK also seeing a significant increase in interest. Based on student feedback, the Brexit factor has heightened students’ awareness of the UK as a destination. Student mobility is also increasing in Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. Mobility numbers to Belgium remained on a par with last year. Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Norway and Portugal had a slight decline.

For students arriving to the University of Limerick we noted a large increase in those coming from France, Spain, Denmark and Sweden. We received students from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Croatia again after a dip from those countries the previous year. The university currently holds the largest budget in Ireland for KA103 Erasmus student and staff mobility. The 2018 budget was €1.3 million euro.

Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen Staff Week

Madeline Molyneaux, who works with the Erasmus and Non-EU Exchange team, took part in the Erasmus Staff Week hosted by Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen, the Netherlands. The theme of this year’s programme was ‘The ideal International Office’. Sessions discussing the best framework for an international office such as the management and structure of an International Office, how can one manage an international office more effectively, and what services an international office should offer as well as how they do their day-to-day business.

Other discussions and sessions were based around housing challenges, crisis management and student involvement and engagement. Fun activities included a walking tour of Groningen and an overview of the Dutch language and history. Information and ideas were shared and freely exchanged between partners and collaborators in the spirit of the Erasmus programme. It was an excellent programme and assists our office in UL to continue to generate ideas while also ensuring that we continue to develop and implement policy, procedures and best practice to address our ever-changing work and geopolitical environment.

New Partnership with University of Wisconsin Madison Engineering School

Study Abroad is delighted to announce a new partnership with University of Wisconsin Madison Engineering School. The University of Wisconsin Madison is ranked 13th among public institutions in US News & World Report’s latest college rankings. Overall, UW-Madison ranks 46th overall. The report also evaluated undergraduate engineering and business programmes, with UW-Madison’s undergraduate engineering programme ranked 15th overall and 8th among public doctoral-granting institutions.

New Study Abroad Freshman Programme Launched

Study Abroad launched a new Freshman Programme in September 2019, welcoming eight autumn semester first-year students from three of our current partners’ institutions: SUNY New Paltz, Southern New Hampshire University, and AIFS Germany. It is planned to expand the Freshman Programme to other partner institutions and increase the overall Study Abroad enrolments.
The University of Limerick was delighted to be bronze sponsor for NACAC 2019 in Louisville, Kentucky, USA last September. As part of the sponsorship, UL gave one lucky counsellor the chance to win a free trip to Ireland and to visit UL. The winner was Mike Delaney, College Counsellor, Regis Jesuit High School. Mike was thrilled to win the trip to Ireland and will be visiting UL to learn about the university and to experience life in Ireland for a US undergraduate student. During Mike’s visit, he will also learn about Limerick city and all the wonderful things our city has to offer to international students.

Not only was UL a bronze sponsor but we hosted a very special seminar that aimed to provide the 7,000 attendees with information explaining how US high school students can apply to study in Ireland, the cost benefits of studying in Ireland, and how an Irish degree will transfer back to the USA in the different disciplines. A key example of how degree transferred back was how students study an undergraduate Irish law degree that would enable them to become US lawyers. The presentation debunked the myths that law school is necessarily a graduate school experience and that to practise in the US students must have a US law degree. Delegates heard from Professor Shane Kilcommins Head of UL School of Law and Raymond Holian, one of the many graduates of UL’s award-winning School of Law, who has forged a successful legal career in the US.

On Tuesday 19th November 2019 the University of Limerick (UL) and New York University (NYU) signed a new exchange agreement between the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance and NYU Music Department. The signing took place at Glucksman Ireland House NYU, a very fitting venue as Dr Loretta Brennan Glucksman is a key supporter of education, and has deep and important links with NYU and UL. As part of the exchange, the two institutions will develop a pathway for students from each university to study at the other. The agreement will also encourage and promote faculty exchange.

Dr Sandra Joyce from the Irish World Academy was thrilled to have this agreement in place. Speaking after the signing, Dr Joyce said: "This agreement marks a new phase in the longstanding relationship between NYU Music Department and the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, which was initiated from the earliest days of the Academy when Professor Mick Moloney was External Examiner for the traditional music and dance programmes. I would like to pay tribute to all who worked so hard to make this happen, particularly Professor David Samuels, Chair of NYU Music Department, and my colleague from UL International Education Division, Niamh Kavanagh."

Josephine Page Director of International Education Division said "The signing between NYU and UL provides an exciting opportunity for mobility and collaboration. It is a fitting partnership as both institutions are recognised national leaders in international student mobility.

One of the ICM Projects is with Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HCMUT), Vietnam. The relationship with the International Office started under the Erasmus+ Programme through the Lotus+ Project, when in 2016, Miss Nguyen Thi Thuy Duong, Program Coordinator, External Relations Office job shadowed for a month in the Erasmus and Exchanges team, in the International Office at UL. The offices kept in contact and worked on an Erasmus+ ICM application receiving approval under the 2018 contract. In September 2019, we received our first ICM student from HCMUT. Ms Thoi Do Kieu Trang, reflecting on her time so far at UL writes:

'I was sitting in the Glucksman Library, having flashbacks of the playful excitement of arriving in Ireland two months ago, feeling light-hearted for the best semester of my life so far. I have to say that studying at the University of Limerick helped me to develop both academically and socially into a stronger character. In the academic environment I cannot say enough about how friendly and hospitable my lecturers and classmates were in UL. At every turn, they were happy to help, correct my mistakes, and better my skills and knowledge. A huge difference while studying compared with my home university is the exposure to the hands-on workshops, practical projects that truly motivated and engaged me in all the lessons, I also learned how to conduct myself appropriately, especially in English. After my brief stay here, I have achieved a level of language fluency which I had never reached before.

Socially, UL provided me with many opportunities in order to make my stay here as lively as possible. There were more than 80 clubs and societies from sports teams to the more uncommon hobbies which enabled me to start doing something new. At the weekend, trips were organised all around the country to see as much as our hearts' content! During my semester, I discovered this vibrant country with my group of international students who I can call lifelong friends. Even the unpredictable weather cannot stop young hearts. We went all the way to beautiful sandy beaches, rocky coastlines, a hike up Connemara and explored the natural wonders in Ireland!

On top of that, my experience with the International Office was fantastic. I was extremely impressed by their enthusiasm and appreciated everything. They helped me at the very first steps from providing exchange opportunities abroad, my visa application, arranging my travel, immigration in Ireland, and support continued throughout the semester. They also organised an amazing orientation week for all exchange students. Thanks to this week, I got to know many friends from various countries and find my footing here. At the end of the day, I am not only coming back with the impression of wonderful Ireland but also the unique cultures, stunning scenery and above all, the unforgettable memories I spent with the people here! Studying at the University of Limerick give me the chance to see the world, step out of my comfort zone and be a better version of myself!'

'Thank you for this lifetime opportunity, for the kind support and for all the moments in Ireland!'

'Very much looking forward to coming back! I can't wait to be there after my trip home and do the same thing again,'

University of Limerick signs exchange agreement with New York University

Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility Student – Visiting from Vietnam

Thoi Do Kieu Trang and fellow international students at UL.
Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges
– Using Technology for Intercultural Dialogue

Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange (E+VE) is a groundbreaking project enabling youth in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean to engage in meaningful intercultural experiences online, as part of their formal or non-formal education. Since spring 2018, Dr Marta Giralt, AHSS, has been leading E+VE, which aims at encouraging intercultural dialogue and increasing tolerance and understanding through online people-to-people interactions, building on digital, youth-friendly technologies; enhancing critical thinking and media literacy, particularly in the use of the internet and social media; and to develop resistance to discrimination and indoctrination while fostering the soft skills development of students, including foreign languages and teamwork. All these virtual exchanges are recognised by the Council of Europe and the students are awarded a European Badge for their participation upon completion of the programme. Dr Giralt is now a member of the coordinator network for the E+VE programme and was awarded a Badge for E+VE for successful participation in Advanced + training. In UL, students participated in the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UL Module</th>
<th>E+VE Project Title(s)</th>
<th>Geographical Area/Partner</th>
<th>Key Skills</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BR4012 Communication across Cultures</td>
<td>European Refuge/Es: Cultivating Diversity Together, Newcomers and Nationalism: Exploring the Challenges of Belonging to Europe</td>
<td>Europe and the Southern Mediterranean</td>
<td>10-week exchange with the aim to develop transversal skills such as intercultural competence, critical thinking, and digital literacy by engaging in meaningful cross-cultural experiences</td>
<td>Spring semester 2018/2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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In June 2019, Marta travelled to the University of Malaya, Malaysia under Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility with her colleague Dr Liam Murray, to provide training and information on the initiative to students and staff. In the next academic year, virtual mobility will become a reality when staff from our partner university in Palestine will visit under Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility in April 2020 to build on the activities.