

1. Provide an introduction and overview of your study abroad experience.

I received the wonderful and unique experience of studying abroad at the University of Limerick Ireland, and upon my journey; I met new friends from all over the world, gained insight into not only the culture of Ireland, but also cultures from around the world, and discovered my true independence and strength. I joined the Outdoor Pursuits club and the International Society at the University of Limerick and these clubs aided in my friendship making and advanced cultural knowledge. Through these clubs, I was able to travel around Ireland not only to the cities, but also to the farmland and the country side as I hiked through mountains and valleys. Studying abroad in Ireland was a fantastic and educational experience.

2. Using one to two examples, explain how your study abroad experience advanced your knowledge and understanding of the world's diverse cultures, environments, practices and/or values.

Through my curiosity of culture and people and the incredible friends I made, I learned about not only the Irish culture, but also was able to gain some knowledge of Grecian, German, French, Spanish, and Swedish cultures. My closest friends were from these various countries and allowed me to ask them about the different aspects of their cultures and lives back at their home. During my time in Ireland, I was also able to stay a full week with an Irish family when my father came to visit. Through them I discovered many Irish ways and culture. I was able to make a true Irish breakfast with them as well as attend an Irish church, which is a big cultural thing for Irish families. I was also able to experience aspects of their life such as the gigantic celebrations for weddings and funerals that occur at the local pubs which the family took me to. I also went along with the family to an Irish play which was very interesting because the accents were very heavy and the end of the play ended with a sudden death. The family also took me and my father to a traditional music night at the local pub and we listened to the amazing musicians play their fiddles and bodhran while the local Irishman would occasionally sing along. By staying with this family, I discovered the importance of life and family in the Irish culture as well as the great fun of the various activities.

3. Describe how your study abroad experience has impacted your knowledge and understanding of global systems, institutions, and relationships of power?

Through my study abroad experience, I have a better understanding of how separated the United States is from the rest of the world. While in Europe, all the countries are much closer together, allowing for stronger connections and compassion towards other countries. The United States is such a large power and so successful and separated that the other countries around the world feel so extremely far away and disconnected. It may be the remoteness of where I live in the United States that disconnects me from the rest of the world, but I felt so connected to other cultures and the needs of other countries while in Ireland. I also gained the realization of how so many people from other countries admire the United States and most have hopes of traveling to or living in the United States at some point.

4. Identify and describe how a decision (or lack of a decision) made by people in your home community or country has impacted your host community or country. Or, if you prefer, identify and describe how a decision/lack of a decision made by people in your host community/country has impacted your home community/country.

I never realized before my adventure to Ireland how the wars that are waged and fought by the United States with other countries not only affect the United States and the other country involved in the war, but they also have large impacts on many other countries not directly involved in the war. I was talking to an Irishman and he brought up the Iraq war and how he had many friends who were sent off to Iraq. He was quite angry about it due to the fact that he had lost one of his friends who was fighting in Iraq. It never occurred to me that there are more countries than just the United States that get involved in the wars that are declared by the US. It makes sense that more countries get involved due to the close proximity of all European countries.

5. Explore how your study abroad experience has impacted your professional or career goals or aspirations. What skills did you develop or enhance during your study abroad experience that might be transferable or beneficial in your future workplace?

While abroad, I was exposed to more cultures and people and gained knowledge about them. I plan to become a physical therapist in the future which is a profession that solely works with individuals. The more knowledge and understanding I have towards people and the various cultures the better I will be able to do my job and be more perceptive to the needs of that individual.

6. Study abroad can be a transformative learning experience, in which students learn more about themselves and the world in which they live.

- a. Describe a disorienting dilemma you experienced while abroad and why you found it disorienting.

One disorienting dilemma was the fact that people were very forward in Ireland and didn't seem to have a strong sense of personal space or respect at times. I encountered so many men that were very inappropriate and invasive to my personal space.

- b. Describe how the dilemma challenged your previous knowledge of the world's cultures, environments, practices, or values.

I realized more than ever how women are often objectified in other countries. While I recognize that this happens in the United States as well, I have never faced it firsthand. I was very overwhelmed and angry with the fact that many of the men I met were not even slightly interested in being friends but were simply focused on more physical pursuits.

- c. Explain how the dilemma helped you to understand how your decisions and the decisions of others have global implications.

These occurrences made me understand that people in other countries are less likely to hide their seemingly archaic world views and need not be ashamed to view women as property. This greatly upset me and made me want to make others who have not had this type of experience more aware of the prejudice against women. Although this wasn't the happiest part of my study abroad it taught me more about other cultures and the different viewpoints around the globe.

7. Finally, please attach two pictures, with captions, that illustrate what was important and meaningful about your experience.



This is a picture of my experience with an Irish family and their farm. There was so much life in Ireland between the green plants or gigantic flowers everywhere, the wonderful animals, and all of the people. While driving down the winding roads of Ireland, sheep and cute, tiny lambs could be seen in every field.





The landscape in Ireland was truly amazing. The topography ranged from flat farmland to rolling hills to dense forests and flowing water. Hiking through mountains and valleys was one of my favorite activities while in Ireland and really made the whole study abroad experience complete.