

## Oisín Farren Study Abroad Blog

Studying abroad at UT Austin has been an enlightening experience, especially when comparing academic teachings between the USA and Ireland. In the USA, continuous assessment is more prominent, with grades based on a combination of assignments, participation, tests, and exams throughout the academic year. In UCD, the emphasis is often on final exams or dissertations, with less continuous assessment throughout the term. In American university culture, the professor does their best to help their students understand the material. Meanwhile, this is not really the attitude in Ireland. Instead, the professor is there to just present the material and evaluate the students. Much more responsibility is placed on the students to keep up.

I also observed that U.S. colleges emphasize a broad-based education, requiring students to take general education courses across various disciplines, which exposes them to a wide range of fields. This approach contrasts with university at home, which focuses more on in-depth study in a specific area. In the U.S., students enjoy a significant amount of flexibility and freedom in their education. While new students may initially identify a field of interest, most bachelor's programs include general education requirements that allow them to explore different subjects and confirm their commitment to a specific major.

Regarding the cultural differences, tipping in the United States is an unspoken rule of etiquette. Tips are expected in American restaurants, whereas in Ireland we have service charges built into the bill at a restaurant or pub.

Through this exchange, I have learned a great deal about myself. I have discovered a newfound confidence in my ability to navigate unfamiliar environments. I would like to come back to the US in the future for work because of the opportunities that are available here.



