Kathrin Hofer embarked on a semester abroad during the fourth semester of the Human Centered Computing (HCC) program, choosing to study in the beautiful city of Waterford, Ireland. During her time there, she attended various courses and participated in the Erasmus+ Program at the South East Technological University (SETU) - Campus Waterford. In her leisure time, she took the opportunity to travel across Ireland and immerse herself in the stunning landscapes of the green island.

The accompanying image depicts her favourite destination, Tramore, located just 20 minutes away from the university by bus.

Waterford

Waterford is in the southern region of Ireland, approximately 3.5 hours away from Dublin by bus. It is known as part of the picturesque "Sunny South" of Ireland.

As the oldest city in Ireland, Waterford holds historical significance as the first place invaded by the Vikings in the country. Evidence of this can be seen in the Viking Triangle, a collection of old buildings from that era, including the notable Reginal Tower situated at the port.

The town is adorned with charming pubs, such as Tullys, the REG and GEOF's. Among them, GEOF's was our personal favourite spot in town 😊.

While it is convenient to explore various cities and coastal areas in the southern region using the bus network from Waterford, a car is necessary if you wish to venture to the western or northern parts of Ireland without spending entire days traveling on different buses. I highly recommend exploring the diverse regions of Ireland and experiencing its breath-taking natural beauty.

Ireland General

Ireland is renowned for its breath-taking cliff walks, enchanting forests, captivating folklore, and charming pubs filled with talented musicians. When exploring the country's stunning countryside, it is always advisable to seek recommendations from your hosts or locals at the pub, as they can guide you to hidden, magical places beyond the well-known tourist spots. Ireland is truly a remarkable country for immersing oneself in nature. However, it is important to be prepared for the unpredictable Irish weather, as you may experience all four seasons in a single day. Dressing in layers and carrying a reliable, waterproof jacket is highly recommended. Personally, my favourite place was the Dingle Peninsula in the southwest. The vistas there are truly incredible, and I had the pleasure of visiting this location twice during separate road

trips across Ireland. The accompanying picture showcases a scenic view from one of the hikes in that area.

University and Courses

The university is conveniently located approximately a half-hour walk or a 10-minute bus ride from Waterford city center. The campus is similar in size to the one in Hagenberg, and although the room and building names may be a bit confusing initially, you can quickly familiarize yourself with the layout. A helpful tip is to zoom in on Google Maps, as it provides room numbers for the ground floor, enabling you to identify the building you need to find. There are two cafeterias on campus offering delicious food and great coffee. Additionally, the library provides a peaceful environment for studying and working. I always felt comfortable at the campus.

During my time there, I enrolled in three courses: an English course, an Irish Folklore and History course, and Management Psychology. The language courses are offered at different proficiency levels, and if you're unsure, you can consult with the instructors who will assist in assessing your level. I highly recommend the Irish Folklore and History course to all Erasmus students. It provides valuable insights into the country's history, including the origins of place names, as well as the significance of various holidays, customs, and legends. I thoroughly enjoyed these lessons.

Communication

It's fairly straightforward, but you should be aware of the Irish concept of "ish," such as "5ish" or "half two ish," when it comes to opening hours or bus timetables. It's recommended to arrive at least 10 minutes before the scheduled bus departure time, and it's best not to be too bothered if the bus happens to be running 30 minutes late :D