

## **VPAR's WELCOME TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

**Date:** Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2015

---

---

[Hoş geldiniz](#) (hosh-geld-inz), [Willkommen](#), Bem-vindos, [Bienvenue](#), Bienvenida, Benvenuto, Jambo! (*swahili-kenyan*);

Dia dhíbh go léir, agus cead míle fáilte romhaibh chuig Ollscoil Luimnigh. Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the entire University of Limerick community, it I am pleased to welcome you as you commence your studies at Ireland's most innovative and dynamic university. We are a university that is dedicated to putting you first and is committed to providing you with an outstanding student experience. Over 80 countries are represented by international students at UL so I'll need a little more time to learn to welcome you all in you your native languages, but I'm working on it.

This semester the University of Limerick will welcome 1,214 international students, who have come to here on Study Abroad, Erasmus and International Exchange programmes. This figure also includes full-time degree students who will be with us for a number of years.

Today's welcome session marks the beginning of a very exciting journey for all of you and whether you are here for a semester , a year or even longer, we, at the University of Limerick are here to help and support you. Today, I'm sure you are filled with a mixture of excitement and apprehension. We don't expect you to know everything about the University in your first few days, so give yourself time, relax and enjoy the settling in time.

There are support networks here at UL to help you settle in to life in Ireland. We are fortunate to have a well-established and experienced International Education Division that works hard to ensure that our international students make a smooth transition to UL. The Division offers many services including an academic skills programme, free English language support, a dedicated Student Support Officer and Buddy programme. It also runs an exciting programme of events and field trips throughout the year including an International Festival. I would encourage you to make the best of all that is around you, it will only enrich your experience.

The University is located on one of the most beautiful campuses in Europe and we have splendid sports and cultural amenities. There is something to cater for every taste – the

Sports Arena, the Olympic Swimming pool, the all-weather pitches, the rowing tank in the Boathouse, this Concert Hall, and the art collections that are dotted throughout the campus. Avail of them, enjoy them. And while you are at it join one or more of the 70 student clubs and societies on campus – why not try something you haven't had the opportunity to do before.

You will also have the opportunity to give back to the community, to assist those less fortunate than yourself. The Presidents' Volunteer Award programme is a regular part of UL life and I hope that as many of you as possible get involved in it. Our students' contribution to their communities is a credit to us as an institution.

We are proud of our long tradition in welcoming visiting students to the campus. We have the largest Erasmus exchange programme in Ireland; we have been welcoming study abroad students for the past 25 years and have made many academic links and partnerships with universities right across the globe. Recently the University of Limerick was voted as having the best overall Living Experience in Ireland and 5<sup>th</sup> in the world: so, you have come to the right place. We have been voted the most supportive University for International Students with our support services voted the Best in Ireland.

I think the reason why we excel in this area is because so many of our students are encouraged to partake in international study themselves and so we welcome international students as we would like our students to be

welcomed abroad. One third (this is, 1 in 3) of UL undergraduate students spend a semester abroad – either on a study programme or work placement. This placement rate is the highest in Ireland. And when it comes down to it our graduates are beating their peers when it comes to the workplace with our graduate employment rate 22% higher than the other six universities combined. So we have much to be proud of.

Make the most of your time here. Work hard, attend all your classes and keep up with the course work. But leave some time to enjoy yourself. Join a student club or society. Make new life-long friends from different countries. I encourage you to embrace everything this University has to offer.

I want to finish by wishing you well as you commence one of the most exciting journeys of your life. For each and every one of you, I wish you a safe, happy, challenging and rewarding experience. We are truly delighted to welcome you to UL.