

Rosalie Rutten

Study Abroad/Internship - Ireland Global Engineering Internship

Summer 2025

### **The Summer of Interning and Irish Adventures**

This summer I had the opportunity to do an internship in Ireland while simultaneously doing a study abroad program there with 15 other NC State students. The program included two Engineering classes alongside the internship. We were all placed in different companies around Cork, Ireland where we would work Monday through Thursday and then have class on Wednesday nights. It interested me to do an internship in Europe because I may want to work in Europe in the future and wanted to see what working there would be like. Therefore, I thought this program sounded perfect for me. I did not have a doubt in my mind that I would sign up for this program and I was pleased to find out months later that I had been accepted. That is how I ended up in Ireland this summer, pursuing an amazing opportunity with such great people around me. This experience was so extraordinary, I wouldn't change it for the world. It has benefited me professionally, personally, and socially and the memories I made, the people I met, and the skills I acquired will never be forgotten.

This experience had so many beautiful memories that I will never forget. Some of the most memorable ones are from the people I met, the places I visited, and the achievements I made in my internship. First of all, it was extraordinary to be there with 15 other NC State students because it immediately connected us all and we became one big group of friends. We would travel together, explore the city together, and talk about our work days. Something else that was very memorable was exploring Ireland. Almost every weekend, my friends and I would travel to a different part of Ireland. We went to Dublin, Cork, Galway, Connemara, Killarney, The Ring of Kerry, Kinsale, Cobh, Belfast, Giant's Causeway, Blarney Castle, and Birr Castle. It was a perfect combination of cities, coastal towns, castles, mountains and cliffs. The country is so beautiful and it was amazing to explore it with such amazing people. Lastly, the

accomplishments at my internship were also very memorable and have made me very proud and excited. The main achievement that I am so happy about is designing, drawing, and animating a video for the company's website. I worked really hard on it all summer and they ended up loving my video and were so impressed. They thought it was so fresh and beautifully done, so now they will put it on their website and LinkedIn. Achievements like this made this experience so memorable because it let me realize that I am capable and competent. I sometimes doubt my skills, but this summer really made me more confident in them.

My assumptions of this experience were challenged in amazing ways. First of all, I expected my internship to be very technical since I applied for an Engineering internship. However, since in my interview with my boss, I also discussed having creative skills, she gave me just as many creative as technical skills. I loved this so much because I thrive most when combining those two sides of myself. Another assumption that was challenged was that I wouldn't really make an intense contribution to the company because I didn't have extraordinary skills. This was challenged because I ended up making contributions by creating their company video, testing their applications, and coding scripts for their products. I am so happy I had the skills to help with these tasks. This all really increased my confidence levels and taught me a lot.

Even though this experience brought so many amazing memories, there were also some challenges that I had to overcome this summer. The biggest challenge was the fact that I had to adjust to being in a place with people that I hardly knew. I went to Ireland completely alone and only barely knew one person. It was nerve-racking at first, but luckily everyone was coming alone, so everyone was trying to make friends. Eventually, all of the NC State students that were there became great friends, which was so much fun. Going to Ireland alone really helped improve my independence and now I am sure I can do many more things independently in the future without being nervous. Another challenge was finding a work-life balance. Because I was abroad for my internship, all I really wanted to do was travel and explore, but I was also there for two classes and a full-time internship. Balancing all of this took some time, but near the middle

of the experience, I got my routine down. I managed this by working as hard as possible throughout the week so that I could travel on the weekends. I think that I overcame all these challenges very well and they have improved my ability to adjust to new places, people, and experiences.

This internship has helped me enhance so many skills and taught me so much about my future career and myself. I learned a lot about cross-cultural communication. Every country has different standards and communication methods, so it was interesting to recognize those and adhere to them. I also became better at working in teams because every project I worked on required teamwork. It was nice to test my skills by initiating meetings, asking questions, assigning tasks, and giving updates. I got even better at this throughout my internship and am now aware of what makes a good teammate. This internship helped me improve some career skills as well such as programming with Python and UX/UI design. This internship was mostly centered around AI products, so this taught me if I would be interested in a future career in AI. Even though I really loved my internship, it taught me that I would not want to go into AI for my career. However, it was interesting to learn about during this experience. Besides technical and professional skills, this internship also taught me a lot about myself. It taught me to be more confident in my skills because any time I wasn't sure about my work, my boss ended up loving what I did. I also learned that I work well with others and am good at initiating conversations or meetings with them to talk about the work that has to be done. I also learned that my favorite days of work are when I am doing both creative and technical work. These are all such beneficial skills and knowledge that I have gained during my internship and I believe that this will all benefit me in my future career.

Besides learning things about myself this summer, this experience also taught me a lot about others. One thing that I noticed the most was how important it is to do what you love. Seeing my boss enjoy her job so much was so inspirational to me. She always seemed so happy and excited doing her job and she is so good at what she does. She really inspired me to

keep doing what I am doing as long as it makes me happy. This summer also taught me how important different cultural experiences are for others. I have grown up with different cultural experiences, being from two different countries and traveling a lot, but a lot of people on this trip had never been outside of the US. I saw them flourish in another country and learn so much about other cultures and people. These are all observations that I made throughout the summer that taught me more about others.

From this experience, I learned a lot about my own culture and country and about other cultures and countries. I learned about Irish culture through meeting Irish people, asking them about their culture, and experiencing life there. I learned about the pub culture which is very big there. Whenever people want to socialize, they go to a pub to get a beer, which was shocking to see at first. I also learned that Irish people love chatting, even to strangers. They are very open about everything and will tell you anything about their personal lives or share stories at any point of the day. I really enjoyed this because it made me get to know my coworkers better and it allowed them to get to know me better. My time in Ireland also taught me more about my cultures. I am from the US and The Netherlands and being in Ireland taught me about both of them. It pointed out even more how much more free I feel in Europe than the US because of public transport. It also made me realize that each European country is so different. It was interesting to see how Ireland was kind of a combination of the US and The Netherlands in multiple ways. All these cultural differences were very interesting to examine this summer.

All in all, this experience was amazing. It taught me so much about myself and what I aspire to do in my future career. It enhanced my skills and helped me practice cross-cultural communication. I loved my internship because of the people I was working with and the creative and technical tasks that I got. I also really enjoyed traveling all over Ireland on the weekends and meeting so many new, amazing people. I am so happy I got to share this experience with others. I would recommend this program to anyone because it really brought the best of both study abroad and internships together.