

explicit

MTU STUDENTS' UNION MAG

FRESHERS WEEK TIMETABLE:
TIME FOR SOME CRAIC!

TOGETHERALL - SETTLING IN
STARTS WITH CONVERSATION

SO FRESHERS, YOU'RE
MTU STUDENTS, NOW WHAT?

SHED - THE STUDENT HUB FOR
ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

14 - 18 Sept

Freshers Week

Time for some craic!

Student: Savers Offer

50% off

all student savers dishes

chicken balls, three in one, four in one
fudi spice box, fudi mega box

Offer available from Sep 15 - 19

€5 cash voucher

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voucher code: fudi09

Offer available from Sep 9 - 29

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&more

fudi
&more





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LOCATIONS
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for MTU Students!

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THROUGH OUR LOYALTY CARD SCHEME



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with our Loyalty
Card Scheme



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from your local,
independent
pharmacy



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OUR PRIORITY**
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for you



EXCLUSIVELY FOR MTU STUDENTS

Show your student ID & start saving today!

7 CONVENIENT LOCATIONS



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SHOPPING
CENTRE**



BISHOPSTOWN



**SOUTH
DOUGLAS RD
next to Centra**



**SOUTH
DOUGLAS RD**



BALLINOUGH



**ELMWOOD,
FRANKFIELD**



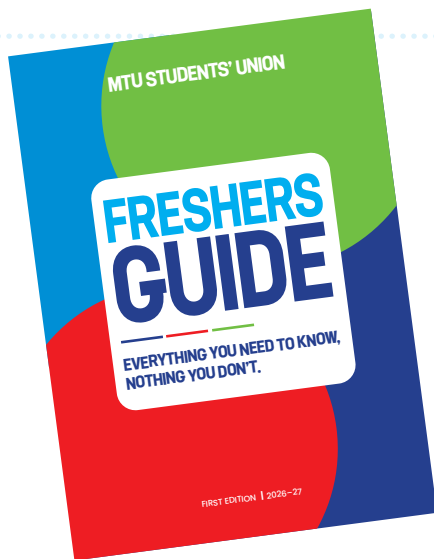
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our local communities



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HANDBOOK OUT NOW!

Your guide to everything MTU. You can read and download it [here](#) OR call in to us for a hard copy at: The Students' Union Office, 1st Floor, The Student Centre

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MTU SU elections



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YOUR FULL-TIME OFFICERS



PRESIDENT

Cian McGrath SUPresident@mtu.ie

Leading your Students' Union

The President represents students at the highest level within MTU, ensuring your voice is heard and your university experience continues to improve.

I can help you with: ✓ Student representation ✓ University-wide issues ✓ Feedback and ideas ✓ General advice and support



CORK SU DEPUTY

Ben McCarthy SUDeputyCork@mtu.ie

Representing and supporting students

I coordinate Union activities and protect the Union's democratic structure. I work with relevant committees, support and train Class Reps, and help organise Student Council and Class Rep meetings. Most importantly, I am always available to listen, help students with concerns, and make sure their voices are heard. I am also the spokesperson for the union in Cork and will strive to advocate for the issues that are important to MTU Cork campus students.

I can help you with: ✓ Student representation ✓ University-wide issues ✓ Feedback and ideas ✓ General advice and support



KERRY SU DEPUTY

Patrick McGrath SUDeputyKerry@mtu.ie

Representing and supporting students

I coordinate Union activities and protect the Union's democratic structure. I work with relevant committees, support and train Class Reps, and help organise Student Council and Class Rep meetings. Most importantly, I am always available to listen, help students with concerns, and make sure their voices are heard. I am also the spokesperson for the union in Kerry and will strive to advocate for the issues that are important to MTU Kerry campus students.

I can help you with: ✓ Student representation ✓ University-wide issues ✓ Feedback and ideas ✓ General advice and support



CORK SU VP EDUCATION

Sophie O'Callaghan SUEducationCork@mtu.ie

Supporting your academic journey

Whether you have questions about your course, assessments or academic regulations, the VP Education is here to help you succeed.

I can help you with: ✓ Exams and assessments ✓ Academic issues appeals ✓ Grant & financial issues ✓ Teaching and learning issues



KERRY SU VP EDUCATION

Laura McNally SUEducationKerry@mtu.ie

Supporting your academic journey

Whether you have questions about your course, assessments or academic regulations, the VP Education is here to help you succeed.

I can help you with: ✓ Exams and assessments ✓ Academic issues
appeals ✓ Grant & financial issues ✓ Teaching and learning issues



CORK SU VP WELFARE & EQUALITY

Emma Hume SUWelfareCork@mtu.ie

Looking after your wellbeing

As your VP Welfare and Equality, my job is to aid you with any non-academic issues that may affect you. I am here to support your mental, physical and sexual health, as well as promoting areas such as equality, student safety, accommodation, transport and addiction. I love talking to students and I am here to help, guide and support you.

I can help you with: ✓ Health and welfare services
✓ Accommodation concerns ✓ Financial supports



KERRY SU VP WELFARE & EQUALITY

Alan O'Brien SUWelfareKerry@mtu.ie

Looking after your wellbeing

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I can help you with: ✓ Health and welfare services
✓ Accommodation concerns ✓ Financial supports

FIND US

Cork: Students' Union Office
First Floor, The Student Centre
Bishopstown Campus

Kerry SU Office
South Campus, Clash Road, Tralee

OPENING HOURS

Monday to Friday
8.30am–5.00pm
Hours may vary outside term time.





By Keith Brown

SO FRESHERS, YOU'RE MTU STUDENTS ... NOW WHAT?

A few things you'll wish someone had told you before you got lost, hungry and accidentally sat in the wrong lecture.

CONGRATULATIONS. YOU'VE MADE IT TO MTU!

You've survived the Leaving Cert, the CAO, the waiting, the wondering and probably at least one conversation that started with, "So, what course are you actually doing?"

Now comes the easy bit, right? Well... sort of.

College is brilliant, but the first few weeks can also feel like you've been dropped into a strange new world where nobody knows where anything is, everyone looks like they know exactly what they're doing, and somehow you're expected to find Room 2.14 without ending up in a completely different building.

Don't worry. You're not the only one. Here's some advice from students who have already made the mistakes, learned the shortcuts and occasionally pretended they knew where they were going.

GET TO KNOW THE LIBRARY

At first glance, the library can look a little intimidating. Rows of books, silent study areas and an atmosphere that says, "Please don't even think about opening a packet of crisps." But get to know it. It can become your best friend.

The library isn't just somewhere to panic about an assignment three days before it's due. There are study spaces, resources, computers and, most importantly, librarians who actually want you to ask questions.

If you're completely stuck, ask for help. Seriously. That assignment that currently looks like it was written in another language? There's a good chance someone can point you towards the information you need.

One important warning, though: during exam season, good study spaces disappear faster than free

food at a student event. If you find a decent spot, treasure it.

THE CANTEEN IS WHERE IT'S AT

Forget the lecture theatre. The canteen is where campus life really happens. It's where you'll meet people, catch up with classmates, discuss how little work you've done and occasionally consume a full breakfast at an hour when most people are still pretending to be asleep.

It's also worth figuring out the busy times. Lunchtime can get seriously hectic, so don't leave yourself ten minutes to get food, eat it and make it across campus for your next class.

And here's a money-saving tip: use your own reusable cup or flask and you'll save 30c at the canteen. You'll also get a free reusable bottle from the Students' Union at Orientation, so don't forget to actually use it. Your bank account will thank you.

As for emergency noodles, cereal bars or whatever other questionable snack you can fit into your bag... you'll learn quickly that having food on you is never a bad idea.

YES, YOU WILL GET LOST

You're going to get lost. Accept it now and save yourself the stress. MTU can feel like a maze when you're new, particularly when you're trying to find a room while simultaneously pretending you're not completely lost.

And don't assume everyone else knows where they're going. They probably don't. You'll eventually walk confidently into a lecture theatre, sit down, get your laptop out and realise you're in the wrong class. It happens.

The good news? You're surrounded by other people who are equally confused. Say hello. You might even make a friend.

JOIN SOMETHING. ANYTHING.

One of the easiest ways to meet people in college is to get involved. Societies and clubs are a brilliant place to start, and you don't have to be an expert, particularly good or even remotely sensible.

Like gaming? Join gaming. Like drama? Go for it. Want to try something completely random that you've never done before? Even better. You might join something thinking, "I'll give this a go once," and end up making some of your best college memories there.

The friends you make through college aren't necessarily going to be the people sitting beside you on the first day. Sometimes they're the people you meet because you decided, on a whim, to try something new.

So get involved. You can always leave later.

YOUR LECTURERS ARE ACTUALLY HUMAN

This might come as a shock, but your lecturers are people. They don't spend their evenings sitting around thinking of new ways to make your life difficult.

If you're struggling with something, ask. Email them if you need help. Go to them after class. Ask questions. You're not expected to know everything.

Just remember that "Hi, I need this assignment sorted ASAP" probably isn't the best opening line. Use their name. Be polite. Write in proper sentences. Explain what you need. It sounds obvious, but a decent email goes a surprisingly long way.

And if they don't reply immediately, don't panic. They have other students too.

DON'T FORGET TO ACTUALLY ENJOY COLLEGE

Yes, you're here to get a qualification. Yes, assignments matter. Yes, occasionally you will need to sit down and do some actual work.

But college isn't just lectures, deadlines and staring blankly at a laptop at 11.47pm wondering why you haven't started your assignment yet.

Get out. Explore. Go for food. Go to a gig. Join a club. Meet people. Head out with your housemates. Have a lazy day when you need one.

And, of course, make the most of Freshers Week. There's loads happening, so check out the timetable on the next page and pick a few things to get involved in.

You don't have to go to everything. In fact, please don't feel like you have to go to everything.

College is a marathon, not a week-long competition to see who can survive on four hours' sleep.

FINALLY... RELAX

Here's the biggest thing to remember. Nobody has it all figured out. Not the person who seems incredibly confident on Day One.

Not the person who already knows where every building is. Not even the person who somehow has their timetable, laptop, coffee and entire life perfectly organised before 9am.

Everyone is figuring it out as they go.

You'll make mistakes. You'll miss a class. You'll forget a deadline. You'll walk into the wrong room. You'll probably have at least one week where you wonder if you've made a terrible mistake choosing your course. You haven't. Give yourself time.

Get involved. Ask questions. Make a few mistakes. Laugh at yourself when things go wrong.

Before long, you'll know where everything is, you'll have your favourite coffee spot, you'll know which canteen queue moves fastest and you'll be giving advice to the next batch of Freshers.

And yes, eventually, you'll even find the right lecture theatre!



Freshers Week Cork Timetable

*Freshers
Week*

MTU STUDENTS' UNION

MONDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER

Sponsored By
HOTPRESS

10am Market Stalls outside Student Centre

11am-1pm **MC FLEMING OUTDOOR DJ**
by Gym area

1pm **Marten James**
The Student Centre Common Room

7pm til late **JERSEY NIGHT**
Wear your favourite Jersey
The Bishopstown Bar - €2 all night
- over 18s only - FREE BUSES back to
Bishopstown student residences
- College ID and AGE ID required

*Freshers
Week*

MTU STUDENTS' UNION

TUESDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER

Sponsored By
CORRIB OIL, WENDYS, BUS EIREANN

10am Market Stalls outside Student Centre

11am-1pm **MC FLEMING OUTDOOR DJ**
by Gym area

11-2pm **MTU Societies Day** (Sign up)
The Student Centre

1-2pm **Music Bingo** with **MIA GOLD**
The Student Centre Common Room

*Freshers
Week*

MTU STUDENTS' UNION

WEDNESDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER

Sponsored By
**ANSEO THE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT OFFICE
& WILTON SHOPPING CENTRE**

10am Market Stalls outside Student Centre

11am-1pm **MC FLEMING OUTDOOR DJ**
by Gym area

11-2pm **MTU Sports Day** (Sign up)
The Student Centre

11-2pm **Board and tabletop games**
The Student Centre Common Room

*Freshers
Week*

MTU STUDENTS' UNION

THURSDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER

Sponsored By
**ANSEO THE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT OFFICE
& FUDI & MORE**

10am Market Stalls outside Student Centre

11am-1pm **MC FLEMING OUTDOOR DJ**
by Gym area

11-2pm **Board and tabletop games**
The Student Centre Common Room

11-3pm **Freshers Soccer Tournament**
at the Astro Turf Pitches

11-3pm **Outdoor inflatables**
at The Circle Courtyard

10pm **Freshers Fest @ Odyssey**
Hanover Street, Adm €5, over 18s only
- College ID and AGE ID required

MTU STUDENTS' UNION
PRESENTS

Odyssey

Freshers Fest

**ODYSSEY NIGHTCLUB,
HANOVER STREET**

3 Rooms: Main Room, Monster Lounge, Vinyl Lounge

ADMISSION
€5

**THURSDAY
17TH SEPT**

Doors 10pm, OVER 18s ONLY, college ID & age ID REQUIRED

MTU STUDENTS' UNION
PRESENTS

FRESHERS WEEK

JERSEY Night

**MONDAY
14TH SEPT**

THE BISHOPSTOWN BAR!

WEAR YOUR FAVOURITE JERSEY
€2 ALL NIGHT!

Doors 7pm, OVER 18s ONLY, college ID & age ID REQUIRED
FREE buses back to Bishopstown student residences

Freshers Week, 14 -18 Sept

MTU SU
Freshers Week

SOCCER TOURNAMENT

2026

1 ST PRIZE	2 ND PRIZE
€160	€80

DATE
Thurs 17th Sept
11 - 3pm

ENTRY DEADLINE
Tues 15th of Sept
2pm

APPLICATION FORMS
Ross Hennessy
on What's App 086 185 5815

6-A-SIDE (MAX 8 PLAYERS)
€2 ENTRY PER PLAYER
PLAY 3 GAMES GUARANTEED

GAMES ON MTU ASTRO-TURF PITCHES
WEAR APPROPRIATE GEAR
NO FOOTBALL BOOTS
TEXT ROSS FOR AN APPLICATION

Check out
all the events
happening in
Kerry...
[Click Here!](#)

FREE PARK & RIDE

MTU Bishopstown Campus



Park and Ride is in operation during term time only

Drive to the Curraheen Park Greyhound Stadium (T12 HNP4).

Park your vehicle in one of the MTU Park & Ride spaces.

Get on the MTU Park & Ride Bus (you may be asked to show your MTU Staff/Student ID).

Get off the bus at the MTU Le Chéile Building.

Times as follows:

Greyhound stadium opening hours

Mon-Fri 7:30am – 7:00pm

8am – 10am (every 15 mins)

Leaving the greyhound stadium every 15 minutes.*

10am – 4pm (every 30 mins)

Leaving the stadium every 30 mins **on** the hour and 30 minutes **past** the hour. Leaving MTU campus every 15 minutes **past** and 15 minutes **to** the hour from MTU campus bus stop.*

4pm – 6.30pm (every 15 mins)

Leaving the greyhound stadium and MTU campus every 15 minutes.*

* Subject to traffic conditions



MTU

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Mumhan
Munster Technological University



CAUTION! — KEEP OUT — CAUTION! — KEEP OUT — CAUTION!

**MTU STUDENTS' UNION
PRESENTS**

BE SAFE DAY



MTU Bishopstown Campus

Monday 14th Sept
from 11am in main corridor

Come and chat with:

**The Drug and Alcohol taskforce, the HSE, RSA, Sexual Violence Centre
and others**



NO ENTRY • DANGER • NO ENTRY • DANGER • NO ENTRY • DANGER

**MTU**Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Mumhan
Munster Technological UniversityLeabharlann
Library

MTU LIBRARIES

Here for You

SUPPORTING YOUR LEARNING, RESEARCH AND WELLBEING

Subject Guides

Find the best books, eResources, databases and websites for your course.

*Quality resources.
Less searching.
More learning.*



Library Workshops

Join our interactive workshops to build your study, research and digital skills.

Dates and topics are shared on our library website, social media and monitors.

Build skills for success.



Assignment Toolkit (OER)

Step-by-step guidance to help you through the assignment process – from getting started to referencing and submission.

Plan • Research • Write • Succeed



Library Tours

Discover our spaces, services and resources with a guided tour of the library.



5 Study Hubs

Available to students for meetings with lecturers, group work, presentation preparation, etc. Book via the library website.

WELLBEING



Self-Care eBook Collection

Handpicked eBooks to support your wellbeing – 24/7 access online, any time, anywhere.



Wellbeing Walkway

A relaxing space in the library featuring books and plants to support your wellbeing.

SUSTAINABILITY



Green Library Initiatives

We're proud to be making a positive impact through biodiversity planting, sewing/repair kits and other sustainability projects.



SDG eBook Collection

Explore eBooks about the UN Sustainable Development Goals and building a better, more sustainable future for all.



Accessibility

We're committed to making our libraries accessible for everyone. Reader Pens are available to borrow from our libraries to support reading, comprehension and independent study.



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Library for Life

MTU
Oideall Teicneolaíochta na Mionann
Munster Technological University

SOCIETIES

SOCIETIES DAY

Nexus, Student Centre | TUES, 15th SEPTEMBER 2026 | 11:00-14:00

Interested in joining a Society?

Register for membership, meet new people,
and make your mark on campus life!
Free pizza provided



Sign Up!

MTU
Oideall Teicneolaíochta na Mionann
Munster Technological University

SPORTS DAY

Nexus Hall | WED, 16th SEPTEMBER 2026 | 11:00-14:00

Interested in joining a Club?

Register for membership, meet new people,
and get active with Sports Clubs!
Free pizza provided



Sign Up!



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SHED

Student Hub for Entrepreneurial Development

Sean and William / ReAble Labs]

What Can an Idea Become?

Sometimes, it starts with simply walking through a door.

That is what Sean Barrett did when he came to SHED at the Rubicon Centre to talk through a project he had been working on.

Together with William Hartley, a medical student at Trinity College Dublin, Sean was developing ReAble Labs, a venture creating affordable, modular prosthetic hands, with the aim of making prosthetic technology more accessible to those who need it most.

At that stage, there was no knowing quite where the idea might go. A conversation led to an opportunity to enter the Hult Prize MTU Local Competition, and from there, the project began to gather momentum.

Sean and William progressed to the national competition and in April 2026 were named Hult Prize Ireland winners at UCD. Their success took ReAble Labs to the next stage of the global competition, the Hult Digital Incubator, where they were one of just 60 teams selected from around the world.

Sean was also participating in Student Inc., developing ReAble Labs from the Rubicon Centre alongside other student entrepreneurs.

The next step took the venture even further. ReAble Labs won a Golden Ticket to the Hult Global Accelerator at Ashridge House in the UK, where they

joined just 21 teams globally to reach the Hult Prize finals.

They did not progress to the final eight, but reaching that stage marked an extraordinary journey for a venture that had started with a student simply looking for somewhere to take an idea. And the journey continues. Through the Rubicon network, the team has been connected with a mentor who will support them as they continue to develop ReAble Labs and explore where the venture could go next.

Sean and William's experience is one example of what can happen when students are given the opportunity to explore an idea, test it and see where it might lead.

And there are plenty of ideas being developed at MTU right now.

This summer, students from across MTU and partner Universities have been developing their own ventures through Student Inc., a 13-week accelerator programme designed to help student entrepreneurs take their ideas further.

Throughout the programme, students have been speaking to customers, learning from mentors and industry experts, pitching to angel investors and presenting at the showcase. Their ventures span different sectors and are at different stages of development, but the starting point is often similar: identifying a problem, seeing an opportunity and wondering if there might be a better way to do something.

Student Inc. is just one of the opportunities available through MTU Student Hub for Entrepreneurial Development (SHED).

And students don't even need to arrive at SHED with an idea already worked out. Through its programmes, competitions, innovation challenges, workshops and mentoring opportunities, SHED helps students explore problems, generate ideas, develop projects and test possibilities.

An idea might become a business, form the basis of an academic project, lead to a competition entry or simply introduce a student to a new skill or area of interest.

There is no set pathway and no expectation that every student will become an entrepreneur. Students can dip in and out of opportunities depending on what they want to achieve and where they are in their journey.

For Sean and William, one conversation led to a local competition, a national title, an international incubator and a place among the world's top 21 Hult Prize teams. Now, with continued mentorship through the Rubicon network, they are taking the next steps in developing ReAble Labs.

For the students taking part in Student Inc. this year, their journeys are still unfolding.

And for the students who haven't found their idea yet, there is a place to start.

You never quite know how far an idea can go.



This section contains contact information and QR codes. It is divided into four columns. The first column has an email icon, the text 'Email us', and the email address 'SHED@mtu.ie'. The second column has a globe icon, the text 'Learn more', and the website 'mymtu.ie/SHED'. The third column has a LinkedIn icon, the text 'LinkedIn', and a QR code. The fourth column has an Instagram icon, the text 'Instagram', and a QR code. At the bottom of this section is the text 'Have an idea? Or looking for one? Start with SHED'.



Settling in Starts with Connection ...

Togetherall is a **free, anonymous and clinically monitored online mental health platform** available to all MTU students 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

With Togetherall, all students can share how they're feeling, connect with others and access support when navigating new experiences and routines.

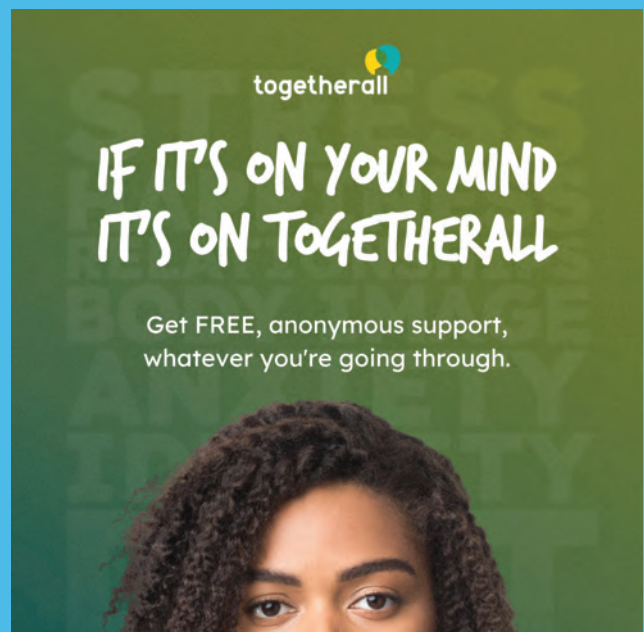
- *Free wellbeing support 24/7* • *Safe & anonymous community.*
- *Courses and journalling tools to manage stress and support wellbeing.*

Sign up for free at togetherall.com using your student email address and access support whenever you need it.

Togetherall is an external service, recommended by the MTU counselling service.



MTU Counselling
Service for Students





Student Health Matters **FREE Health APP**

Access safe, evidence based and reliable health information instantly at the touch of a button.

All third level students may access a 'Student Health Matters' App that provides students with **access to reliable and relevant health information in one place, at the touch of a button**. The content, based on Irish healthcare information and services, was created by a team of health professionals at Irish Student Health Association and Expert Self Care Ltd, a specialist mobile health information app developer.

The App was developed as many students struggle with looking after their health. Rather than googling their health questions, which can be unreliable and confusing, students can now access trusted health information and links to many useful websites in seconds.

The App provides: links to the HSE database of over 600 medical conditions and treatments and covers topics including; Healthy diet, physical activity, smoking, alcohol, drugs, your mental health, sexual health common illnesses, health topics A-Z, head injury and concussion, vaccinations, the importance of sleep, first aid box and information and links on where to get medical help and advice; and contact details for health and medical services available at College Health Centres.

The ISHA 'Student Health Matters' App is available for iPhone and android and is free to download from the App Store and Google Play.

Search '**Student Health Matters**' or **[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THIS FREE HEALTH APP](#)**

MTU STUDENT HEALTH CENTRE
TO BOOK & ACCESS SERVICES CLICK [HERE](#)



Athens & Crete

Flynnner's Flying Column

I By James Flynn

A new semester has dawned and, for many new students, a new Freshers Week is upon MTU Cork. Da Flynnner has been active over the summer, and I feel it is time to tell the story of my recent trip to Greece.

The trip took in Athens, the city where so much of Western civilisation and ancient education began, along with a quick visit to the beautiful island of Crete.

So, without any further ado...

ATHENS – WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

It was a very early start at Dublin Airport, where myself and seven friends arrived from Cork before boarding the Ryanair flight to Athens. After a four-hour journey over the Balkans – most of which I slept through – we landed and headed for the Retroverse Hostel in the city centre.

After checking in and settling down, I decided to stretch the legs and have a wander around. One thing that immediately struck me was just how friendly and hospitable the Greeks are. Naturally, the best way to relax after a journey was to find somewhere for a drink! Athens also proved surprisingly good value compared with many other European cities. Public transport can be very cheap, a pint of beer averages around €3.50–€4 and can sometimes be as little as €2, while bottled water and coffee are also far cheaper than back home.

Soon enough, though, it was time to meet up with the gang. We headed to Zacharokalamo Café for dinner, where I settled for a tasty Greek salad. Afterwards, we enjoyed a lovely evening stroll through the rustic streets and around Monastiraki Square.

Then it was time to hit the hay. Well,

for most of us. I headed back to the aforementioned restaurant for a fine glass or two of wine before bedtime.

THE ACROPOLIS

The following morning it was time for the big one – the Acropolis.

We were up at 6.30am and, by 7.30am, had arrived at one of the great symbols of Western civilisation. Even on the way to the entrance, ancient ruins were everywhere, including the remains of schools and colleges from both the Greek and Roman periods. It really brought home just how important Athens was as an early centre of education and learning.

The entrance fee was €30, but considering we could spend the whole day there, it was money well spent. We took in the Parthenon, the Propylaea, the Temples of Nike and Athena and countless other ancient remains. The views across Athens, the port of Piraeus and the Mediterranean were absolutely magnificent.

Down below the Acropolis is the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, which has been beautifully restored and is still used for plays, concerts and other events. It really is some sight.

After a quick brunch, we headed to the Acropolis Museum, packed with treasures, statues, artwork and artefacts from Ancient Greece. There are also remains of the streets



of Ancient Athens underneath the museum, giving you a real sense of just how old the city is.

After wandering through the many bazaars and markets, it was back for dinner, where a Greek pizza was in order, followed by a little pub crawl around the city.

A TASTE OF HOME

After the exertions of the Acropolis, we decided to have a bit of a lie-in and some me-time. I took the opportunity to wander around Monastiraki and, as is obligatory for Da Flynnner when abroad, I found an Irish bar.

The James Joyce Bar provided two pints of Guinness and a little taste of home in the middle of Athens. It was also a small part of County Mayo in the Hellenic Lands – and, like everywhere else associated with Mayo, there was still a great buzz following the Yew County's historic Sam Maguire victory last July, which had the whole county enjoying an extended Bank Holiday!

But it was soon time to reunite with the gang, and we headed to Cat Café Athens, where you can enjoy a coffee while cats and kittens wander around the place. Greece has cats everywhere, so this was my first proper appreciation of just how much of a feature they are!

Next stop was the Athens Olympic Stadium. The original stadium dates back to Ancient Greece, while the modern stadium was restored for the 1896 Olympics and later used during Athens 2004.

Back into the city on the Metro, we passed the Greek Parliament Buildings and several beautiful Orthodox churches before stopping for dinner. I settled for a delicious block of Greek feta drenched in olive oil, along with Greek mozzarella, ham and salad rolls, all washed down with Greek house wine.

After another busy day, it was time for an early night because our next adventure was about to begin.

SAILING TO CRETE

We were up at 6am, checked out of the hostel by 7am and were on the Metro by 8am. By 9am we had reached Piræus Harbour, ready to board the ferry to Crete.

We set sail at around 10am and, after a relaxing voyage across the Mediterranean, taking in those famous blue waters with plenty of refreshments and banter along the way, we eventually arrived at Souda Port.

From there it was connecting buses to Chania and then on to our apartment in the Yannis area. As it was a late arrival, there was only one thing for it – food! We headed to Forum Grill and Bar, where I tucked into some excellent Greek moussaka, a kind of Greek take on shepherd's pie, along with some table wine.

BEACH LIFE IN CRETE

The next morning began with a stroll along the Yannis beachfront, plenty of morning coffee and the sound of the waves crashing onto the shore.

Then it was time for myself and the gang to hit the beach. Yannis Beach has brilliant sand and stunning sunshine, although the shingle washed up along the shore from the surrounding sandstone cliffs will do absolutely nothing for your toes!

Still, that wasn't going to stop us. We hit the water, enjoyed the waves and spent a few hours relaxing before heading off to clean up. I then called into Angelo's Restaurant, where Angelo himself – a gentleman who clearly loves meeting new people – treated me to a Cretan Kings lager, a beautiful mountain beer that tasted like nothing I had experienced before.

After relaxing with some music and a few drinks, it was time for dinner. We headed to Pergola, where I treated myself to fried squid and chips and another lager, followed by a complimentary dessert.

Later, it was back to Forum Grill and Bar for some house wine and a brilliant session of traditional Greek music.

HISTORY AND CHANIA

Our final full day in Greece arrived far too quickly.

Looking out from the apartment balcony over my morning coffee, I took in the stunning Cretan countryside. The mountains here are even higher



than those in County Kerry, and it is immediately obvious that Crete is a place for the intrepid adventurer, with so many treasures waiting to be explored.

We jumped on the nearest bus and travelled around ten miles west to Maleme, where we took in two very different pieces of history.

The first was the Tomb of Tholos, dating back to the Late Minoan period. The second was the Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof – a cemetery containing the graves of around 4,500 German paratroopers who died during the invasion of Crete in 1941. The Battle of Crete was the largest airborne invasion in history and came at an enormous cost. The cemetery contains memorials, gravestones, reconciliation plaques and an information centre explaining the invasion and occupation of Greece.

There are stories from all sides of the conflict, some of them quite surprising, and it provides a fascinating – and sobering – insight into what happened on the island. Back on the bus, it was off to Chania city centre.

We visited the Firka Venetian Fortress, the Maritime Museum of Crete and the San Salvatore Bastion, before making our way to the famous Lighthouse of Chania and the Old Chania Harbour.

The harbour, with its ancient walls and piers protecting the Old City, offers unbelievable views and is definitely one of those places where you could spend hours simply wandering around.

After another wander through the bazaars, it was time for a refreshing drink or three while we debated where to eat. We eventually chose Amphora Taverna, where I enjoyed a delicious chicken gyros – the Greek national dish – along with complimentary table wine and desserts. And then, of course, it was time to experience Chania after dark.

We hit the town for a final session, sampling some of the many bars and nightclubs that make Chania such a lively party city. Let's just say it was an early-morning finish!

THE FLYNNER VERDICT

All good things must come to an end, and it was finally time to pack the bags and head home. Not before one final dinner of Greek pizza, a complimentary dessert and a few farewell Cretan Kings, though! Angelo, the owner of the restaurant, was once again the gentleman and even gave us a lift to the bus stop in his car.

After a marathon journey involving cars, buses, ferries, trains, planes and plenty of walking, we eventually made it back to Cork – and Macroom in my case.

So, what do I make of Greece?

Highly recommended.

I still have great memories of the food, the drink, the people and, of course, the trip to the Acropolis, which will live long in the memory.

And who knows? I might even make a return visit to Chania before too long.

So put it on yer bucket lists there!

HAPPY DAYS DERE!

And finally, congratulations to Katie Taylor as she brought her illustrious career to a magnificent conclusion with her victory over Flora Pili at Croke Park.

Katie, you are truly an ambassador and a sporting legend whose name will live forever in Irish sporting folklore.

Sláinte!





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