



# CASA DUBLIN ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



BROWN

**CASA** Consortium for  
Advanced Studies Abroad

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

**CASA Dublin** program provides undergraduate students a unique opportunity for full immersion into Irish culture, by studying and living alongside Irish students at Trinity College Dublin. Participants of the program have unique opportunities made available to them as part of the CASA Dublin program including a one-week orientation program co-delivered by CASA and Trinity's School of Histories and Humanities, excursions in and outside of Dublin throughout the semester, and opportunities for students to connect as a cohort. All activities are planned with the goal to help students understand and interpret Ireland's culture, literature and political history as well as immerse themselves in the Irish and Trinity cultural spheres.

## AT-A-GLANCE

### ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Students can enrol in modules (classes) in approved areas of study (up to four) at Trinity College Dublin, the number one university in Ireland.

### CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The program offers a number of opportunities to immerse in the local culture; activities include a taste of Gaelic Football and efforts to combat climate change

### FEATURE STORY

A student wins a prestigious award from TCD's Historical Society and takes part in a volunteer experience that has close personal ties

### LOOKING AHEAD

Priorities for the future include a continued focus on place, exploring possibilities of a Pro-Seminar, and the design of an Exam Prep & Re-entry Workshop

# ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Students on the **CASA Dublin** program enroll in modules (classes) at Trinity College of Dublin, Ireland's top university. Students can list up to six areas of study on their application; usually taking modules from between two and four areas. CASA provides an academic orientation program run by Trinity's School of Histories and Humanities. This is a bespoke one-week long program with lectures and excursions. CASA staff collaborate closely with the School in order to pair academic events with our CASA orientation, events, excursions, advising and activities.

- Our new Re-entry and Exam preparation workshop was well attended in both semesters and provided time for reflection on the semester and exam preparation.
- One student in Spring 2025 received a perfect semester of First Class Honors across all modules. This is an exceptional achievement at Trinity.



*Spring 2025 students, Caitlin Neafsey (Cornell), Mandy Zhang (Penn), and Nylah Lee (Amherst), enjoy a beautiful spring day helping rewild Ireland in Avoca, Wicklow with Home Tree.*





*Fall 2024 students in Newgrange, Co. Meath*

# 60

Our 60 students this year received a total of 72 First Class Honors results

# 32%

Increasing interest in STEM participation to nearly 32% of students studying in a STEM area while on the program.

# 2

In Spring 2025, we had two students with perfect attendance at CASA events and excursions.

# 15

different excursions and events across the academic year.



*A rare clear day with Fall 2024 students learning to play Gaelic football and hurling at our Introduction to GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association) event during orientation.*

## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

CASA Dublin offers carefully programmed excursions and events throughout the semester to help its students connect with, and continue to reflect upon, Ireland's culture, history and heritage. Excursions include tours of both historic and modern sites throughout Dublin, a theatre or music performance at a local venue, and day trips outside of Dublin.

**Some of this year's highlights:** "Small Things Like These" screenings where cohorts came together to see the film adaptation of Claire Keegan's important novella of the same name about the control of the Catholic Church in late 20th century Ireland. This connected back to students' orientation presentations on Ireland's Great Shame, the Magdalene Laundries which were Catholic-run institutions where women who were seen as 'fallen,' were interned and forced to work from the 18th century through the 20th century.

Students in both semesters explored Ireland's ancient past visiting Newgrange, a Stone Age passage tomb, and Trim Castle, Ireland's largest Anglo Norman fortification.

Excursions to Airfield Estate, a sustainability-focused urban farm and estate in South Dublin, where students learned about sustainable farming and brushed up on their vegetarian cooking skills.

Students also got involved outside of CASA and Trinity by participating in our CASA Dublin bingo card challenge. In both semesters we had two students who completed the full bingo card by the end of the semester.





*Fall 2024 students, Andrés Fente (Swarthmore) and Enock Nyakundi (Brown), showing off their vegetarian chili and flatbread at the Airfield Estate cooking class.*



*Fall 2024 students at the Airfield Estate cooking class.*

# FEATURE STORY

## Dog's Trust Donation Drive

Over the past few years, we have always encouraged the students to donate any items they don't plan to take with them back to the US to cut down on waste and to give back to the community. A gap we have always had is that many charity shops in Dublin will not take used towels and blankets and none will take duvets—items our students must buy at the start of each semester and usually the most likely to end up in the bin due to how much space they would take up in luggage. At the end of the Spring 2024 semester we trialed a donation drive for these items to bring to Dog's Trust, a local animal shelter which is happy to use the items to keep animals comfortable while they wait to go to their forever homes. Our first attempt at the drive was well received by students, however, many were unable to donate due to the timing of the drive which was either too early—students still needed their bedding and towels—or too late—after they had already left.

Come Fall 2025, we knew we needed a different solution to help as many students donate as possible. We were talking to the students about the timing predicament at our farewell meal when one of the students offered to collect and store items in their apartment to help as they were leaving slightly later than the rest of the group. Our student volunteers that semester, Duncan Buckerfield (Cornell) and Garrett Spillane (Brown), helped collect around 10 full sets of bedding, towels, and blankets which equated to a full taxi load of items—nearly half of the students' bedding and towels for the semester. Having the drive take place over a period of time in their housing combined with the students' help increased the donations received.

In Spring 2025 we further improved the drive by intentionally asking volunteers who were leaving after the program end date to maximize the opportunities for students to donate before they departed. Our student volunteers this semester, Nancy Deng (Vanderbilt) and Nola Gallo (Barnard), helped collect over half of the program participants' bedding, towels and blankets for donation.



Moving forward we are hoping to formalize the donation drive as a volunteer opportunity for the students to work on throughout the semester.



***“The donation drive was really rewarding to participate in,  
and I appreciate CASA’s efforts to  
reduce waste and give back to the community.”  
- Nancy Deng (CASA Dublin Spring 2025, Vanderbilt)***



Mufasa, a dog currently up for adoption at Dog's Trust, enjoying the comfort of a donated duvet and blanket.



# LOOKING AHEAD



As we approach nearly ten years of CASA Dublin, we are looking to expand programming and include additional elements to further align with the CASA study abroad model.

Some of our goals include:

- (1) Exploring the possibility of a Pro-seminar. In addition to being a unifying academic element of the program, including a Pro-Seminar as part of the CASA Dublin required coursework could have the added benefit of increasing student engagement and interest in local culture.
- 2) Creating formal volunteer opportunities for CASA Dublin students as part of the program. Currently students engage in volunteer work either on an independent basis or through student societies. We hope to create some bespoke volunteer opportunities for CASA Dublin students to engage with and give back to the community while here in Ireland.
- 3) Establishing an alumni program to help keep past participants engaged in study abroad reflection and to assist incoming students with preparing for their time on the program and in Ireland more broadly. We have had success the last few years in varied types of alumni outreach and hope to build on that to create a more formal structure to continue for years to come.

