

Young Irish students doing the business in Germany

A summer school in Munich opens Irish minds to the German outlook on business



Peter Casey of Dragons' Den: 'The Germans definitely have a different way of operating to the Irish'



Derek Scally

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As the euro crisis lingers, the debate over its causes and consequences remains the most divisive issue in recent European history. As the EU's high-stakes poker game continues with Greece, even the most bitter opponents around the table agree the European deck has been reshuffled in recent years and, for now, [Germany](#) is trumps: in political and economic clout, but also in job opportunities.

For Dr [Susan Walsh](#), dean of the Globe Business College in Munich, Ireland should be doing more to run with this new reality. The Dubliner aims to do just that with a course at the private college she founded in Munich 10 years ago.

Globe, based in a listed art deco building near Munich central station, draws students internationally for its undergraduate and postgrad degrees in business and management. Its summer school is similarly international, but Walsh is anxious to see more Irish faces in the mix.

For her, the week-long summer course isn't a recruitment drive for her college but an attempt to open young Irish eyes to the opportunities Germany offers. Once they've had a look, Walsh is optimistic Germany will take its place in people's minds as an option for later, alongside Britain, Australia, the US and Canada.

"Ideally we keep these young people at home, but if that's not possible the next best thing is to have them in Germany, within spitting distance of home, and contributing to Europe," she says. "Studying abroad for a longer period is a big ask, but a summer school gets people off the island and addresses the blind spot many Irish people still have to Germany."

Confidence issues

Many Globe college students are from elite international schools and are comfortable presenting themselves and their ideas to an international audience, but less so the Irish, says Walsh, at least to start. "Some Irish students die a thousand deaths at first," she says. "But they realise by week's end that the Irish can contribute just as much as anyone else."

The summer programme is a real-world, practical experience, although it is pricey. Students are split into groups and sent out to partner firms or businesses run by parents of Globe students. The students get a product and a week to produce a pitch, and have lectures in presentation, marketing and financing. [Peter Casey of *Dragons' Den*](#) recently mentored students ahead of final presentations. In a nod to the TV show, students pitch their ideas to local "dragons".

Casey admires the course's practicality and mix of international students. "Anyone who thinks that America is the only place where entrepreneurs can survive is not thinking straight," says Casey, who divides his time between Ireland and the US. He admits he's not the "biggest fan" of the Germans, but has "grudging respect" for their economic and business achievements.

"You don't have to like someone to learn from them, and the summer school tries to impart the good business practices the Germans have developed," he says. "They definitely have a different way of operating to the Irish and, while I'm not advocating this, I think it's important to go and see and understand it to open and broaden your mind."

[Freddie Tallon](#) (16) from Julianstown, near Drogheda, and in fifth year at Gormanston College, Co Meath enjoyed meeting students from Germany, Switzerland, France, the Czech Republic and even Kazakhstan at the summer school. He was pleasantly surprised at the friendliness of Germans in Munich, who displayed none of the arrogance he had expected.

“I’d definitely consider Germany now, as they have such a good business world, and after college you’re pretty much guaranteed a job,” he says.

Fellow Gormanston student [Michael Briscoe](#) (17) from Termonfeckin, Co Louth, also took part last summer. He recalls the intense time as his team worked towards their presentation. “My group was given a dementia home for adults to market, to present future plans [for] and to try and get dragons to invest in. It was more professional and detailed than the classes in school, and more practical.”

The summer course is in English, although Tallon and Briscoe, both studying German for the Leaving Cert, practised the language as they took in the sights of Munich.

Tallon says he came home with more than just practical business knowledge and a taster of German life. “If you take the precise side of the German character and put it together with the Irish knack of talking to people and knowing people, then you have the perfect businessperson.”

- [Globe-college.com](#). *The week-long summer school is €880, plus accommodation (from €150) and flights*

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