

So, quick little introduction about myself. My name is Adam Walsh, I'm in my 2nd year of studying Commerce here at UCD. So I'll tell you a little about why I chose to apply to 'EIL Explore Ireland' to volunteer, what I learned from my experience and some insight to what my life was like while in Mexico for 2 months volunteering.

I applied via the written application after receiving an email from the Access & Lifelong Learning team about the opening call for applications for this programme in early January of 2017. I read into this straight away as I had been looking for more opportunities to experience foreign cultures, travel outside of my comfort zone (Europe) and ultimately try something that I'd never done before. Fast Forward to the end of June and I'm with 2 other guys getting ready to board our flights to Mexico city after the 4th guy in our group almost didn't get into Spain as he didn't have a European passport.

So while in Mexico for 8 weeks I truly learned so much about myself and my capabilities/ability to adapt to change, a new culture (people, customs, values) and so much more. I was teaching English and Football classes to 2 groups of kids aged between 8-14 in a community centre setting in a small town in Oaxaca city in Mexico (I had no training or experience in teaching at all but this made little difference to the locals as they were just extremely happy to be able to offer these classes to the kids.) I feel like I cannot truly express my experience fully in writing so I will provide a link to some of the videos I made while in Mexico to really give you an insight what the whole experience was like!

- My thoughts on my Volunteer experience:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ov6TlujzQ-g>
- Exploring the Tourist attractions in Oaxaca:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7\\_M\\_bEYuMc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7_M_bEYuMc)
- Travel vlog of Monte Alban (ancient ruins we visited)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKdAVbtQ7mY>

Below is a brief timeline of how the application process works.

1. Submit your application (you can choose between submitting a piece of writing / video / art or photo to answer the questions they have listed. Basically within this application form the team are looking to get an insight into you as a person and ultimately they want you to sell yourself to them but in an honest way as they'll get to know later if you get accepted.)
2. Applications are shortlisted
3. Attend a group workshop and interview day with the team and other applicants.

4. Have one final phone interview to confirm all the details of your trip and project abroad.

Checkout EIL's more precise process guidelines here:

<https://www.eilexplorer.ie/apply-now/>