

Ireland/USA 12 month Intern Work & Travel (IWT) Programme

What is it?

The Intern Work & Travel (IWT) Programme is a scheme that has been agreed by the Irish and U.S. Governments to enable Irish and U.S. students and recent graduates to participate in internships and travel in each other's countries for a period of up to 12 months. The scheme is being operated as a five year pilot programme, and will allow up to 20,000 Irish citizens to enter the U.S. on J-1 Exchange Visitor visas, and to live and work in any part of the country.

Who can apply?

The IWT programme is not the same as the Working Holiday Programmes that exist between Ireland and Australia/Canada, as the U.S. programme is **open to current third level students and recent graduates only**.

In order to be eligible for the programme, you must be

- a **citizen of Ireland**, and
 - either currently enrolled and participating in a post-secondary college/university course in an accredited institution within the 32 counties of Ireland, **or**
 - have recently graduated (i.e. within 12 months of the start date of the proposed internship).

Note: Vocational third level students are not eligible to apply unless their study is part of a programme that can lead to a degree or other qualification equivalent to Level VI of the Irish Higher Education System.

What other conditions/requirements apply?

- You do not have to have a job prior to travelling to the U.S.; however the job/internship that you find **must be related to your field of study**, and must be for a **minimum of 32 hours per week**. According to the regulations you cannot work in unskilled or casual labour positions, or in positions that require or involve childcare, elder care or patient care.
- You **cannot hold any other employment** apart from your internship while you are in the U.S. As a participant in this programme you are not allowed to take up another part-time position, such as bar work/waitressing etc. to subsidise your living costs. This applies even if the job/internship related to your study is unpaid.
- You must have **travel/health insurance** in place by the time you enter the U.S. that meets the specific requirements of the U.S. State Department. You should check these requirements with your sponsoring organisation. (see page 2 below)
- You must be able to provide proof of **sufficient financial resources to support yourself** while looking for a job, throughout the exchange visitor program, and for your return home. If your internship is unpaid, you must be able to show that you have access to at least \$750 per month for the duration of your stay in the U.S.
- You **may not be accompanied by your spouse** or other dependents.

How do I apply?

The Programme is already active and is **open for applications** all year round. If you are an Irish citizen who wishes to travel to the U.S. under this Programme, there are two main steps involved in the application process.

Before you can apply for a visa, you must be issued with a **DS-2019 form** (a ‘Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status’). Applications for the DS-2019 form must be made through a U.S. Department of State **approved sponsoring organisation** - it is not possible to apply directly to a U.S. Embassy/Consulate. You should contact the sponsoring organisations directly for their individual application forms, detailed application guidelines and terms and conditions of their schemes. All applications will be examined by the sponsoring organisation and you will be required to **undergo an interview either by phone/webcam /in person**.

If the application is approved by the sponsor, the DS-2019 form will be issued to you and the next step is to **apply for a J-1 Exchange Visitor visa at the U.S. Embassy**. The decision to grant or refuse a visa is solely at the discretion of the U.S. Embassy. The Embassy will examine your application and your documentation, and as part of this process you will be required to **attend an interview at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate**. If you are successful at the interview the Embassy will usually issue your visa within approximately five working days.

US citizens who wish to travel to Ireland under the programme should contact the Embassy of Ireland in Washington or one of the Consulates General of Ireland in Boston, Chicago, New York or San Francisco.

How do I find a sponsoring organisation?

In Ireland, **USIT, SAYIT and Go4Less** can all facilitate this process as they work directly with approved sponsoring organisations in the U.S.

Alternatively you can apply directly through a **U.S.-based sponsoring organisation**, for example the **Irish Immigration Centre in Boston**. A full list of the U.S.-based sponsoring organisations is available on the U.S. Department of State website (see page 4). Note that the sponsoring organisation does not have to be based in the city/State you intend to travel to.

Each agent/sponsoring organisation has slightly different application guidelines and procedures to follow. Some have specific requirements regarding travel arrangements and insurance, and the programme costs and post-departure obligations also differ. In addition, sponsoring organisations provide varying levels of support both during the application process and after you arrive in the U.S. – some organisations will offer flight and insurance options, some will leave this up to you to arrange independently; some will arrange your interview appointment with the U.S. Embassy for you, in other cases you will need to arrange this yourself.

It may be worthwhile to **do some research** on the various options and **shop around** to make sure you select the organisation that best suits your needs.

How much does it cost?

Each agent/sponsoring organisation is responsible for setting its own fees. Regardless of which organisation you choose to apply with you will have to pay a **Programme/Application fee** and a **SEVIS fee** in addition to your **insurance and travel/flight costs**.

The following table outlines the fees charged by some of the more common agents/sponsoring organisations used by Irish citizens. You should bear in mind that the service offered by each of the organisations is not exactly the same so you should enquire with each organisation as to what exactly is included in the Programme/Application fee.

	Programme/ Application Fee	SEVIS Fee	12 month Insurance
Irish Immigration Center Boston	\$600 (approx. €452)	\$180 (approx. €135)	not quoted
Go4Less	€679	€140	€275
SAYIT	€680	€180	€300
USIT	€699	€180	€300

In addition, all applicants have to pay a fixed **visa application/processing fee** which is payable directly to the U.S. Embassy/consulate. This fee is set at €107.42 if paying by Euro bank draft or Irish postal order, or \$131.00 if paying by US dollar bank draft.

How long does it take?

It is not possible to say exactly how long the process will take from start to finish as it may depend on a number of factors including which sponsoring organisation you are using, and whether there is any waiting period for the DS-2019 form to be issued or for an interview appointment at the Embassy. It is estimated that the process will take approximately 6-8 weeks from the time an application is submitted to the sponsoring organisation. It is recommended that you **apply at least 8 weeks before your planned departure date.**

After your visa has been issued

When you get to the U.S. there are certain obligations that you, your sponsoring organisation and your employer must fulfil.

- Within 10 days of your arrival in the U.S. you must notify your sponsoring organisation/ SEVIS of your residential address and confirm that you have started to look for work.
- Most sponsoring organisations state that you have **up to 30 days to find a job/placement** however you should confirm this with your sponsoring organisation.
- When you find a placement your employer is required to fill form DS-7002 (Training/ Internship Placement Plan) before you start work.
- Your sponsoring organisation must check in with you and your employer every 60 days for the duration of the programme, and you must inform them of any changes to your circumstances such as change of address or change in the status of your internship.

Can I stay in the U.S. at the end of my internship?

The IWT Programme is a **temporary exchange visitor programme only** and you will be expected to leave the United States and return to Ireland when your visa expires. Your visa **cannot be renewed or extended** even if your employer wants you to stay on.

You may however travel in the U.S. for up to 30 days after the expiry date on your DS-2019 form. During this **30 day ‘grace period’** you are entitled to travel within the U.S., but you are no longer eligible to work/intern.

You are strongly advised not to overstay your visa, as this can leave you liable for arrest, detention and deportation, and/or severely affect your chances of entering the U.S. in the future.

Agents/Sponsoring Organisations

U.S. Department of State

Full list of approved sponsoring bodies: <http://eca.state.gov/jexchanges/index.cfm>

Irish Immigration Center

59 Temple Place, Suite 1010, Boston, MA 02111, USA
Tel: 001 617 542 1900 ext. 14 *or* 001 617 542 7654 ext. 16
Email: pcomfrey@iicenter.org or ambyrne@iicenter.org
Web: <http://www.iicenter.org/>

Go4Less

30 Lower Abbey Street (Club Travel Offices), Dublin 1
Tel: +353 1 435 0000
Web: <http://www.go4less.ie/>

SAYIT

76 Grand Parade, Cork
Tel: 1850 487 283
Web: <http://www.sayit.ie/>

USIT

19/21 Aston Quay, Dublin 2
(USIT also has offices in Cork, Galway, Waterford, Limerick, Athlone & Belfast)
Tel: +353 1 602 1906
Web: <http://www.usit.ie/>

Useful Contact Details

Embassy of the United States, Dublin

42 Elgin Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
Tel: +353 1 668 8777
Web: <http://dublin.usembassy.gov/>

Department of Foreign Affairs

80 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2
Tel: +353 1 478 0822; LoCall: 1890 426 700
Web: <http://www.dfa.ie/>

Embassy of Ireland, USA

2234 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington DC 20008, USA
Tel: 001 202 462 3939
Web: <http://www.embassyofireland.org/>
Consulates General: <http://www.embassyofireland.org/home/index.aspx?id=30872>

Crosscare Migrant Project

1 Cathedral Street, Dublin 1
Tel: +353 1 873 2844
Email: migrantproject@crosscare.ie
Web: <http://www.migrantproject.ie/>

DISCLAIMER: This is a reference guide only. All information should be checked with the relevant agency or organisation.