Intern Work and Travel Programme

Twelve month visa for the USA

June 2012
What is the Intern Work and Travel Programme?
The Intern Work and Travel (IWT) Programme is a scheme that allows 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 twelve months.

The scheme allows Irish citizens who are eligible for the programme to enter the U.S. on J-1 Exchange Visitor visas, to find a job or internship after they arrive in the U.S., and to live and work in any part of the U.S. for up to twelve months.

Who can apply?
The Intern Work and Travel Programme is open to current post-secondary level students and recent graduates only.

In order to be eligible for the programme you must meet all of the following criteria:

- You must be a citizen of Ireland.
- You must be over 18.
- You must be either currently enrolled and participating in a post-secondary college or university course, or you must have recently graduated from such a course (within 12 months of the start date of the proposed internship).
- The course you are doing, or that you recently graduated from, can be full-time or part-time, but it must lead to a degree or other qualification that is recognised as equivalent to Level VI or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications Ireland.

What other conditions and requirements apply?
- You do not have to have a job lined up before you travel to the U.S.; however the job or internship that you find must be related to your field of study, and it must be for a minimum of 32 hours per week.
- 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 or waitressing to subsidise your living costs. This applies even if the job or internship related to your study is unpaid.
- You must have travel or 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.
• 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 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.

1. Apply for the DS-2019 form – Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status
Before you can apply for a visa, you must be issued with a DS-2019 form, which is a Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status. To apply for the DS-2019 form, you must go through an approved sponsoring organisation. It is not possible to apply directly to a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

There are a number of different sponsoring organisations, so you should contact the sponsoring organisations directly for their individual application forms, detailed application guidelines and exact terms and conditions of their schemes before you decide which one to use. All applications will be examined by the sponsoring organisation and you will be required to undergo an interview either by phone or webcam or in person.

2. Apply for a J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa at the U.S. Embassy
If your application is approved by the sponsoring organisation, 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 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. The decision to grant or refuse a visa is solely at the discretion of the U.S. Embassy. If you are successful at the interview the Embassy will usually issue your visa within approximately five working days.
How do I find a sponsoring organisation?

There is a full list of approved sponsoring bodies available on the website of the U.S. Department of State at the following link: http://j1visa.state.gov/participants/how-to-apply/sponsor-search.

You can apply directly through a U.S.-based sponsoring organisation, for example the Irish International Immigrant Centre in Boston. The sponsoring organisation does not have to be based in the city or state you intend to travel to. In Ireland, USIT and Go4Less work directly with approved sponsoring organisations in the U.S., so they can also accept your application.

Each 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 are also different. In addition, sponsoring organisations provide different 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.

You should do some research on the various options and shop around to make sure you select the sponsoring organisation that best suits your needs.

How much does it cost?

Each sponsoring organisation is responsible for setting its own programme application fees. The following table outlines the fees charged by some of the more common 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsoring Organisation</th>
<th>Programme Application Fee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish International Immigrant Center Boston</td>
<td>$800 (approx. €640)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go4Less</td>
<td>€679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USIT</td>
<td>€699</td>
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In addition to the programme application fee, you will also need to pay for the following:

- SEVIS fee (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) of US $180
- U.S. Embassy visa application fee of US $160
- Flight costs
- Twelve months work and travel insurance
How much money do I need to bring with me?

You will need to provide a bank statement to the US Embassy and to US Immigration in order to prove that you can support yourself and will not pose a burden on the US Government. You will need to be able to show that you have a minimum of $1,500 in start-up funds to cover your initial expenses in the US and to support yourself until you receive your first pay cheque.

You should keep in mind that it may take some time to find a job, and even when you do find a job, you might not get your first pay cheque for a few weeks. You should budget for expenses you may have before you receive your first pay cheque.

The types of expenses you may have include the following:

- temporary housing while you are looking for permanent housing
- housing deposit (usually equivalent to one month rent)
- one month rent in advance
- transportation costs when looking for work
- transportation to and from work
- food
- clothing

If possible you should also bring a credit card, as it is accepted in most places in the US and can provide you with emergency funds if anything goes wrong.

How long does it take?

It is not possible to say exactly how long the process will take from start to finish as it will 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 six to eight weeks from the time you submit your application to the sponsoring organisation. Therefore it is recommended that you apply at least eight 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.

- You must notify your sponsoring organisation and/or SEVIS of your residential address and confirm that you have started to look for work within 10 days of your arrival in the U.S.

- Most sponsoring organisations state that you have between 30 and 90 days to find a job/internship, 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 Intern Work and Travel 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 J-1 Exchange Visitor 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 or 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

**Irish International Immigrant Center**  
100 Franklin Street, Lower Level 1, Boston, MA 02110, USA  
Tel: 001 617 542 7654 ext. 38  
Email: jclarke@iiicenter.org  
Web: http://www.iiicenter.org  

**Go4Less**  
30 Lower Abbey Street (Club Travel Offices), Dublin 1  
Tel: 01 435 0000  
Email: claire@go4less.ie  
Web: http://www.go4less.ie  
http://www.go4less.ie/Working-Visas/USA-12-Month-Holiday-Work-Visa/usa-visas-application.asp

**USIT**  
19/21 Aston Quay, Dublin 2  
(USIT also has offices in Cork, Galway, Waterford, Limerick, Athlone & Belfast)  
Tel: 01 602 1600 / 01 602 1747 / 01 602 1667  
Email: melanie.young@usit.ie or workusa@usit.ie  
Web: http://www.usit.ie  
http://www.usavisa.ie/12-month-usa-work-programme

**U.S. Department of State**  
Full list of approved sponsoring bodies: http://j1visa.state.gov/participants/how-to-apply/sponsor-search
Useful Contact Details

Crosscare Migrant Project
1 Cathedral Street, Dublin 1
Tel: 01 873 2844
Email: migrantproject@crosscare.ie
Web: http://www.migrantproject.ie

Embassy of the United States
42 Elgin Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
Tel: 01 668 8777
Web: http://dublin.usembassy.gov

Department of Foreign Affairs
80 St. Stephen’s Green, Dublin 2
Tel: 01 478 0822
LoCall: 1890 426 700
Web: http://www.dfa.ie
http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=73713

Embassy of Ireland, USA
2234 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington DC 20008, USA
Tel: 001 202 462 3939
Web: http://www.embassyofireland.org

Fáilte 32
A New York based organisation that helps visa holders and new arrivals to find work
Email: http://www.failte32.org/contact-us/
Web: http://www.failte32.org/

For a list of Irish Centres based in the USA see http://ciic-usa.org/whoweare_findcenter.html

Disclaimer: This leaflet contains guidelines only. Crosscare Migrant Project has made every effort to ensure that the information in this guide is accurate; however, policies and legislation can change at any time. All information should be clarified with the relevant government department or authority before any decision is made. Please contact Crosscare Migrant Project if you have any questions.