Welcome to Ireland – General Notes for Interns (2018)
Fergus Ryan

These notes are designed to introduce you to Ireland and to address any questions you might have about practical aspects about your visit to Ireland.

About Ireland

Ireland is an island on the north west coast of Europe, comprising approximately 6.9 million inhabitants. It is approximately 32,600 square miles, 300 miles from the northern most tip to the most southern, and approximately 175 miles across.

Politically the island comprises two legal entities. The Republic of Ireland, with approximately 4.8 million inhabitants, makes up the bulk of the island. The State attained independence from the UK in 1922, and became a Republic in 1949. The Republic of Ireland (officially called ‘Ireland’) is a sovereign, democratic republic, with its current Constitution dating back to 1937. It is a member of the UN, the European Union, and the Council of Europe, but is militarily non-aligned. The capital and largest city is Dublin. The majority of the population is Roman Catholic (78%), though otherwise the population is quite diverse. For instance, 17% of inhabitants were born outside Ireland and around 12% of residents are non-Irish nationals. Major industries include pharmaceuticals, IT and software development, agriculture, and financial services. The official languages are Irish and English. While English is the main language of communication, Irish is spoken on a daily basis in some parts of the west, while over 612,000 inhabitants speak a language other than English or Irish at home. (Sources: CSO Census 2016, www.cso.ie)

Northern Ireland comprises six counties in the northeast corner of the island. A jurisdiction within the United Kingdom, it has just over 1.87 million people. It has its own power-sharing parliament and government with significant devolved powers and functions. Its capital is Belfast. Northern Ireland is politically divided along religious lines: 48% of those in Northern Ireland were raised as Protestant, while 45% are or were Roman Catholic by birth. Historically, Northern Ireland has witnessed significant religious and political division, resulting in serious violent conflict in the jurisdiction from the 1970s through to the 1990s. As a result of a peace settlement brokered in 1998, however, the jurisdiction is now overwhelmingly peaceful.

Currency

The currency in the Republic of Ireland is the Euro, which is the common currency of 19 EU countries, including France, Germany, Spain and Italy. €1 = $1.20 as of January 2018 (exchange rates vary over time). There are 100 cents in a euro. Coins are in 1 cent, 2 cent, 5 cent, 10
cent, 20 cent, 50 cent, €1 and €2 denominations. The notes start at €5 and progress to €10, €20, €50, €100, €200 and €500 euro notes. (1 cent and 2 cent coins are valid tender, but have largely been withdrawn from circulation in Ireland).

The currency in **Northern Ireland** is the UK (British) pound sterling. £1 = $1.35 as of January 2018 (this figure changes over time). There are 100 pence in a £1. The 4 main Northern Irish banks issue their own bank notes, which differ from those used in the rest of the UK, but Bank of England notes can be used in Northern Ireland.

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**Weather**

Ireland remains relatively temperate and mild even in the Summer. Typical temperatures in June vary from around 50-70°F. The average Summer temperature is around 60°F and it rarely exceeds 75°F. That said, the weather is often unpredictable and variable, and it is best to bring one light sweater in case it gets cold.

Please be aware that some Irish workplaces do not have air-conditioning and may get somewhat stuffy on hot days.

The notion that it rains a lot in Ireland is somewhat exaggerated. Met Éireann notes:

“The general impression is that it rains quite a lot of the time in Ireland but in fact two out of three hourly observations will not report any measurable rainfall. The average number of wet days (days with more than 1mm of rain) ranges from about 150 days a year along the east and south-east coasts, to about 225 days a year in parts of the west.”

Dublin is one of the driest parts of the country, and the east coast generally is drier than the west. When rain does fall, it is rarely heavy.

Weather patterns in Ireland, however, are quite unpredictable and changeable. It can rain at the most unexpected times so it’s always safest to carry a small umbrella even on a fine day. Even if it looks like it is going to be sunny, be prepared for rain!

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1 https://www.met.ie/climate/rainfall.asp
Packing: Dress Code for Interns

Interns are expected to treat their internships like regular work and should dress accordingly. The Irish at work are probably about as formal as North American workers, but will tend to be somewhat more relaxed regarding interns’ attire.

Workplaces may vary in terms of their approach, with NGO organisations being much more casual than government agencies and the Bar. **You are advised to check with your internship supervisor as to what is considered appropriate workwear for your particular internship.**

On your **first day** at your internship we recommend that you wear a formal business suit. You can then gauge the attire in the relevant office while making a good first impression.

In most offices, and on most days, smart casual attire is recommended (shirt/blouse, trousers/skirt, shoes) but **please bring one good formal business suit** (the kind you would wear to an interview) for your first day and for special occasions such as court appearances.

If you are interning with a barrister, you should bear in mind that court attire tends to be quite formal and conservative. (Barristers themselves wear black gowns to court, with white collars and bands). Ideally, you should wear a dark suit to court; men should ideally wear a shirt and tie with their suit.

For men, at court and in government agencies it is best to wear a shirt and tie with smart trousers on a daily basis. In other agencies, such as NGOs, it may not be necessary to wear a tie on a daily basis, but bring a few along for formal and special occasions. In Ireland, with dark shoes, it is generally considered more appropriate to wear dark socks.

For women, either trouser suits or skirts are perfectly acceptable.

Religious apparel such as turbans, hijabs, and yarmulkes are perfectly acceptable in the workplace, including in public sector workplaces.

Interns should **not** wear jeans, trainers/running shoes, t-shirts, sweatshirts (particularly if hooded) and tracksuits at work. T-shirts with slogans should also be avoided.

**Contacting your internship supervisor**

Prior to your arrival in Ireland, we will give you contact details for your internship supervisor. You should make contact with your supervisor at the internship prior to arrival in Ireland or as soon as possible after arrival.
Phoning for directions/help

The international dialing code for Ireland is +353

If calling Ireland from the US, dial 011-353 and then the number including the area prefix, dropping the zero at the start of the area prefix.

If calling the US from Ireland, dial 001 and the number you wish to dial, including the area code.

Dublin landline (fixed) phone numbers all have the same prefix (01). This prefix need not be used when ringing from another landline (fixed phone) in the 01 area (all of Dublin and some parts of Meath, Wicklow and Kildare). If, however, you are ringing a Dublin landline from a cell phone, insert the prefix 01.

‘Mobile phones’ (cell phones) have the prefixes 083, 085, 086, 087 or 089, depending on the network. These prefixes should always be used when calling, even if you are calling from the same network.

You may be able to get ‘a pay as you go’ SIM card for your phone, for the duration of your stay. The main cellphone companies are: 3, Meteor, Eir, Virgin, TescoMobile, Lycamobile, Postmobile and Vodafone.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS: Phone 999 or 112 for the police, fire or ambulance

Transport and Travel: Getting Around

Getting from the airport
The airport in Dublin is to the north of the city, approximately 7 miles from the city centre. The most convenient way to get from the airport to UCD is by taxi, but it is also the most expensive, costing in or around €40 depending on the time and route taken. One possible way of reducing costs is to arrange in advance to share
a taxi with fellow students on the programme, if you are arriving on the same flight.

To reduce costs further, you can also get into the city centre by bus and then get a taxi the rest of the way to UCD. Several buses and coaches are available that travel from the airport to the city centre and in some cases directly to UCD. There are plenty of taxis available in the city centre.

Dublin Bus runs Airlink buses into the city centre (747 or 757 routes): [http://www.dublinbus.ie/Your-Journey1/Timetables/?searchtype=place&searchquery=Dublin+Airport](http://www.dublinbus.ie/Your-Journey1/Timetables/?searchtype=place&searchquery=Dublin+Airport)

Aircoach operates a coach service from Dublin Airport to the UCD slip road. See www.aircoach.ie for further details. Route 700 to Leopardstown/Sandyford stops outside UCD.

For full details on transport options from Dublin airport, see: [www.dublinairport.com/to-from-the-airport](http://www.dublinairport.com/to-from-the-airport) (if this link does not work when you click on it, copy and paste it into your internet browser).

**Street layout**

Streets do not follow the typical US layout and street names in particular can prove confusing. A single continuous street may have several different names changing at each intersection. Streets of the same or similar names are common so take care to consult your instructions and map carefully before travelling. Street names are listed in Irish and English, but most places are known by their English name.

**Speed limits and notices**

Speed limits and most distances are listed in kilometres. 1 km = 0.625 miles. (You will occasionally see distances listed in miles but all speed limits are now in kilometres.) Most new cars will have speedometers in km (kilometres per hour or kph) only but older cars may indicate speed in both kph and mph. In the city centre, speed limits can be as low as 30 kph.

**Traffic**

Motor vehicles and bicycles **drive on the left** in Ireland and in the UK. In the city centre some roads and streets are one way only. Make sure to look **left and right** before crossing the road. Traffic can be very heavy throughout the city, so short journeys are often best made on foot. Please note that in the city centre, many streets are one way. Keep an eye out for cyclists and motorcycles when dismounting from buses.

At pedestrian crossings, **wait for traffic to stop**, even if you are cleared to walk. Cyclists often do not stop when required to do so, even at red lights.

It is illegal to use a cellphone (even to text) while driving.
Buses
Dublin has a good network of buses and taxis, and a limited number of commuter trains. The 39A is very frequent – it goes directly into Dublin city centre from UCD and will be useful for travelling to most internships in the city centre:

http://www.dublinbus.ie/Your-Journey1/Timetables/All-Timetables/39a-3/

The number 46A bus also leaves regularly (every 8-10 minutes) from UCD, travelling to the city centre and on to the Phoenix Park. It is particularly useful if you are based at the Criminal Courts of Justice:

http://www.dublinbus.ie/Your-Journey1/Timetables/All-Timetables/46a-21/

Leave approximately 40 minutes for your journey (longer in rush hour, from 7.30-9.30 a.m. and 4-7 p.m.)

Details of other buses may be found at www.dublinbus.ie. You can get real time information on the times of buses at www.dublinbus.ie/RTPI/ or on special apps that can be downloaded free to your smartphone/computer/tablet. Key in the number of the bus stop and you will get details of expected arrival times of nearby buses.

Within Dublin, a bus can cost anything between €2.10 and €3.65 (each way) depending on the length of your journey. It should cost around €2.85 cash to travel from UCD to most destinations in the city centre depending on your destination. It is cheaper if you use a Leapcard (see below).

Here are a few points and tips about the buses:

- **You can get reduced bus fares using a Leapcard** – www.leapcard.ie. Bus fares are at least 10% cheaper using this card, which can also be used on commuter trains, the Luas light rail, and some (but not all) private bus services. This works like an Oyster card in London. On the bus, you present your card to the driver, and indicate your destination. You can buy a leapcard online or in many convenience stores. There is a €5 deposit for the card so it may not be economical unless you intend to make good use of the buses.

- **If you are using coinage, the buses require exact change.** Bus drivers will not accept paper notes, only coins. If you do not have exact change, the bus driver will issue you with a paper receipt for the relevant amount of change. This can be exchanged only in the Dublin Bus main office in O'Connell Street for the appropriate amount of money, though many charities will also accept change vouchers.

- **On the bus, if you pay in cash, make sure you keep your ticket for inspection.** Bus inspectors can check whether you have a valid ticket for your journey. If you don’t, you could be required to pay €50.

- **If but only if** you are travelling more than two journeys per day, you may wish to obtain a book of day ‘rambler’ tickets, available for €32.10 for 5 days from the Dublin Bus centre in O’Connell Street and selected newsagents (convenience stores). (Prices are cheaper for students).
tickets allow you virtually unlimited bus travel for five days (which need not be consecutive), which can be very useful if you are taking more than two buses per day. (It works on the Airlink from the airport into the city, but not on the nightlink (late night buses)). It is not worth it if you are only travelling one return trip a day on the buses. It is arguably not economical for most interns.

- Most trains and buses have free WiFi.

**Student Travel Card**
If you intend to do a lot of travelling by bus and train around Ireland, a student travel card may be worth purchasing – it allows you to buy bus and rail tickets at a discount. See [http://www.studentleapcard.ie/#home](http://www.studentleapcard.ie/#home) for further details. It is available to full time students based outside of Ireland but you’ll need to get an application form stamped by your college before you come to Ireland. There is a €10 charge and a bit of paperwork to complete so it may not be economical unless you are intending to make regular use of the trains and buses.

**Light Rail and Trains**
You may also find the Luas light rail network of some use for some journeys. There are three lines, though none of these lines travels sufficiently close to UCD. Check out [https://luas.ie/](https://luas.ie/). If you have a leapcard, this also works on the Luas – you can use the leapcard by swiping in and swiping out by placing your card on the validator located on Luas station platforms.

To travel further afield check out [www.irishrail.ie](http://www.irishrail.ie) and [www.buseireann.ie](http://www.buseireann.ie) Trains are quite efficient, clean and pleasant but you’ll find the bus network quite comprehensive and considerably cheaper than trains.

**Taxis**
Taxis can be expensive but are in very regular supply. Expect to pay between €7 and €10 even for travel within the city centre. UCD to city centre should cost circa €12-€15, depending on traffic. Fares are more expensive after 8 p.m. and before 8 a.m. and on Sundays/public holidays. There are taxi ranks throughout the city but you can also ring for a cab. There is a minimum charge of €3.60 for all taxi rides (€4 after 8 p.m.), and a small extra charge is levied for additional passengers.

The National Transport Authority strictly regulates taxi fares - [http://www.nationaltransport.ie/](http://www.nationaltransport.ie/). All taxis are required to run a meter, display a table of fares, and should have an identification number and driver ID displayed.

**Bicycles**
You can now hire a bike in Dublin through the Dublin Shared Bikes scheme. See [www.dublinbikes.ie](http://www.dublinbikes.ie) for further details. There are bike terminals throughout the inner city. A three-day ticket, which can be purchased direct from the terminal, costs €5. Once you have a ticket, you can take a bike free for up to half an hour – extra is payable if you go over half an hour. A security guarantee of €150 will be
sought and applied to your credit/debit card, but you will only be liable to pay this if your bike is lost or stolen.

**Workplace Etiquette and Rules**

**Smoking**
Smoking is banned in enclosed parts of virtually all workplaces, in taxis and on public transport. This includes all pubs, restaurants and nightclubs. These laws are strictly enforced.

**Workplace conduct**
Workplace equality and harassment laws in Ireland are quite extensive. In particular, the law bans workplace discrimination and harassment where based on the following grounds: gender/sex, age, religion, race, nationality, ethnicity, family status (the fact that you are or are not a parent), civil status (the fact that you are married, are a civil partner, are widowed, separated or divorced, or are single), sexual orientation, transgender status, disability, membership of the travelling community. Discrimination/harassment on these grounds is also banned in the context of the supply of goods and services by businesses.

**Data Protection and Privacy**
Irish Data Protection laws are quite strict. Private information held by a body (public or private) relating to an individual (the data subject) should not be divulged to another body or company (or persons outside the relevant company) without the consent of the data subject. If disposing of information containing personal data, you are advised to use a shredder.

**Official Secrets and Freedom of Information**
All interns owe a duty of confidentiality towards their intern providers. Please do not divulge confidential information relating to your employer to any other person.

If you are interning with a public sector organisation two additional considerations apply:

- Your work may be subject to the Official Secrets Act – this means that your work may be subject to confidentiality requirements.
- In public sector roles, please be conscious also that your written communications – letters, e-mails, IMs, even post-its – are subject to the Freedom of Information Acts. This means that, subject to certain exceptions, members of the public, including journalists, can seek access to documents produced or held by the public sector organisation.

**Working hours**
Most workplaces stay open later, but typical working hours are from 9-5, weekdays only, with lunch from 1-2.

**Electrical equipment**
Electrical sockets in Ireland carry a much higher voltage (220-240v) than those in the US. **NEVER** plug an electrical device from the US into an Irish socket **without an appropriate voltage adapter**: You may otherwise destroy the electrical device and/or electrocute yourself. Some laptops already have converters but if in doubt, check it out.

### Weights and Measures

Most Irish weights and measurements are expressed using the metric system. Speed limits and distances are expressed in kilometres. That said, most Irish people will also be familiar with imperial measurements (e.g. the standard measurement for beer is the pint).

### Social and Personal

- **Banks** generally open from 10-4 including lunch, Mondays to Fridays with some banks staying open until 5 on a Thursday. Banks tend to provide fairly competitive exchange rates. Banks are closed on weekends. In recent years, counter services in bank have been scaled back, and electronic banking is more common.
- **Post office opening hours** vary but tend to stay open from 9.30 to 5, Monday to Friday and 10-1 on Saturday. Sending a postcard or regular letter (up to 100g) to the US will cost €1.35. Check out [www.anpost.ie](http://www.anpost.ie).
- **Theatres** include the Abbey, Project, Gaiety, Olympia, Tivoli and Gate theatres in Dublin city centre as well as the Grand Canal (Bord Gáis) Theatre. Dublin city centre also has a good selection of cinemas, including the Savoy, O’Connell Street and Cineworld, Parnell Street. The IFI and the Lighthouse (Smithfield) show good arthouse and independent movies. Check out [www.entertainment.ie](http://www.entertainment.ie) for further details.
- **Shops** typically stay open until 6 p.m. most days, with later opening on Thursdays until 8 or 9 p.m. Convenience stores usually stay open later, often 24 hours in the city centre, but usually at least until 9 or 10 most nights.
- **Pubs** serve until 11.30 p.m. from Monday to Thursday, until 12.30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and on the eve of a bank holiday, and until 11p.m. on a Sunday, with an additional half an hour’s drinking up time in all cases. Extensions are often granted, particularly at weekends. Nightclub hours vary but they usually stay open until 2.30 a.m. **Off-licences (liquor stores) close at 10 p.m.**
- Please note that smoking is not permitted in any indoor portion of a pub, nightclub or restaurant, the ban being strictly enforced throughout the State. The minimum legal age for buying alcohol is 18.
- **Restaurants:** unless a service charge has been added it is traditional to tip in or around 10%-12.5%, though this is entirely at your discretion. Service charges are typically added automatically for groups of six or more.
- In shops, prices stated **include** Value Added Tax (sales tax) and other taxes (excise etc....).
Things to do in Dublin and Ireland

My personal recommendations include:

- The National Museum, Kildare Street (especially the Treasury) and Collins Barracks. No entry fee
- The National Gallery, Merrion Street. No entry fee.
- The Natural History Museum (The ‘Dead Zoo’), Merrion Street. No entry fee.
- The Little Museum of Dublin, St. Stephen’s Green
- Chester Beatty Library at Dublin Castle (Eastern art and documents – specialises in Islamic Art). No entry fee.
- The WB Yeats exhibit at the National Library. No entry fee
- St. Patrick’s Cathedral and Christ Church Cathedral
- St. Michan’s Church
- The relics of St. Valentine and the statue of Our Lady of Dublin at Whitefriar Street Church. No entry fee
- George’s Street Arcade and Market
- The Italian Quarter (north of Millennium Bridge)
- Irish Film Institute, Eustace Street
- Cows’ Lane (market on Saturdays)
- Temple Bar Farmers’ Market (Saturdays)
- If the weather is nice, Phoenix Park and Dublin Zoo
- The Abbey Theatre, Gate Theatre, Focus, Grand Canal (Bord Gáis) and Project Theatres, all in the City Centre; Draíocht Theatre, Blanchardstown; Civic Theatre, Tallaght; Mill Theatre, Dundrum.
- The Ha’penny and Millennium Bridges and the Samuel Beckett Bridge
- The Ulysses-themed murals at Bloom’s Hotel and assorted urban art throughout the city.
- National Concert Hall (reasonably priced classical concerts)
- Trinity College Dublin (The Book of Kells but also check out the College Chapel and Exam Hall, if they are open, and the foyer of the Museum Building)
- Gardens at St. Stephen’s Green and Merrion Square
- Islandbridge National War Memorial Park
- Kilmainham Gaol
- The Irish Museum of Modern Art, Kilmainham
- Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin and Glasnevin Cemetery
- Moore Street Fruit and Vegetable Market
- The Seafront at Dún Laoghaire, Howth, Clontarf, Sandymount, Dalkey, or Killiney
- Leinster House (Congress – called the ‘Oireachtas’)
- The Royal Irish Academy, Dawson Street
- Olympia theatre (for concerts)

Good things to see outside Dublin:

- Trim Castle, Co. Meath (intact but largely unchanged since 1300s, this Castle featured in the movie Braveheart)
- Newgrange and the Boyne Valley, Co. Meath
- Battle of the Boyne Site, Co. Meath
- Powerscourt Gardens, Co. Wicklow and nearby Enniskerry
- Russborough House, Co. Wicklow
- St Patrick’s College and Maynooth University (National University of Ireland), Co.Kildare; Maynooth Castle
- Carton House, Maynooth and Castletown House, Celbridge, Co. Kildare
- Japanese Gardens and National Stud, Co. Kildare
- Museum of Style Icons, Newbridge, Co. Kildare
- Avoca, Co. Wicklow and surrounding countryside
- Kilkenny City (Castle and Medieval town)
- Belfast City: Titanic Quarter (incl. Titanic Museum), Ulster Museum, Botanic Gardens, King's Hall, Cathedral Quarter, and Queen’s University worth a look but the city as a whole is worth a visit
- Cork City, Kerry and West Cork; Ring of Kerry.
- Galway City and Connemara
- Derry City
- Cliffs of Moher, the Burren and Doolin, Co. Clare (in fact anything in Co. Clare)
- Clonmacnoise Round Tower
- Coole Park, Co. Galway
- Cashel, Co. Tipperary

Useful websites about Dublin:
- [www.totallydublin.ie](http://www.totallydublin.ie)
- [www.visitdublin.com](http://www.visitdublin.com)
- [http://comeheretome.com](http://comeheretome.com)

N.B. While every effort has been made to ensure that the above is accurate, the author accepts no liability whatsoever in respect of the contents of this information sheet.