

Welcome to Ireland – General Notes for Interns (2014)

Fergus Ryan

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

About Ireland

Ireland is an island on the north west coast of Europe, comprising approximately 6.4 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 4.589 million inhabitants, makes up the bulk of the island. The State, the official name of which is Ireland or Éire, attained independence from the UK in 1922, and became a Republic in 1949. The Republic of Ireland is a sovereign, democratic state, with a Constitution dating back to 1937. It is a member of the European Union and the Council of Europe, but is militarily non-aligned. The capital and largest city is Dublin. The vast majority of the population is Roman Catholic (84%), 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 English and Irish. While English is the main language of communication, Irish is spoken on a daily basis in some parts of the west, while over half a million inhabitants speak a language other than English or Irish at home. (Sources: CSO Census 2011, 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 1.8 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 are Protestant or were brought up as such, while 45% are Roman Catholic by birth. While Protestants in Northern Ireland generally favour remaining within the United Kingdom, many Catholics would prefer to be part of a United Ireland. Historically, Northern Ireland has witnessed significant religious and political division. A sustained terrorist campaign prevailed from the 1970s through to the 1990s, though as a result of a peace settlement brokered in 1998, the jurisdiction is now overwhelmingly peaceful.

About Dublin

Dublin, Ireland's largest city, is the capital of the Republic of Ireland and the State's political and economic hub. The city itself has a population of approximately 530,000 people, though the entire county of Dublin has a population of 1.2 million. The city is a coastal settlement nestling between Dublin Bay and the Dublin mountains, and is divided by the River Liffey. The city is at least 1,000 years old, having been founded by Viking settlers, reputedly in

988 AD (though the earliest written reference to a settlement in Dublin dates back to around 140 AD). A UNESCO City of Literature, Dublin is the birthplace of many literary and cultural giants including Jonathan Swift, George Bernard Shaw, Bram Stoker, Oscar Wilde, JM Synge, WB Yeats, Elizabeth Bowen, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Brendan Behan and Maeve Binchy. From 1783-1800 and again since 1922, the city has played host to the Irish Parliament, now called the Oireachtas, and it is also the seat of the main Irish courts, including the Supreme Court. The President of Ireland resides in the Phoenix Park, Dublin, in Áras an Uachtaráin.

Currency

The currency in the Republic of Ireland is the Euro, which is the common currency of 18 EU countries, including France, Germany, Spain and Italy. €1 = \$1.38 as of April 2014 (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. Each Euro coin contains a side common to all states, with the reverse side containing a national design, though Euro coins are valid in all Eurozone states, regardless of the national design. The notes start at €5 and progress to €10, €20, €50, €100, €200 and €500 euro notes.

The currency in Northern Ireland is the UK (British) pound sterling. £1 = \$1.67 as of April 2014 (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.

Weather

Ireland remains relatively temperate and mild even in the Summer. Our maritime location and the North Atlantic Drift in particular keep Ireland relatively mild in the Winter, and temperate in the Summer. Typical temperatures in June vary from around 50-75°F. The average Summer temperature is around 65°F and it rarely exceeds 75°F. That said, the weather is often unpredictable, 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.

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

For weather updates, check out the Irish Meteorological Service (Met Éireann) at www.met.ie

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 can vary in terms of their approach, with NGO organisations being much more casual than government agencies and the Bar.

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. **Dark or preferably black suits** are best, as barristers wear black to court (white shirt/blouse, everything else black).

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.

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.

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

Contacting your internship provider

Prior to your arrival in Ireland, you will be given contact details for your internship provider. You should make contact with your liaison at the internship prior to arrival in Ireland or as soon as possible after arrival.

Phoning for directions/help

The international dialling 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.

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). If, however, you are ringing a 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, even if you are calling from the same network.

Ready to go/pre-paid cellphones are typically quite cheap to purchase and cheap to operate. If you anticipate having to make lots of calls in Dublin, it is quite economical and convenient to purchase a 'pay as you go' cellphone for the duration of your study. You may also 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, E-mobile, Meteor, O2 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.

Aircoach operates a coach service (No. 700) from Dublin Airport to UCD slip road. See www.aircoach.ie for further details.

A number of buses in the Dublin Bus network will also take you to the city centre from which you can get a connecting bus to UCD. See www.dublinbus.ie for more details.

For full details on transport options from Dublin airport, see:

<http://www.dublinairport.com/gns/to-from-the-airport/overview.aspx>

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 name 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 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. 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, meaning that traffic goes in one direction only. Keep an eye out for cyclists and motorcycles when dismounting from buses.

Wait for traffic to stop at pedestrian crossings, even if you are cleared to walk. Cyclists sometimes do not stop when required to do so, even at red lights.

It is illegal to use a cellphone 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 town from UCD and will be useful for travelling to most internships in the city centre:

<http://www.dublinbus.ie/en/Your-Journey1/Timetables/All-Timetables/39a/>

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/PageFiles/6331/46aFrom UCD Belfield towards Phoenix Park.pdf](http://www.dublinbus.ie/PageFiles/6331/46aFrom%20UCD%20Belfield%20towards%20Phoenix%20Park.pdf)

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 phone/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 €1.80 and €3.05 depending on the length of your journey. It should cost either €2.35 or €2.60 cash to travel from UCD to most destinations in the city centre depending on your destination.

Here are a few points and tips about the buses:

- If you are using cash, 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, **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.
- 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 and the Luas light rail. (For instance, I save €3 a week using this card compared to full cash fares). 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 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 €27.50 for 5 days from the Dublin Bus centre in O'Connell Street and selected newsagents (convenience stores). These 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://studenttravelcard.ie/> 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 €15 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 two lines, one of which travels close to UCD, though the nearest station is not convenient for travel to or from UCD. Check out www.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 and www.buseireann.ie. Trains are very 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 the 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 €4.10 for all taxi rides (€4.45 after 8 p.m.), and a small extra charge is levied for additional passengers.

The National Transport Authority strictly regulates taxis – see <http://www.transportforireland.ie/taxi/>. 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 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. An annual card is €20. 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/data 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 (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 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.
- 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 to the US will cost 90c up to 100g (3.5 oz.). Check out 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, the Screen and the Lighthouse (Smithfield) show good arthouse and independent movies. Check out www.entertainment.ie for further details.

- Shops typically stay open until 6 p.m. most days, with late opening on Thursdays until 8 or 9 p.m. Convenience stores usually stay open later, often 24 hours in the city centre, but usually 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 11.30 p.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%, though this is entirely at your discretion. Service charges are typically added automatically for groups of six or more.

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.
- Chester Beatty Library at Dublin Castle (Eastern art and documents – specialises in Islamic Art). No entry fee.
- The National Library of Ireland, Kildare Street.
- The 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) and the Last Supper in Dublin mural.
- The Little Museum of Dublin, on St. Stephen's green
- 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.
- The Ha'penny and Millennium Bridges and the Samuel Beckett Bridge

- National Concert Hall (reasonably priced classical concerts)
- Trinity College Dublin (The Book of Kells but also check out the Chapel and Exam Hall, if they are open, and the foyer of the Museum Building)
- Gardens at St. Stephen's Green, Merrion Square and 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, Sandymount, Dalkey, or Killiney
- Leinster House (Congress – called the 'Oireachtas')
- The Royal Hibernian 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
- Castletown House, Celbridge, Co. Kildare
- Japanese Gardens and National Stud, Co. Kildare
- Avoca, Co. Wicklow and surrounding countryside
- Kilkenny City (Castle and Mediaeval town)
- Belfast City: Titanic Quarter, Ulster Museum, Botanic Gardens, King's Hall and Queen's University worth a look but city as a whole is worth a visit
- 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
- www.visitdublin.com
- www.dublincity.ie
- <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. No responsibility is accepted in respect of external websites.