



IRISH INTERNATIONAL
IMMIGRANT CENTER

Q & A for Prospective Exchange Visitors

Q: How much does the visa cost?

A: The IIC charges for a \$300 deposit, and a \$750 remaining balance, so the total sponsorship fee is \$1050. Once you have been determined eligible for the program, all payments are done through the IIC donation page.

This price does not include, your SEVIS fee of \$180, your Embassy visa processing fee of \$160, purchasing flights, or health travel insurance.

Q: Does the IIC provide flights and health insurance at all?

A: No, these are two costs you sort out yourself.

When booking flights, you are not required to book a return flight home. Health insurance prices vary, but you shouldn't expect to pay any more than \$300 for insurance.

Q: How long is the whole visa process and when are payments due?

A: The timeline for obtaining a visa takes about 6-8 weeks. The process can be shorter, but it depends on how fast we receive the required documentation from you.

Initially, the \$300 non-refundable deposit is required to secure you a spot in our visa sponsorship program (subject to passing the IIC interview and U.S. Embassy interview). The remaining balance of \$750, we recommend paying 2 months before your visa starts so you will have time to complete the process and still avail of the 30 day grace period at the start of your visa.

Q: Are there certain degrees that can't be accepted on the J1 IWT visa?

A: Yes, there are certain areas of study that are prohibited on our visa. On our visa, you are not allowed to teach, coach, give medical treatment, carry out manual labor, work with children or health care / social care clients of any sort.

If your degree would involve you taking on clients/patients or working with kids, etc., then you would be ineligible for our visa. Below is official wording from the State Department on prohibited areas of study:

According to the Department of State regulations, "Interns cannot work in unskilled or casual labor positions, in positions that require or involve child care or elder care or in any kind of position that involves medical patient care or contact. Nor can interns work in positions that require more than 20 percent clerical or office support work."

If you find that we cannot accept your application then you are of course still free to check out some of the other visa sponsors to see if they can help you. You can find a comprehensive list here: <http://j1visa.state.gov/programs/intern/>

Q: Do you get to come into the US before your visa starts?

A: Yes, on the visa you are given two grace periods, one 30 day grace period before your visa starts and one 30 day grace period after your visa ends, so you are allowed to be in the U.S. for a total of 14 months.

Each grace period is 30 days total. During the grace periods, you cannot work and you cannot travel in and out of the U.S. You can use the grace periods to get settled in the U.S., travel around the country, or tie up loose ends before you return to Ireland at the end of your visa, or simply to have a holiday. The grace periods cannot be combined.

Q: Am I allowed to travel out of the country during my visa?

A: Yes, during your 12 months you can travel out of the country.

You have a total of 30 days you can use during your 12 months for traveling outside of the U.S. Before traveling outside of the U.S., you must have your DS-2019 certificate signed by a member of the IIC team. For this to be signed you need to have started work and provided your DS-7002 work authorization form.

Q: Does the IIC help with securing employment?

A: Yes

Our Director of Intern Placements and his team will assist you during your job search. They can help you adapt your CV to American Resume format, help you write cover letters, as well as possibly connect you with some potential employers. This help commences as soon as you have your IIC interview.

Q: Does the IIC help with securing accommodation?

A: Very limited assistance.

Finding housing is something that you are in charge of, but for those that travel to Boston, we can provide helpful sites for listings in areas we believe are safe to live in, as well as reasonably priced in regards to rent.

Q: Do you need to have work lined up before you come on the program?

A: No, if you are an Irish Citizen that studied at an Irish university then you can travel without work set.

If you are an Irish Citizen that studied at a university outside of Ireland, then you do need to have a work placement setup in your field of study in order to obtain a J-1 Intern visa with us.

Q: What visas do we sponsor?

A: The IIC ONLY sponsors the J-1 Irish Work & Travel visa, and the J-1 Intern visa. Both are for up to 12 months.

We DO NOT sponsor the J-1 Summer Work and Travel visa - please see our Summer J-1 page for help we offer to these visa holders who travel to Boston.

Q: Can you travel once your exams are completed?

A: Yes, you can.

In order to travel before your conferral date, we require documentation that will prove the date you completed your coursework.

Applying for the J1 IWT visa

Q: When should I start sending in my application?

A: Depending on when you are traveling, you should send your application documents 3-4 MONTHS BEFORE YOU INTEND TO TRAVEL.

There are restrictions on when we can issue official documents for you, so although sending in your application materials ahead of time shows you are well prepared, we can't start processing your application until a certain time period.

Q: Is there anything I can do to speed up my application when it gets close to when I am intending to travel?

A: Yes. If you are within 3 months of your intended travel date, your application process can go a lot faster if you have read your guidelines and have all the paperwork we require from you prepared and ready to send off.

The faster we receive things from you, the faster we can move along with your application. For those that wish to receive documentation faster than sending paperwork through normal post, we can expedite your form for an additional \$40 fee. Expedition means you would receive your forms within 3-5 business days.

Q: What are the minimum requirements for travel health insurance?

A: It is your responsibility to make sure the health insurance you purchase meets the minimum requirements set by the State Department.

The minimum requirements for your health insurance cover are:

- (1) Medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per accident or illness;
- (2) Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000;
- (3) Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of exchange visitors to his or her home country in the amount of \$50,000; and
- (4) Deductibles not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness

Please note your insurance must cover for the full period, i.e. from the date you travel to the end of your grace period after your visa ends. You must let your insurance provider know what work you will be doing when on the visa, as manual labor tasks are not covered.

Q: If I need to change my visa start date, is that possible?

A: Yes, this can be done ONLY IF you have not already had your Embassy interview and been granted a visa.

Once we issue your DS-2019 form and send it off to you, if you wish to change your start date, a \$25 re-issuance fee will be required to receive a new form.

Q: When can I enter the U.S.?

A: You can enter the U.S. up to 30 days prior to when your visa is set to start.

We recommend taking advantage of at least some of your grace period, so that you can get settled and be able to devote more time to your job search.

Q: Can I move address?

A: Yes, but you must keep us informed so we can update your SEVIS record.

Q & A for Current Exchange Visitors

Q: Can I extend my visa?

A: No, the J-1 IWT visa can not be extended beyond the maximum duration of 12 months.

Q: What is the last day I can stay on the program and work?

A: The final day of your visa is noted on your DS-2019 certificate, you cannot work beyond that date.

You have a 30 day grace period after your visa end date where you can remain in the U.S. but not work. You must return home to Ireland before the end of your grace period.

Q: What taxes do I pay on the visa?

A: On the visa, you are required to pay Federal and State tax. You are exempt from paying Social Security and Healthcare (FICA) taxes while on the program in the U.S.

Note: If you live in the state of California, then you are required to pay ALL TAXES (State, Federal, FICA).