

Country Profile - Ireland

Job market

What are my chances of getting a job?

Ireland was affected by the global financial crisis of 2008-2010 and this has had an ongoing impact on the job market which remains somewhat depressed. This may limit employment opportunities, particularly in some sectors, although there are signs that things are beginning to improve. Generally Irish employers are positive about employing EU nationals and foreign candidates where suitable vacancies exist, provided they speak fluent English.

- **Typical problems encountered:** some professions require registration with the relevant professional associations and all the necessary qualifications and training to meet Irish standards and conditions (e.g. surgery, nursing, physiotherapy). There is intense competition from other graduates, particularly postgraduates.
- **How to improve your chances:** consider undertaking postgraduate study as this will help you to compete against other candidates for jobs. Having practical work experience through a graduate internship or placement scheme will also help to build your skill set. You need to be able to demonstrate basic competencies such as good computer skills, numeracy, teamwork and communication skills. Offering fluency in another language might also help.
- **Language requirements:** English and Irish (Gaeilge) are the official languages of Ireland. You will need to be fluent in English to work in Ireland. For some public service appointments, such as some teaching and lecturing posts, some knowledge of Irish is also required. Irish self-study courses are available through [Eurotalk Interactive](#) and [Routledge Language Learning](#).

Where can I work?

- **Major industries:** digital media - with many multinational companies locating their head offices in Ireland. Other major industries are food and drink, computer software and IT, pharmaceuticals and tourism.
- **Recent growth areas:** there has been a slight increase in the employment of managers and professional workers.
- **Industries in decline:** construction, manufacturing and agriculture. Also a smaller decline in wholesale, retail and hospitality in the private sector.
- **Shortage occupations:** sciences areas (chemists, biologists, medical scientists, nutritionists), engineering roles, IT roles (software engineers, computer programmers, web developers), finance roles (risk analysis and management), medical roles (medical practitioners, specialist nurses, medical radiographers, senior therapists and clinical psychologists), and marketing and technical sales roles.
- **Major companies:** Accenture (computer services), WPP (advertising), Covidien (medical equipment), CRH (construction materials), Allied Irish Banks, Ingersoll-Rand (conglomerates), Seagate Technology (computer storage), Bank of Ireland, XL Group (insurance), Shire (pharmaceuticals).

- **Search for more companies:** [Kompas](#) - a worldwide business directory searchable by country and product/service, [Chambers of Commerce Ireland](#), and [Golden Pages: Ireland](#).
- **Major cities:** Dublin (capital, largest), Cork, Galway and Limerick.

What's it like working in Ireland?

- **Average working hours:** the average Irish working week is 39 hours with the maximum working week being 48 hours. Working hours are governed by EU directives, which stipulate that you're entitled to a minimum of 11 hours continuous rest in every 24 hours and you're also entitled to at least 24 hours continuous rest every week.
 - **Holidays:** you are entitled to a minimum of four weeks holiday and the nine public holidays every year.
 - **Tax rates:** all EU/EEA nationals resident and working in Ireland will pay tax in the same way as Irish nationals. The two bands for personal income tax are 20% and 41%. See [Revenue - Irish Tax and Customs](#) for more information.
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Applying for jobs

You do not need to be in Ireland to apply for jobs or secure a job before you go. The main methods for applying for jobs are the same as in the UK – a CV and covering letter or an application form, which may sometimes be an online version.

It is important that your CV and application are tailored to the specific job you're applying for, rather than being a generic copy that you send for all vacancies. Your CV can follow the same format as the one you use in the UK and should include key information such as your education, employment history, skills and interests. Include information on your language skills, particularly if English isn't your first language or if you can speak other languages. You are not required to include your date of birth, religious belief, marital status or ethnicity. Make sure your covering letter or application form includes information on why you would like to live and work in Ireland and what you would be able to offer the employer. See [Gradireland](#) for further information.

Interviews also follow the same formats as those in the UK. The actual style of interview may vary depending on the size and type of employer. Some may be with a couple of people and may be quite informal, while others may include a panel, presentations or test and exercises and perhaps a second round of interviews. Many of the large employers who run graduate schemes select their candidates through assessment centre days. It's important that whatever type of interview you have, you're fully prepared for it. Research the company in-depth before you go so you can talk confidently about it in the interview. Also think about the type of questions you're likely to be asked and what your response could be. Make sure you're able to give examples of how you have the skills and knowledge they require.

Will my UK qualifications be recognised?

Most UK qualifications will be recognised in Ireland, although some professions may demand different requirements. You can check whether your qualifications will be accepted through the qualifications recognition service of the [National Qualifications Authority of Ireland](#).

The [European Qualifications Framework](#) helps to standardise qualifications from different EU states and can be used by employers and individuals.

For help with comparing your professional, vocational or technical qualifications with those in Ireland you can consult [ENIC-NARIC](#).

The [UK National Europass Centre \(UK NEC\)](#) is also a key resource for helping with the comparison of your qualifications. It provides five documents that enable employers to understand your subjects of study, training and work experience. It also records non-formal learning and language skills.

Do I still need to pay UK tax and National Insurance?

If you are planning to live and work in Ireland, check your UK tax and National Insurance position with [HM Revenue & Customs \(HMRC\)](#) to ensure that you are not losing any UK pension rights.

Vacancy sources

Job websites

- [Academic Jobs EU](#)
- [Adminjobs.ie](#)
- [CPL](#) - Irish recruitment agency
- [ComputerJobs.ie](#)
- [EURES - European Job Mobility Portal](#) - provides information about job vacancies, living and working conditions, and the labour market. It also has a CV-posting service for jobseekers.
- [Ireland Jobs](#)
- [Irish Jobs](#)
- [Jobs in Ireland](#)
- [Jobs Ireland](#)
- [Job Finder Ireland](#) - collates Irish recruitment agency vacancies.
- [Monster \(Ireland\)](#)
- [SalesJobs.ie](#)

Recruitment agencies

- [Euro-CIETT](#) - the European section of the [International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies \(CIETT\)](#) which provides a list of member recruitment agencies
- [Golden Pages: Ireland](#) - search for recruitment agencies
- [Manpower Ireland](#)
- [National Recruitment Federation](#) - links to recruitment agencies in Ireland

Newspapers

- [The Irish Independent](#)
- [The Irish Times](#)
- [The Sunday Business Post](#)

For a full list of the newspapers in Ireland see [Kidon Media-Link](#).

Other sources

Information on graduate and internship positions and careers fairs is available on [Gradireland](#). Also contains a list of employers and shows who is currently recruiting.

Hidden vacancies

It may be possible to secure work through speculative applications. Make sure you research the company thoroughly and be clear of what skills or experience you can offer to the organisation.

Work experience

Work placements and internships

- [AIESEC \(Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales\)](#) offers young people the opportunity to participate in international internships in areas such as management, technology, education, and development.
- Opportunities for placements and internships in Ireland are advertised through [Europlacement](#).
- [IAESTE \(The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience\)](#) provides science, engineering and applied arts undergraduates with course-related placements.
- A list of various internship programmes in Ireland is available from [Intern Abroad](#).
- [Internships Ireland](#) helps international students and graduates to gain professional work experience that is relevant to their studies or chosen career.

Exchange programmes

The [Leonardo da Vinci Programme](#) promotes and supports work placements within the European Economic Area (EEA). The Leonardo network can assist in both identifying potential placements and in granting financial assistance in the case of less well-paid placements.

Teaching schemes

It may be possible to work in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in Ireland. [MEI Schools](#) have 51 member schools around Ireland and employ TEFL teachers. TEFL courses are also available in Ireland through organisations such as [TEFL Ireland](#) and [International House Dublin](#) (which also employs TEFL teachers).

Volunteering

There are many volunteering opportunities available in Ireland through [Volunteer Ireland](#). They have local volunteer centres as well as a database of opportunities. [Volunteer Abroad](#) also has various opportunities in Ireland.

Casual work and short-term opportunities

Casual and short-term work is often seasonal and related to the tourism industry. You can approach employers directly or use employment agencies such as [Manpower Ireland](#).

Gap year opportunities

[Adventure Ireland](#) offers sports programmes, cultural trips and study exchanges. [Gradireland](#) has an area dedicated to work experience and advice on gap years. [iGapyear](#) lists gap year projects around the world.

Postgraduate study

How does the higher education system work?

Ireland has higher education institutions that include universities, institutes of technology and colleges of education. The Irish higher education system works to the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) which covers ten levels of study. This aims to help with the comparison of national and international qualifications. Irish universities are state-funded and are self-governed. They offer qualifications at Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate levels. Private, fee-paying colleges are also available which tend to specialise in professional and vocational courses.

What courses are available?

Irish universities offer a wide range of subjects at postgraduate level comparable to those offered in the UK. Institutes of technology tend to specialise in courses in engineering, computing, science and business but also offer many other subjects. Colleges of education provide specialised training for primary school teachers. Course lengths are comparable to those in the UK with Masters taking one to two years and PhDs taking a minimum of three years. Ireland's National Learners' Database, [Qualifax](#) has comprehensive information on courses available in Ireland.

Where can I study?

There are four main universities in Ireland:

- National University of Ireland (NUI) – umbrella university covering [University College Dublin](#), [NUI Galway](#), [University College Cork](#) and [NUI Maynooth](#);
- The University of Dublin, generally known as [Trinity College Dublin](#);
- The [University of Limerick](#);
- [Dublin City University](#).

See [Universities Ireland](#) for further information. There are also 14 institutes of technology located around Ireland and several colleges of education.

Applying for postgraduate study

Each institution has specific entry requirements, similar to the UK. A general guideline is at least a 2:2 honours undergraduate degree in a relevant subject. Some institutions may require a 2:1 or higher. A certain level of research experience is usually required for PhD programmes. English is the language of instruction in Ireland and you must be able to

demonstrate a certain level of competency in it, usually through TOEFL or IELTS results. Refer to individual institutions for further information on specific entrance requirements.

You can apply for postgraduate courses throughout the year. Closing dates vary for different courses. Some courses accept applicants during the year and hold some places until results are announced.

Most applications are made directly to the institution via its official application form, which you may be able to download from its website. Some institutions accept online applications via the [Postgraduate Applications Centre \(PAC\)](#).

Application forms for individual institutions vary but all usually ask for details of your qualifications, relevant experience, a statement of interest and academic references. You will also need to pay an application fee of €45 to each institution you apply to.

Fees and scholarships

While undergraduate courses are state-funded in Ireland, postgraduate course fees must be paid by the student (including Irish nationals). Fees can vary depending on the course and institution and may be higher for non-EU citizens. You should check with the individual institution for further details.

Financial support may be available from the university or from an external organisation. Some research bodies award funding and scholarships for postgraduate study and research in Ireland including, the [Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences](#), the [Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology](#) and the [Science Foundation Ireland](#).

Further information on available funding and grants in Ireland can be found at studentfinance.ie.

Are there any exchange programmes?

UK students on undergraduate degree programmes or postgraduate Masters and some PhD programmes may be interested in spending time studying in Ireland through [Erasmus](#). This programme is open to all subject areas but check with your institution's Erasmus coordinator first (usually in the international office) to see which countries they have links with and in what subject areas.

Will my qualification be recognised in the UK?

Irish qualifications are typically recognised in the UK, particularly as the postgraduate qualifications at Masters and PhD level are in the same standard format.

If you wish to compare your professional, vocational or technical qualifications with Irish qualifications, you can consult [UK NARIC \(National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom\)](#).

Visa and travel information

Visa requirements and applications

You do not need a visa to enter Ireland if you are an EU citizen. Citizens of Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein are also able to enter Ireland without a visa. Details of other countries whose citizens do not require a visa can be found on the [Citizens Information](#) website.

Citizens of non-EU countries which are required to have a visa can apply for one online through the [Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service](#).

If you are an EU citizen you can study and/or work in Ireland without a study or work permit.

Non-EU citizens may be required to have a permit and can check on the Citizens Information website for further details. You can also contact the Irish embassy in the country where you are currently residing, or if you're living in the UK, go to the [Embassy of Ireland](#).

Permanent residency

EU nationals have the right to stay in Ireland for up to three months without restrictions. If you plan to stay for longer you must meet certain requirements:

- be employed or self-employed, or
- have sufficient resources and sickness insurance so that you don't become a burden on the social services of Ireland, or
- be enrolled as a student/vocational trainee, or
- be a family member of an EU citizen in one of the above categories.

Non-EU citizens may be required to register with the local immigration officer and need a residence card to live in Ireland. Further details are available from the [Citizens Information](#) website.

Foreign nationals are able to apply for Irish citizenship through naturalisation but to do so they must have been resident in Ireland for a certain length of time. All applications are decided by the Minister for Justice and Equality and further information can be found on the Citizens Information website.

Help in an emergency

If you require help while you are in Ireland you can contact the [British Embassy Ireland](#). They offer support in a variety of situations including providing emergency travel documents and can help to contact relatives in emergencies and put you in touch with others who can help.

The emergency number for the police, ambulance or fire brigade is the same as in the UK - 999. You can also use the European emergency number of 112.

Travel advice

You should always check for up-to-date travel advice including any restrictions or warnings for the country before travelling. The latest travel advice and a traveller's checklist can be found on the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#) website.

Country overview

Geography

- **Full country name:** Ireland
- **Population:** 4.5 million
- **Border countries:** Northern Ireland (forms part of the UK)
- **Climate:** maritime climate of mild winters and cool summers, with a narrow seasonal variation in temperature.
- **Terrain:** an island in the North Atlantic with coastal cliffs in the west and interior agricultural lowlands, numerous hills, low mountains and lakes.
- **Natural hazards:** storms can result in dangerously high waves on the coastlines.

Living in Ireland

- **Cost of living:** Ireland has one of the highest costs of living in Europe. Rental prices are high, particularly in Dublin. Be prepared to pay higher than average prices for food, drink and clothing.
- **Internet domain:** .ie
- **Health:** if you are an EU national you should ensure you have a free [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#) before leaving the UK. This doesn't replace medical or travel insurance but does entitle you to state provided medical treatment while in Ireland. You'll be treated the same as an Irish national, so if they had to pay for treatment, you would too. The Health Service Executive in Ireland issues medical cards which allow the bearer to obtain certain health services for free. You may be entitled to a health card if your income is below a certain level. More information on healthcare in Ireland can be found on the [Citizens Information](#) website.
- **Laws and customs:** it is illegal to smoke in places of employment in Ireland - this covers pubs and restaurants. Holding and using a mobile phone while driving is banned. Possession of even small quantities of drugs can lead to long terms of imprisonment. Ireland has a civil partnership registration scheme for same-sex couples which gives them the same rights and obligations towards each other as married couples.

Economy and finance

- **Currency:** euro
- **Type of economy:** western, capitalist.
- **Health of economy:** Ireland was affected badly by the economic downturn and officially went into recession in 2008. Its economy shrank by 10% in 2009 and it had a near collapse of its property market which put a major strain on the Irish banks and government finances. In November 2010 Ireland agreed to take a financial support package from the EU and IMF worth €85billion. The Irish government aims to reduce its budget deficit to below 3% by 2014 and is working to repair the banking system and restore public finances.
- **Unemployment rate:** 14.3%
- **Main exports:** machinery and equipment, computers, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, animal products, food products and medical devices.

Culture

- **People:** Irish 87.4%, other white 7.5%, Asian 1.3%, black 1.1%, mixed 1.1%, unspecified 1.6% (World Factbook, Census 2006).

- **Major religion:** Roman Catholic 87.4%, plus Church of Ireland 2.9% and other Christian 1.9%.
- **History:** see [BBC Timeline: Ireland](#)

Politics

- **Type of government:** republic, parliamentary democracy
- **Major political parties:** Fine Gael, Labour, Fianna Fáil, Independents, Sinn Féin, Green Party, Socialist Party, People Before Profit Alliance.

More information

- [Embassy of Ireland](#)
- [BBC Country Profile - Ireland](#)
- [The World Factbook](#)
- [XE Universal Currency Converter](#)

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