



IIE Passport Focus... *Ireland*

What studying abroad is really about.

Ireland Fast Facts

Capital:
Dublin

Language(s):

English (official) is the language generally used, Irish (official, Gaelic or Gaeilge) is spoken mainly in areas located along the western seaboard **Note: English is the predominant second language**

Population:
4,234,925

Religion(s):

Roman Catholic 88.4%, Church of Ireland 3%, other Christian 1.6%, other 1.5%, unspecified 2%, none 3.5%

Currency:
euro (EUR)

Major Events:

- Dublin International Film Festival, February
- Six Nations Rugby Internationals, February-March
- St. Patrick's Day, 17 March
- Irish Grand National, April
- Irish Open Golf Championship, May
- Rose of Tralee Festival, August
- Dublin Horse Show, August
- All-Ireland Football and Hurling Finals, September
- Galway Oyster Festival, September

Online Resources

Irish Council for International Students
www.icosirl.ie

Education Ireland
www.educationireland.ie

Central Statistics Office Ireland
www.cso.ie

Embassy of Ireland, Washington DC
www.irelandemb.org

Ireland - Information on the Irish State
www.irlgov.ie

Fáilte Ireland - National Tourism Development Authority
www.failteireland.ie

Discover Ireland - The official site of Tourism Ireland
www.tourismireland.com

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program
www.iie.org/gilman

National Security Education Program
www.iie.org/NSEP

Study Abroad Scholarships
www.StudyAbroadFunding.org



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When many students think of Ireland, or Éire in Irish, they imagine the “Emerald Isle” – an almost magical land of rich greenery, vibrant Celtic music and traditions, heavy rainfall, cozy pubs and maybe even the occasional leprechaun. And while the Republic of Ireland may be all of those things (although the leprechauns are probably a stretch), it is also a modern nation with an excellent higher education system, the second highest per capita GDP in the EU and a host of opportunities for international students. In 2005, *The Economist* even rated it the top country in which to live.

Ireland offers some excellent options for students who wish to enroll directly in an Irish institution. There are four universities, Trinity College Dublin (University of Dublin), The National University of Ireland (NUI), the University of Limerick and Dublin City University. NUI has four constituent colleges: NUI Dublin, NUI Cork, NUI Galway and NUI Maynooth. Prospective doctors will find a terrific learning experience at the Royal College of Surgeons while art students will definitely want



Albert College, Dublin City University

to consider The National College of Art and Design – both are teaching colleges of the NUI. These fine institutions educate more than 100,000 students per year. Ireland also has 12 institutes of technology, the largest being the Dublin Institute of Technology. Many U.S. study abroad providers offer programs in partnerships with these Irish institutions. Any student considering studying in Ireland can find helpful information from Education Ireland or the Irish Council for International Students.

Students interested in economics and government will be fascinated to explore the Irish economic development of recent years and the government policies that helped the country earn the nickname “Celtic Tiger.” Though formally an agricultural nation, some of Ireland’s main industries today include information technology, brewing, machinery,



steel, textiles and tourism. It is also a global center for the banking, telecommunications, and the pharmaceutical and software industries. As a result of this economic development, Ireland is experiencing a shift from emigration to immigration, with its population developing into a diversified and multicultural society.

Behind this modern success lies a complex history that has given rise to a rich cultural, artistic, literary and musical heritage. Ireland’s history began 7,000 years ago with hunters from Britain settling on the island. The introduction of Christianity is credited to St. Patrick in the 5th Century, and the subsequent Irish monasteries were responsible for a true flowering of Irish learning, culture and art in the following centuries. One of the masterpieces of art and history that survives from that period is the Book of Kells, an ornately illustrated manuscript produced by monks around 800 A.D. Students should definitely go to the Trinity College Library in Dublin to see this amazing manuscript for themselves.

Around this time, Vikings began to invade and were finally stopped by High King Brian Boru in 1014. In the 12th Century, the Normans invaded, which marked the beginning of seven centuries of Anglo-Irish struggle. In 1921, the 26 counties that today make up the Republic of Ireland formed the Irish Free State. In 1948, the Republic of Ireland Act severed the last remaining constitutional ties with Britain. Ireland joined the United Nations in 1955 and the European Community in 1973.

With more than 50 percent of its population under the age of 25, Ireland is a youthful, energy-filled country. Students should take the opportunity to learn about Ireland’s traditional games such as Gaelic football, hurling and camogie...

Ireland has a history of great musicians that stretches all the way back to the blind harpist Turlough O’Carolan (1670-1738). Traditional Irish music has experienced a revival in recent years as demonstrated by the popularity of groups such as The Dubliners, Clannad, The Chieftains, De Dannan, Horslips and Altan, and many students are probably familiar with Irish song, dance and music due to “Riverdance.” The widespread influence of Irish musicians can also be seen through the popularity of a variety of modern musicians and groups including Van Morrison, Rory Gallagher, Thin Lizzy, U2, Sinéad O’Connor, Enya, Boyzone, West Life, the Cranberries, Therapy, ASH and The Corrs.



In addition to the famous Irish musicians, students will also be impressed by the number of literary geniuses who have called Ireland home. Students studying literature can wander the streets of Dublin as did Leopold Bloom, the famous main character of James Joyce’s novel *Ulysses*. Other Irish authors include satirist Jonathan Swift, poet and playwright Oscar Wilde, political writer Edmund Burke, *Dracula* author Bram Stoker, and dramatists George Bernard Shaw, Oliver Goldsmith, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, John Millington Synge and Sean O’Casey.

With more than 50 percent of its population under the age of 25, Ireland is a youthful, energy-filled country. Students studying in Ireland should take the opportunity to learn about Ireland’s traditional games such as Gaelic football, hurling and camogie (the women’s variant of hurling), which remain the most popular sports in the country today. In addition to Ireland’s Gaelic sports, soccer, rugby, golf and horseracing are hugely popular.

If you study in Ireland, you will have an array of excellent English-language educational opportunities to choose from, and the chance to live in vibrant cities with a thriving economy and rich cultural institutions and to be greeted by the famously welcoming Irish hospitality.

Check out IIEPassport... the study abroad search engine.

Go to www.IIEPassport.org to find study abroad programs in Ireland as well as Gaelic language programs.

<http://info.iiepassport.org/country/ireland.html>

