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Applying for Your Student Visa

If you are a national of the EEA (27 EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) or Switzerland you currently have the right of free movement and residence in the UK. There will be only a brief passport or identity card check on arrival in the UK.

Non EU students should apply for a Tier 4 student visa, see UKVI website: https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa. You can apply for your visa anytime from 3 months before the start of your course. Full guidance is available on the UKVI website at the above link. Some US students chose to use an expedited service such as WorldBridge or Swift.

As part of your visa application you will need a CAS (confirmation of acceptance for studies) from ISE. You may also have to provide for your visa application documents Trinity has used to issue your CAS (eg transcripts). We can provide your CAS once you have accepted an unconditional offer for the course and paid your course fee deposit. We normally start issuing CAS to incoming students from May in the year of entry. A CAS is valid for 6 months. As part of the visa application you will also need to show that you have enough funds to cover tuition fees and living expenses for at least 50% of your course (£1,015 per month).

To obtain your CAS number, once you have accepted a firm offer of a place on the course, please send a scan of the photograph page of your passport to the MPhil office at reconsec@tcd.ie. We will then issue you with a PDF version of your CAS containing your CAS number and other information about the course which you may need for your visa application. To speed up your visa application UKVI offers the following advice:

- Submit any supporting documents either with your application or shortly after in a timely manner;
• Enrol your biometrics as soon as you receive your enrolment request;
• Ensure you complete the Immigration Health Surcharge along with your Tier 4 application; and
• Utilise the Immigration Health Surcharge fee checker to understand the required payment

As referred to above students are required to pay a Healthcare Surcharge (currently £150) per year as part of the visa application. This entitles you to use of the UK National Health Service for the duration of your stay in the UK as a student.

When your leave is granted, you’ll be given a 30 day vignette. The vignette means you have permission to come to the UK and is valid for 30 days from the date you said you’d arrive in the UK (even if you arrive at a later date). You will then need to collect your Biometric Residence Permit from a Post Office within 10 days of your arrival in the UK. You’ll receive a decision letter from UK visas and immigration (UKVI) telling you when your BRP will be available and which Post Office branch you can collect it from. There is an option to choose the branch on your application form - the nearest Post Office to ISE is the Botanic Gardens branch. Enter Botanic Gardens at this branch finder to see the location. You must bring your passport or travel document with your vignette sticker in when you collect your BRP.

If you have problems picking up your BRP you should use the UKVI online service at: https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits. Students on a Tier 4 visa will need to bring their BRP to ISE Belfast on Orientation day or as soon as possible after that, as the school is required to keep a copy for our records. You will also need to provide your term time address and contact details once available and let us know of any changes throughout the year.

We will provide you with an International Student Checklist at orientation as a handy reference for all the things you will need to remember to do when you arrive.
Travel to Belfast and Clearing Immigration

You are likely to travel to Northern Ireland by one of three routes: a flight directly to Belfast with the new Norwegian Air service starting in July 2017 (New York and Boston areas to Belfast International); a flight to mainland UK (e.g. London, Manchester etc.) and a connecting flight to Belfast International or Belfast City Airport, or a direct flight to Dublin. Current students mentioned that US- Reykjavik-Belfast is worth exploring as it is not too expensive. If you travel via Dublin you should keep your travel documents in case they are later needed as proof of your journey to the UK. You may also need to explain that you are travelling on to Belfast for a Trinity course based there, as confusion can sometimes arise due to your Trinity documentation. The UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) has further information for UK-bound students arriving via Dublin:


At your point of entry into a UK airport an immigration officer may ask you to show evidence of your reasons for coming to the UK. This could include your CAS and acceptance letter, travel tickets, passport, evidence of funding and your 30 day travel vignette. Spot interviews may take place. Whatever your chosen route you should carry the key documents in your hand luggage.

Travel Between Belfast and Dublin

At the start of term you will need to travel to the main Trinity campus in Dublin, in the Republic of Ireland, to collect your student ID card. As part of the registration process you will be notified of the dates when your card will be available for collection. (Please note you will need to have completed online registration before you can collect your card). ISE Belfast students often arrange to travel together and combine this with the ISE Dublin Orientation morning during Trinity postgraduate Orientation week.
Students from certain countries may need to ensure that their UK student visa covers re-entry to the UK so they can legally travel out of Northern Ireland, to the Republic of Ireland, and back. Check with UK Visas and Immigration if you think this might apply to you.

To comply with Irish visa requirements, some nationalities will need a short visitor visa in order to make the journey to Dublin. These are issued by the Irish authorities. For more information on Irish visas see: https://www.dfa.ie/irish-embassy/great-britain/our-services/visas/visas-for-ireland/

Citizens of many countries do not need a visa to enter the Republic of Ireland, including US and Canadian citizens, however all Non EU students are advised to carry their passport, BRP and Trinity student ID card when travelling between the two jurisdictions as there are sometimes identity checks on public transport.

**Accommodation**

It is a student’s own responsibility to find accommodation for the year. In this section we provide advice on accommodation options on-site, which areas of the city are most student-friendly, and some options to help you with your housing search.

**Choosing which area to live in**

The Irish School of Ecumenics is located at 9 Lennoxvale, off Malone Road, Belfast, BT9 5BY. [Click here for map.](#) The campus is shared with Edgehill Theological College and is comfortable and well-equipped. Accommodation is available on-site, however this is limited and is available on a first come first served basis. You can apply for student accommodation **after Easter**. Please contact the Edgehill bursar directly: Wayne Mullholland [wmulholland@edgehillcollege.org](mailto:wmulholland@edgehillcollege.org).

There are lots of student friendly areas in south Belfast which are convenient for getting to ISE and where rentals are easy to find: Lisburn Road (also known as Windsor), Ormeau, Malone, Stranmillis, Ravenhill and Botanic. The area directly
behind Queen’s University known as ‘the Holylands’ is popular with undergrads and can be quite lively; so for a quieter life you might prefer to avoid that area. Belfast is a relatively safe city on the whole. There have been some incidents of racism and hate crimes directed towards non-white immigrants, however there are plenty of areas where anyone will feel safe and welcome. We encourage you to contact us if you would like advice about a particular area.

Short term accommodation suggestions

Many students will need somewhere to stay for a few days on arrival in Belfast. Listed below are some options in South Belfast, recommended by past students:

- Arnies Backpacker Fitzwilliam Street
- Paddys Palace Fitzwilliam Street
- Lagan Backpackers Fitzroy Avenue
- Global Village University Street
- Vagabonds University Road
- Full list of Belfast hostels from Hostelworld.com
- Air B&B run by past ISE student Ormeau Road area

Finding a place for the year

Besides the on-site accommodation, here are some suggestions: for a general search for student housing you could try the Student Pad website. This resource lists private rental properties approved by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive for students:

http://www.nihestudentpad.co.uk/Accommodation

As ISE isn’t listed as one of the campuses, it’s best to search under Area/Belfast: Botanic, Malone, Stranmillis, Windsor and Ravenhill. There is also a useful advice section:

http://www.housingguideonline.co.uk/HousingGuide

New dedicated student accommodation is due to open in south Belfast in September 2017 –see Botanic Studios. The area has lots of bars and clubs but is certainly very central. Pricey but includes facilities management and bills. Please check before arranging anything as at the time of print, it seems to be still under construction!
Useful Websites

- Gumtree [https://www.gumtree.com/flatshare/belfast](https://www.gumtree.com/flatshare/belfast)
- Daft.ie [http://www.daft.ie/student-accommodation/](http://www.daft.ie/student-accommodation/) (select Queens’ University Belfast as the nearest campus)
- Spare Room Flat Share [https://www.spareroom.co.uk/](https://www.spareroom.co.uk/)
- City Lets [http://www.citylets.co.uk/flats-rent-belfast/](http://www.citylets.co.uk/flats-rent-belfast/)

For those interested in city centre apartment living, Mark Royal House is located across from St. Anne's Cathedral in the Cathedral Quarter. ISE students have had good experiences there and report that the building is very secure with key fob access required to enter the building and to enter onto your floor and specific wing. Interested students can contact the director of the building at [info@cathedralliving.com](mailto:info@cathedralliving.com) and the building's website is [www.cathedralliving.com](http://www.cathedralliving.com).

Finally, in the weeks before term you will be invited to join a Facebook group so that you can chat to other incoming students. This means you can connect with others and find out if anyone is interested in sharing accommodation.

**Getting to ISE**

Lennoxvale, off the Malone Road, is a short taxi ride from the main bus and train stations in the city centre. The Malone Road is also served by the number 8 Metro buses which leave from the City Hall. Hop off a couple of stops after Queen’s University and ISE is located at no. 9 Lennoxvale at the end of the cul de sac. [Click here for map.](#)

**Access to Money**

Please make sure that you have access to money to see you through the first few weeks of term in case of any delay in processing student loans.
Working


You can search for work through the local press, or online, for example [http://www.nijobfinder.co.uk/](http://www.nijobfinder.co.uk/) and it is sometimes possible to find bar or cafe work by dropping in your CV. Bear in mind that if you take the Community Learning module you will also have an internship to factor into your time in term 2.

Healthcare

You can register with any doctor (GP) practice. Take along your BRP, passport and evidence of your address to your nearest clinic or surgery to register. You will then be sent an NHS medical card with an individual identity code, which you can also use to register with a dentist. A consultation with your doctor is free, but you may have to pay for any medicines prescribed. Some students opt to register with the University Health Centre at Queens where the staff is experienced in student health issues, but you can register with any doctor in your area.

Living Costs

UKVI estimates that you will need around £1,015 per month to cover living expenses, although you may find Belfast a little cheaper compared to the rest of the UK.

Currency

The currency used in Northern Ireland is the British Pound, sterling. The Republic of Ireland uses Euros. If you wish to get some Euros before you travel to Dublin, you can buy them at any Post Office or bank. The Ulster Bank beside the City Hall has a Euro ATM. On the train to and from Dublin you can use either currency. Trinity fees are calculated in Euros.

Opening a Bank Account

To open a bank account you will need your passport, BRP and a letter from us to confirm your student status and your term time address. Please request a letter from the Executive Officer at reconsec@tcd.ie when you are ready to open a bank account (once you know your term time address). Past students have recommended the new Santander branch at Queen’s University Student’s Union as being the easiest bank to deal with when opening a student account. Other nearby banks are Bank of Ireland and Ulster Bank. Further general advice is available here: http://www.educationuk.org/global/articles/banking/

The Weather!

Northern Ireland has a mild, temperate climate. It’s rare to get extremes of hot or cold (especially hot...!). Do bring warm clothing and a waterproof coat.

Transport

Translink operates all bus and trains services in Northern Ireland, making it easy to find information. Various smart travel cards are available to help you save money: http://www.translink.co.uk/Fares/. The city service is called Metro. Regular buses and trains run between Belfast and Dublin. The bus is cheaper but there are webfares available for the train if you book a few days in advance. There is also a cross border coach service operated by Aircoach: http://www.aircoach.ie/.
Course information & further guides on living in Belfast

More information about the course and about living in Belfast, can be found on the Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation home page of the ISE website: 
http://www.tcd.ie/ise/postgraduate/conflict-resolution.php

Further Information on studying in the UK

UK Council for International Student Affairs
http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/

British Council
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/

UK Visas and Immigration
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student

Living in Dublin

The Trinity Global Relations Office has a wealth of information on accommodation, cost of living, opening a bank account and college health services for students, which may be of interest for anyone who proposes to live in Dublin and undertake the MPhil by travelling to Belfast for classes: http://www.tcd.ie/study/non-eu/
Contacts

MPhil Office, Belfast
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Click here for map

Online:
Follow us on Twitter:
@TCDatBelfast
Follow us on Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/Irish-School-of-Ecumenics-223631603391/

Link to our Homepage:
https://www.tcd.ie/ise/postgraduate/conflict-resolution.php

Watch School video and see the Belfast campus:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3uWLY_hXxY

Academic Registry:
The central Trinity office for application, fee payment and registration enquiries.
Tel: +353 (0) 1 896 4500
Email: academic.registry@tcd.ie