



National
College of
Ireland

NCI

Preparation Guide

Your journey to NCI



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CONTENTS

	Page
Pay your Fees to secure your place	3
Buy Medical Insurance	4
Apply for Your Visa	5
Book Your Accommodation	7
Plan Your Budget	9
Take Part in the Pre-Arrival Programme	11
Follow us on Social Media	13
Book Your Flight	14
Complete the Registration Form	15
Book your Complimentary Airport Shuttle	16
Pack Your Bags	17
Arrive in Dublin	19
Attend Welcome Programme	21
Complete the checklist	23



“The NCI International staff, as well as the fantastic peer mentors, organized and managed the welcome programme flawlessly! This was the most wonderful greeting we could have asked for!”
Eshan, MSc in Cyber Security

[Website](#) | [Email](#)



We are delighted that you have applied to study at National College of Ireland (NCI).

Within the International Office, we have a support team dedicated to help and guide you from before you arrive in Ireland, right the way through to graduation. We are a small team of three full time staff (myself, Joana, and Teresa) and we are supported by International Peer Mentors, who are students that work with us part time.

We are passionate about what we do and the positive impact it has in helping students settle into their new life in Ireland, allowing them to focus on their studies and to flourish. This has been recognised within the education industry as we won first place in The Education Awards 2021 and 2023 for the International Engagement Award.

This guide contains useful information and practical tips to help you plan for a successful, safe and stress-free journey to Ireland. However, we also understand how overwhelming it can be to move to a new country, which is why we created the NCI Pre-Arrival Programme and the Welcome Programme. I strongly recommend that you take part.

On behalf of everyone at NCI, I would like to wish you a safe and pleasant journey and I am looking forward to meeting you in Dublin.

Best wishes,

Sheila Mahon,
International Officer



This has been recognised within the education industry as we won first place in The Education Awards 2021 and 2023 for the International Engagement Award.

PAY YOUR FEES TO SECURE YOUR PLACE

To secure your place on the programme you must pay the relevant tuition fees, even if you only have a conditional offer.

Pay your Fees

Tuition fees must be paid in full before you arrive in Ireland and there are a number of ways to pay your fees. Full details on these payment options are [here](#).

Inform us when you have made a payment

You must inform us when you have made a payment by completing the [Payment Transfer Form](#). Email it along with a copy of your proof of payment (for example the bank transfer receipt) to internationalpayments@ncirl.ie.

This is a very important step, as it is the only way we can trace that your payment was received into our bank account. You should allow up to ten working days to receive your receipt.

Refunds

If you fail to meet the entry requirements or your visa is refused, you will receive a refund of your tuition fees, less an administration fee. Please see the [NCI Refund Policy](#).



Tip: Paying your tuition fees in full will speed up the study visa process



BUY MEDICAL INSURANCE

All international students are required to have private medical insurance as it is a requirement for the Irish study [visa](#). It must include hospital cover and a minimum of €25,000 for Accident and €25,000 for Disease. We recommend that you ensure your medical insurance meets all your own needs, especially cover for any pre-existing conditions.

NCI do not provide medical insurance so you must buy your own. Students from visa required countries must submit their insurance with their visa application and students from non-visa required countries submit their insurance when registering with immigration in Ireland.

Medical Insurance Providers

You can buy medical insurance from any provider in your home country* (first year only) or from Ireland. There are two types of medical insurance policies that you can buy from Irish providers.

1. **Travel Policy** - These policies are cheaper than private medical insurance. This type of policy is only available to students who are enrolled on a course of 12 months or less duration. They are designed specifically for international students and meet student visa requirements.
2. **Private Medical Insurance**. There are a few providers in Ireland that offer private medical insurance specially designed for international students.

Please see the [Insurance section of the website](#) for links to buy insurance from Irish Insurance Providers.

When buying medical insurance, it is important that you understand and check the following:

- understand the policy and what it covers.
- understand how to make a claim and if there is an excess fee.
- check your insurance policy covers your journey to Ireland and if not, you might want to consider buying travel insurance.
- check the start date for your insurance is for the date you plan to arrive in Ireland.

*You can buy medical Insurance from your home country for your first year in Ireland only. After that you must buy medical insurance from an Irish provider.

APPLY FOR YOUR VISA

Students from certain countries need an entry visa to travel Ireland. To find out if you need an entry visa, please visit the [Immigration website](#). If you require an entry visa you should apply as soon as possible and take the following into consideration:

- It can take up to 16 weeks for visas applications to be processed for some Countries.
- You should allow an additional 4 weeks to get your passport back, travel to Ireland and to arrive at least one week before classes start.

We strongly advise students to work with one of our trusted agents for their visa application as NCI cannot advise on individual visa applications.

Applying For a Visa to Enter Ireland

If you require an entry visa you must complete the online visa application using [AVATS](#). You should read the visa application details very carefully and understand what documents you are required to submit.

Checking on Your Visa Status

You can track your visa on the [Immigration website](#). This shows current processing time and visa decisions and is updated weekly. If you are refused a visa, you may appeal the decision within 2 months. However, as this would affect your date of arrival in NCI you may need to seek advice on latest possible arrival date from the International Office or potentially defer to the next available intake.

Keeping NCI updated on you Visa status

The [Visa Status Survey](#) is an initiative to ensure we have the most up-to-date and accurate information about your visa status. We ask that all international students complete it.

Our advice on your visa application

1. Ensure your passport is valid for 12 months.
2. Make sure you have your medical insurance before you submit your application.
3. Show that you have enough money to support yourself while in Ireland. All students are required to show evidence that they have access to at least €10,000 per year of their studies. If the duration of the course is less than 6 months, they must have access to €700 per month of their stay or €4,200, whichever is the lesser.
4. Make sure you explain any gaps in your Resume (CV).
5. Explain why you want to be a student at NCI and what you plan to do after you graduate.
6. Make sure you understand your chosen course and its modules.



BOOK YOUR ACCOMMODATION

Finding the right accommodation, at the right price and location, is one of the biggest challenges that students encounter. With the help of this guide, the NCI website and guidance from the international Office, you will find your accommodation in Dublin. You decide which option is right for you, student residence or privately rented accommodation.

Whatever you choose, it is important to research and book your accommodation as early as possible.

Student Residences

- ✓ Booking in advance
- ✓ Save time
- ✓ Purpose-built properties
- ✓ Great facilities
- ✓ Share with other college students
- ✗ Full payment in advance
- ✗ Potentially expensive
- ✗ House rules
- ✗ Limited flexibility regarding housemates
- ✗ Strict cancellation policy

Privately Rented

- ✓ Monthly rent instalments
- ✓ Flexibility regarding housemates
- ✓ Lease for 12 months or more
- ✓ Potentially more affordable
- ✗ Can only be arranged when in Dublin
- ✗ Need for temporary accommodation in Dublin
- ✗ Arrival at least 2 weeks before course start
- ✗ Time-consuming search
- ✗ Might interfere with studies
- ✗ Target for scams

Which option is best for me?

There is a large number of **student residence accommodation** in Dublin. All of these can be booked in advance from your home country. They are very safe and comfortable places to live, all either in walking distance or with very good transportation links to NCI. Due to the high standard of the facilities and good location these residences can be expensive. The main difference between student residences and **privately rented accommodation** is that you cannot book private accommodation from abroad. You must be in Ireland to arrange privately rented accommodation otherwise you are an easy target for accommodation scams.

If you think private accommodation is the best option for you, you must arrange temporary accommodation for several weeks before you travel to Ireland, for example in a hostel, Airbnb or host family. Be aware that looking for private accommodation is time consuming as you will have to arrange and view different places. As this will make it difficult for you to focus on your studies, we recommend arriving well in advance of your course start date to focus on your accommodation search. Students all arrive in Dublin at the same time, all hoping to find accommodation. The earlier you come, the less time and hassle you will have in finding your home for the next year.

You can find more information on the NCI [International website](#) about accommodation options, website links for residences, search engines as well as resources for further reading and support.

Remember:

- NCI doesn't provide accommodation.
- We highly recommend booking student residences.
- For student residences, apply early and to multiple locations. Payment is not required to apply for student residences however, it is required to secure a place.



"My recommendation to students would be to book student accommodation as it is the safest option. The reason is because student residences in Ireland usually have a good location, transport services are found easily, offer you the option to choose the room you prefer, and usually they provide additional facilities such as gym, games room and more."

Allen, MSc in Marketing



PLAN YOUR BUDGET

Planning your budget is one of the most important things you should do before you leave home. The cost of almost everything in Ireland will be different to your home country. It is very important to have enough money to cover your tuition fees and living costs.

This section helps you estimate the cost for living expenses such as accommodation, food and other essentials. Many things can affect how much money you will need, so these figures are a guide only. While many students get a part-time job to support themselves, it is better not to rely on work to cover your living expenses.

Start-up costs

These are costs which you will have to pay at the beginning of your stay in Ireland and will not reoccur too frequently if at all:

- Registration with Immigration (€300). Please note you will have to pay €300 each time you renew your registration.
- Medical Insurance. Please note you will have to renew your insurance after 1 year. Please see the insurance chapter in this guide.
- Temporary accommodation during your house hunt if not living in student residences.
- Deposit for privately rented accommodation (usually 1 month's rent). You will have to pay a deposit if you move into accommodation that is privately owned. It should be returned to you at the end of your stay unless you have damaged the property in some way.
- Deposit for Utilities (Gas and Electricity) for privately rented accommodation.

Monthly Living Expenses

Your biggest monthly expense will be for accommodation. You can see [average prices](#) for accommodation in Dublin and a [guide to average monthly expenses](#) on the NCI website.

Average Cost of Living

For cost of living we highly recommend that you refer to the following websites for guidance:

- [Numbeo](#)
- [Irish Council for International Students \(ICOS\)](#)
- [Education in Ireland](#)



Tips for Planning your Budget:

- Bring some Euros in cash with you and use a credit card (a Forex card for example) to have easy access to money until you open a bank account in Ireland.
- It is best not to bring any Euro denominations larger than €50 as they aren't widely used.
- Open a digital current account before travelling to Ireland
- You should allow some room for the unexpected costs, e.g. visit to the doctor or any travels which are not yet planned, social outings, etc.
- Make a budget and track it during your time in Ireland to keep an eye on your spending.
- Remember that failed modules will result in repeat fees, visa renewal fees and additional medical insurance fees.

Opening a digital bank account before you travel to Ireland

It may take some time to get set up with a student bank account in a traditional high street bank in Ireland. It may be a good idea to set up a digital bank account online first and get an IBAN (International Bank Account Number) before travelling to Ireland, as these can be setup from anywhere. Please see more [information on the NCI website](#).



TAKE PART IN THE PRE-ARRIVAL PROGRAMME

The NCI International Pre-Arrival Programme is an online bespoke programme designed to help you prepare and plan for a successful, safe and stress-free journey to Ireland.

Pre-Arrival Newsletters

We begin contacting students about twelve weeks before the start of classes and we send weekly newsletters by email. These will be divided by topic and every week the newsletter will cover a key topic and feature supporting guides and information.

It is really important to keep an eye out for these communications!

Pre-Arrival Live webinars

Every week during the Pre-Arrival Programme, these newsletters are followed by a live webinar on that week's topic. This allows you to have an opportunity to ask real time questions.

International Fresher closed community group

You will be invited to an exclusive fresher community group where you will have the opportunity to connect with other peers who are starting at NCI, as well as receive announcements and updates from the team.

As it is a closed a messaging group exclusively created for NCI international freshers, this is a safe space to meet and connect with other international students before you start at NCI.

You can see more information about the [Pre-Arrival Programme](#), including as upcoming dates and topics on the "Pre-Arrival Programme page" of the website.



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Instagram

The International Office has a very active Instagram account. It is aimed at all international NCI students: prospective and current ones, as well as graduates. Follow us [@nci_int](https://www.instagram.com/nci_int) for information on student recruitment, events organised for students, important updates, competitions, Q&A sessions and much more.

Chat to Current Students

Use the NCI Unibuddy platform to get your questions answered and find out more about life at NCI from students studying at the college. You can chat to current student [here](#).

YouTube

Follow [NCI International](#) for up-to-date video content, including video guides and campus tours.

Facebook:

Follow our [Facebook page](#) for information, events and updates.

Website

The NCI website is a fantastic source of information for every student prospective or current. On the [International Section](#) you find everything you need to know about your journey as an international student. It is always a good idea to check here first if you have a question as most likely you will find your answers here.

Book Your Flight

Flying to Dublin

Dublin has direct connections from many major international airports. If there is no direct flight available for you to Dublin, you will be able to connect through one of many airports. You should also check if you require a transit visa for the country you will be travelling through.

Some countries, such as the United Kingdom, ask for transit visas for certain nationalities even though the stopover is for a few hours. The website <https://cibtvisas.co.uk/> is useful for checking if you need a transit visa. Also confirm with your travel agent or the airlines for extra baggage benefits/ allowance that may be available for students.

COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM

In order to successfully start your journey to NCI, you must first complete the [Registration Form](#) and email it to internationalsupport@ncirl.ie before the deadline, which is 10 days before classes start.

All International Students must complete the Registration Form. Only upon submission of this form will you be:

- fully registered for your course
- scheduled for Your Welcome Meeting
- scheduled for an airport pick-up (optional)

The Registration Form is made up of different sections:

1. Student information
2. Visa Details
3. Accommodation details
4. Flight details
5. Airport Shuttle Service

It is extremely important to ensure you email the Registration Form to us before the deadline as it will allow us to plan for your starting at NCI.



BOOK YOUR COMPLIMENTARY AIRPORT SHUTTLE

As part of NCI's support for international students, we offer a free airport shuttle service. A licensed and approved driver will meet you at the airport arrivals hall and bring you to your accommodation in Dublin City.

To book this service you must have completed the [Registration Form](#) and have sent it to us at least five working days before your arrival date. On the form, you must have opted for the airport shuttle by ticking 'yes' in the Arrival Section, and filled in all the relevant information, as per below:

- Flight details – airline, flight number, date of arrival and arrival time. Please ensure you provide details for your flight arriving into Dublin airport.
- Make sure you have the correct flight number. (That is usually a code consisting of a 2-character airline designator and a 1-4 digit number, e.g. TK1977).
- Arrival time – the time on your ticket is local Dublin time, there is no need to subtract or add hours, please use the time as stated on your ticket.
- If your travel plans change, you will need to let us know as soon as possible

As this is a shared service for all incoming NCI students, we ask you to respect a few simple rules. You can find the rules for the airport shuttle service in this [article](#).

You should contact the driver via WhatsApp:

1. When you are boarding the plane, to let them know you are boarding as scheduled, or if there are any delays.
2. When you land in Dublin, you should make use of the free airport Wi-Fi to contact the driver again and let them know you have landed.

PACK YOUR BAGS

Packing your bags is always a challenge, especially if you are going to a place for the very first time. The below information should help you when deciding on what to put in your suitcase(s) on your way to Ireland.

Clothes

We like to think that Ireland has a moderate climate, however, we realise that the weather may seem quite cold to you compared to the climate in your home country. It is also common for the weather in Ireland to change suddenly throughout the day, so it is recommended to wear layers. You can also expect rain so don't forget to pack a rain jacket and some warm clothes. If you struggle to find winter clothes in your country don't worry, as you can purchase those when you arrive in Dublin. Have a look at this [video](#) to find out more about weather in Ireland.

Please note that if you are availing of the NCI shuttle service, you are only permitted to bring 3 pieces of luggage and food is not allowed on board the shuttle. Have a look at this short [video](#) for some packing tips.

Medicine

Natural sunshine is a great source of Vitamin D. Unfortunately, we do not get enough of it in Ireland, therefore we recommend that you bring a Vitamin D supplement with you. Vitamin D plays a vital role in mood regulation and warding off depression, and it is important to take it in countries in the northern hemisphere, such as Ireland, especially during winter months.

If you need to bring any medication with you, please make sure that it is in the original packaging, and that you have a prescription written in English and signed by your doctor. This is very important to avoid confiscation of your medicine by the immigration officers.

Money

Carry some cash in Euros with you but not too much (approximately €200 - €300). It is safer to use your Credit Card (a Forex card for example) or a set up a digital account to have easy access to money while travelling.

Documents

Make sure that you always have these documents in your hand luggage as you will need to present them at [Immigration](#) when you land in Dublin airport:

- Your passport
- NCI offer letter & fee receipts
- Medical Insurance
- Shuttle driver contact name and number

Customs

Certain items are forbidden, and you cannot bring them with you. Some of them are obvious such as firearms, explosives, animals, plants and illegal drugs. For more information, please the [Citizens Information website](#).



ARRIVE IN DUBLIN

Immigration

When you arrive at immigration at Dublin airport, you will see two different lines. You need to enter the line that says Non-EU/EEA passport holders (unless you are travelling on a European passport).

As a student you will be asked to provide documents by an Immigration Official, so you must have the following with you in your hand luggage for easy access:

- Your passport
- NCI offer letter & fee receipts
- Medical Insurance
- Shuttle driver contact name and number (if booked)

The Immigration Official will stamp your passport giving you up to 90 days to obtain your student visa. This stamp is called a 'landing stamp' and it does not give you permission to work. The officer will tell you that you need to make an appointment to register with Immigration within 90 days. Don't worry, you will have plenty of time to make the appointment. We will explain the application process to you at your meetings as part of the Welcome Programme and give you a registration letter which you will bring to the appointment with you.

Once you have passed Immigration, you will need to clear Irish Customs. Follow the instructions at the airport, generally non-EU students will go through the Green Channel.

Please see the [Irish Customs website](#) for more information.

If you have booked the NCI Airport Shuttle Service:

As soon as you land, let your driver know that you have arrived either via WhatsApp or a text message. If you are delayed at immigration or baggage claim, please also let the driver know as soon as possible.

When you come through the arrivals section at the airport, look out for your driver who will be holding a sign for National College of Ireland. Please don't leave the terminal or the meeting point, as the driver will be inside the terminal. You may have to wait for other students to arrive as you will be sharing the shuttle.

When you arrive in Dublin, your family will be keen to know that you have arrived safely. You should call, text or email using the free airport Wi-Fi.

If You are Making your Own Way from Dublin Airport

Dublin Bus Airlink leave from outside the Arrivals Terminal at the airport. Check their [website](#) for updated timetables.

The Aircoach service runs 24 hours a day and stops at various locations in the city centre, please see timetables [here](#).

Taxis are all metered and you should always use a licensed taxi. The fare to the city centre will cost approximately €35 with extra charges for each additional passenger and for carrying luggage.



ATTEND WELCOME PROGRAMME

We have developed a Welcome Programme to support international students joining the college for each intake. This programme runs for several weeks and is designed to ensure you have all the information you need to get started at NCI.

It is a mix of informative workshops, excursions and get-togethers: Some are pre-scheduled, some are highly-recommended and others are optional to attend:

Pre-scheduled: Welcome Meeting

Once you have confirmed your arrival by completing the Registration Form the International Team will email you the details of your welcome meeting. It is the very first meeting each new student will have and will be with a Peer Mentor and a small group of other new students. At this meeting, you will receive information about getting started at NCI and a campus tour.

Highly Recommended Meetings

Student Life Meeting

The team will speak about support systems at NCI, how to succeed in your studies and how to adjust to student life.

Essentials Meeting

You will receive information regarding establishing yourself in Ireland, like opening a bank account, your student visa, or working.

Orientation

Orientation is an introduction to the classroom, IT and library services.

Optional events

In addition to pre-scheduled and highly recommended meetings, the International Office have planned a range of social events for you attend. These can be:

- Know-How sessions to understand how things work at NCI and in Ireland.
- Out & About sessions to get to know more about Dublin.
- Meet-Up sessions to meet other NCI students.

You can check the [Welcome Programme](#) section of the website for a weekly schedule of events, and we recommend you join as many events as you can to meet new friends and get to know Dublin.



“When I started at NCI, I remember being super participative in the International Welcome Programme and the international team events, that really made my days back then, I even got a few prizes just for participating! I recommend you join in those events, for example to go out and hike, you might meet your future best friends or hiking buddies there. I was also part of different clubs and societies in the college and that helped me find great friends and learn more about the Irish culture.”

Laura, MSc in Management

COMPLETE THE CHECKLIST

We have prepared this handy checklist, so that you can keep track of your progress on your journey to NCI.

Have you...

- Paid your fees to secure your place?
- Bought Medical Insurance?
- Applied for your visa?
- Completed the NCI Visa Status Survey?
- Booked your accommodation?
- Planned your Budget?
- Taken part in the Pre-Arrival Programme?
- Followed us on social media?
- Booked your flight?
- Completed the Registration form?
- Booked our Complementary Airport Shuttle?
- Packed your bags?
- Arrived in Dublin?
- Attended the Welcome Programme?

Contact information

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide.

Email: internationalsupport@ncirl.ie

We aim to respond to your query as quickly as possible and within 3 working days.



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National College of Ireland has made every effort to ensure that the information in this booklet was accurate when published. Please note, however, that the nature of the content means that it is subject to change from time to time, and you should therefore consider the information to be guiding rather than definitive. You should check the college's website for any updates before you decide to accept a place on a course. All courses are offered subject to minimum student numbers and validation by QQI.