



Pre-arrival Guide

Your Journey to DIFC Cork

DIFC

UNIVERSITY
FOUNDATION
PROGRAMME



WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME.



We are delighted that you have chosen DIFC to start your international studies. Our Pre-Arrival Guide is to help you to get ready to travel to DIFC's Cork centre from outside Ireland. It contains some really useful information and practical tips to help you plan for a successful, safe and stress free journey to Ireland.

The Marketing and Student Services teams in DIFC are always available to support you during this transition. Therefore, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to get in touch with us.

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

Best wishes,

Dr Marian Hurley

Centre Manager
DIFC Cork



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“The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows.”

-Sydney Harris

This guide helps you prepare for your journey to DIFC
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Your Pre-Arrival Checklist



As soon as possible

- Submit your visa application (if required)
- Book your accommodation
- Check your passport is valid for 12 months from the course start date
- Parents/Guardians completed and signed the Guardianship Form (for students under 18 years)
- If possible, apply for any tourist visas that you may need during your studies in Ireland (especially UK)

Up to one month before you depart

- Check if you need to arrange any transit visas
- Complete our online pre-arrival form with your flight and accommodation information
- Open your own bank account in your home country
- Apply for a UK visa (if required)
- Make a copy of your passport and all essential documents

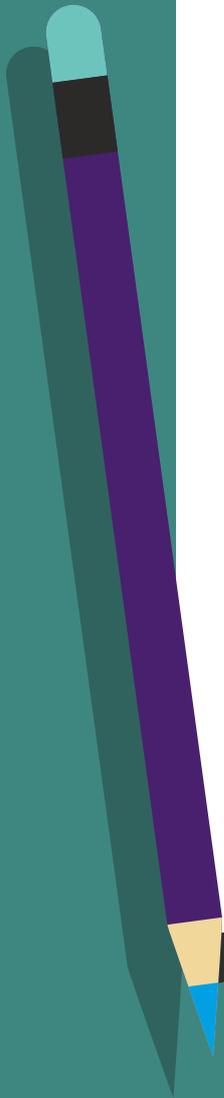
When you travel

When you are travelling to Ireland, you need to have the following documents with you when you present to Immigration in Dublin or Cork Airport

- Passport and visa (if visa required)
- Full Letter of Acceptance from DIFC
- Original Bank Statement from your account in your home country showing a minimum balance of €3,000
- Copy of Guardianship Consent Form (for students under 18 years)

What to bring on your first day

- Passport
- Full Letter of Acceptance
- Sponsor Letter (if you are being sponsored)
- Original signed Guardianship form, original of your Birth Certificate and copies of your Parents'/Guardians' passports (students under 18)



Applying for your visa

Most international students (non-European passport holders) need a visa to travel to Ireland, although there are some exceptions.

To check if you need a visa, please check the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS)

[website: inis.gov.ie](https://inis.gov.ie)

When to apply

You need to ensure you allow plenty of time for your visa application to be processed. Processing times vary, depending on where your visa is processed:

Visa Office	Processing Times
Dublin Visa Office processes applications from Pakistan, most African countries and Vietnam	10 - 12 weeks
China	2-3 weeks
Nigeria / Ghana (Abuja)	5-6 weeks
UAE/Middle East (citizen)	2 weeks
Middle East (non-national)	4-5 weeks
Saudi Arabia (citizen)	1 week
India/Bangladesh	4-6 weeks
Russia / Ukraine	4-6 weeks
Turkey	6-8 weeks

Once your visa has been approved, you have 90 days to enter Ireland. So, whilst you need to submit your application in a timely manner, it is important not to submit it too early – otherwise it may expire before you need to travel.

What documents you need to include

<p>Cover Letter / Statement of Purpose</p>	<p>You need to write a cover letter for your application, in which you should explain the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Provide a summary of your education background and an explanation of any gaps in your educational history (i.e. work experience, volunteering etc) ✔ Outline your reasons for choosing your course of study and why you have chosen Ireland You need to explain what you are pursuing your proposed study plan and why you want to come to Ireland. ✔ Financial details Detail who will be financially supporting you during your studies in Ireland, such as parents, other family member, private or government sponsor. ✔ Intention to return to your home country Be clear about your intention to return to your home country, whether it's to take over the family business or improve society in your home country – you need to state that you intend to return home once you have completed your education. ✔ Details of any members of your family who are in Ireland or the EU If you are intending to come and live with a family member, or already have a support network here in Ireland, this is important to note in your cover letter. ✔ Details of any visa refusals from any country This is very important! You must be honest about this – otherwise your visa will automatically be refused. Provide the reasons for the refusals in your letter. ✔ Details of any visa applications you have made for other countries ✔ Details of medical insurance ✔ Index of supporting documents The easier you make it for the visa officer to find all the relevant information – the better your chance of visa approval. Include an index of supporting documents and number the documents accordingly.
<p>Identification</p>	<p>You need to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Your passport ✔ One passport style photograph
<p>Letter of Support</p>	<p>You are permitted to have 1 or 2 sponsors for your education. If you are being sponsored – by a parent/family member, and/or a third party – you need to include a letter of support from each of them, outlining the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ What is their relationship to you ✔ Why they are supporting you in your education abroad ✔ How much financial support they will be providing ✔ Details of where they derive their income, such as employment, business owner ✔ If they are an uncle/aunt etc, they need to provide details of their own children and demonstrate financial capacity to support their own child/ren's education endeavours whilst supporting you also
<p>Evidence of Finances</p>	<p>Demonstrating that you have the means to support yourself during your studies in Ireland is a critical part of your visa application. There are two ways for you to do this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Provide detailed bank statements for the last 6 months showing that you have immediate access to €7,000 If you have a third party sponsor or your parents are paying your fees, they will need to provide detailed bank statements. In addition to this, your parents/sponsor will need to provide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanations for any lump sum deposits or withdrawals • Letter of employment (if employed) with details of salary • If they own a business, copies of their most recent tax return and Certificate of Registration for the business by the authorities in your country • Details of any land/property ownership, including the value and any rental income received from these (confirmation required from real estate agents on headed paper) ✔ Purchase an Education Bond If you will have difficulty obtaining all the required financial documentation, you can purchase an Education Bond, which is a scheme supported by the INIS. You can find out all the details here https://educationbondireland.com/ <p>The Education Bond requires you to transfer €7,000 into a designated account and then once you have arrived and registered in Ireland, Education Bond Ireland will transfer the funds to your Irish bank account.</p> <p>It is still recommended that you provide bank statements in addition to the Education Bond.</p>
<p>Proposed Study Plan & Medical Insurance</p>	<p>Proposed Study Plan & Medical Insurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Your Final Acceptance Letter from DIFC, including payment receipt & visa letter ✔ Your English Language Certificate

What documents you need to include

Education & Employment History	<p>This section should include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Detailed CV outlining both your education history and employment/volunteering experience (if any) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start & Finish dates in MM/YYYY format • If there have been any gaps in your education history, that aren't explained in your work history, you need to include details of what you were doing. ✔ Original versions of certificates and transcripts for all educational qualifications ✔ Original letters of employment from all periods of employment/volunteering listed on CV
Immigration History	<p>As part of your application, you need to provide details on all visa applications you have made for any country, including Ireland – as well as any refusals. In your supporting documents, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Summary sheet of all stamps/visas in your passport ✔ Original versions of all Visa Refusal/Cancellation letters
Additional requirements for students who are under 18 years of age	<p>For students who are 17 years old when they are travelling to Ireland, you must also provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Original version of State issued Birth certificate ✔ Assigned parental consent of both parents ✔ Copy of the consenting parent's passport or national identity card showing the bearer's signature

How to apply

STEPS	HELPFUL TIPS
Step 1: Collate your supporting documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your visa documents should be presented in a clearly marked folder with labelled sections so that the Visa Officer can easily find and assess all relevant information. • Send a copy of all your supporting documents to your DIFC contact to review – we will help you to ensure that you have included all that is needed before submitting your application
Step 2: Complete the online application form at visas.inis.gov.ie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate all your supporting documentation first (see Step 3) • It is very important that all details entered on the application form exactly match those on your supporting documents
Step 3: Print Off Summary Application Form & Sign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will include details of where you need to submit your supporting documents
Step 4: Purchase an Education Bond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Education Bond can be an easier way to confirm your finances. • We recommend that you still provide bank details as a secondary confirmation of your finances
Step 5: Submit your full application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The details of where you need to submit your application is on your Online Visa Application summary sheet • You may be required to provide your Biometrics information as part of the application process

Important points:

Visa decisions are published weekly (every Tuesday). You can search for the progress of your application using your Visa Transaction Number that will be allocated to you when you complete the online Visa Application Form.

Once you have submitted your full visa application, you need to send your Visa Transaction Number and the date your application was submitted to info@difc.ie

Student Accommodation in Cork

When it comes to accommodation options in Cork city, there are two main options: homestay or self-catering student apartments.

DIFC has a partnership with EazyCity in Cork to help you to find suitable accommodation – either homestay or self-catering and their experienced team will assist you directly.

Homestay accommodation

DIFC Homestay is where you will live with a local host.

The following fees apply to homestays:

- Booking fee: €100 (includes pick up from bus station or Aircoach stop)
- Airport collection (Cork airport): €25
- Single Room: €185 per week
- Twin Room (sharing with 1 other student of same gender): €165 per week
- Security Deposit: €200 per person (refunded at end of stay within 14 working days via bank transfer or credit card by our Finance Dept)
- Late Arrival Fee (8pm – 10pm): €20

Please note, students who are under 18 years must stay in homestay accommodation, as this is part of the child protection laws here in Ireland.

Location

Host families generally live in the suburbs of Cork, so you will need to take public transport to and from your host accommodation. Your host family will tell you which service is the most suitable for you.

Keys

Your host family will provide you with a key to their house. All keys must be kept safely and be returned to the family on the last day of your stay.

Laundry

You will be able to wash your clothes once a week. If you need more access to the facilities, you may ask your host or alternatively use a laundrette service.

Smoking

All of our families operate a policy of no smoking in their homes. Please check with your family if they have an area where you may smoke, if you wish to do so.

Meals

Host family accommodation is on a half-board basis, with breakfast and evening meal provided each day. Please check with your host regarding meal times and inform them if you have made other plans and won't be home for a meal.

Booking a Homestay

If you want to book a homestay, you need to contact EazyCity Cork at cork@eazycity.com

Christmas Holiday Period

Students in homestay accommodation need to travel home for the Christmas holiday period or make alternative arrangements during this time.

Self catering accommodation

EazyCity manage a range of properties around Cork providing independent accommodation for international students. They are all to a high standard but very reasonable in terms of costs.

All properties are equipped with all the necessary facilities, including:

- Full equipped kitchen
- Living room (TV provided)
- WiFi
- Bathrooms
- Washing machine and drying facilities

In terms of costs, the following fees apply to self-catering:

- Booking fee: €100 (includes pick up from bus station or Aircoach stop)
- Airport collection (Cork airport): €25
- Single Room: €155 per week (includes all utilities such as electricity, gas, WiFi and refuse)
- Twin Room (sharing with 1 other student of same gender): €120 per week
- Security Deposit: €200 per person (refunded at end of stay within 14 working days via bank transfer or credit card by our Finance Dept)
- Late Arrival Fee (8pm – 10pm): €20
- Check-Out Fee: €25 payable at the end of your stay

To book self-catering accommodation, you need to contact EazyCity Cork at alessia@eazycity.com

Arrangements for Minors

All students under 18 years need to have a legal guardian in Ireland during their studies. This can be in two forms:

- DIFC arrange a guardian
- Family member or close friend residing in Cork appointed as guardian

If you would like DIFC to arrange a guardian, the appointed guardian will act as a central contact for the student with regards to any issues directly connected to their status as minors.

Role of nominee as follows:

Nominee of student services will carry out the following tasks:

- Provide Student welfare support during office hours (8:30am- 4:30pm Monday to Friday) and outside office hours in case of emergency.
- Attend GNIB with the student for the purpose of visa registration during office hours.
- If required, attend bank with student for opening of account.
- Meet with the student on a weekly basis in order to discuss any welfare issues such as student support including student letters, financial assistance, visa assistance, medical etc
- Keep parents informed as to their child's welfare on a regular basis;
- Send reports throughout the year;
- Arrange medical appointments and bring student to the doctor or dentist surgery.

Don't forget to complete the Guardianship Consent Form and email a copy to DIFC. You should make a copy and bring one with you in your hand luggage when you travel.



Insurance

Medical Insurance

It is mandatory that all international students have Medical Insurance when they travel to Ireland. To save you the hassle, we arrange this for you and the cost is included in your invoice.

This insurance covers the cost of most medical expenses you might incur during your Foundation studies. You are required to pay the first €100 per incident and pre-existing conditions are not covered so, in some cases it may be wise for you to obtain an additional insurance.

Contents Insurance for Student Accommodation

Students who are staying in self-catering accommodation are recommended to take out contents insurance to cover the cost of your possessions or any damage in the event of theft or fire.

Insurance policies cost as little as €40 and are available via <http://www.cover4insurance.com/student-contents-ireland>



Getting to Cork

Obviously this is going to involve a flight from your home country to an airport in Ireland. There are two main international airports where you can fly into: Cork and Dublin

Cork Airport

Cork airport is located 6 km from the city centre. A taxi journey, with little traffic, takes approximately 20 minutes and costs approximately €20. Everything you need to know about Cork airport, including transport connections, is available on the Cork Airport website. It has international connections from London, Amsterdam and Paris.

Dublin Airport

Many international flights arrive into Dublin Airport. The simplest way for you to transfer to Cork City is to catch the Aircoach Express or GoBe Bus from the bus depot outside the Dublin Airport terminal. There are signs to the Coach Terminal. Fares cost €20 per adult and the trip takes about 3.5 hours arriving at Cork's bus terminal on Patrick's Quay.

Booking your Flights

We recommend booking your flights as early as possible. However, if you need to apply for a visa before you can enter Ireland, it is recommended that you only book your flights once your visa has been approved.

You should aim to arrive in Cork 1 or 2 days before the start date of your course. There will be plenty of time during induction week for you to explore the city, so we would not advise students arrive any earlier than 2 days before your course starts.

Furthermore, if you are booking return flights, please make sure you check the Academic Calendar (see pg 13) to ensure that there are no scheduled classes or exams when you are hoping to depart for the holiday period.

UK Visas

If your flight itinerary includes a transit in the UK, you may need to arrange a UK Transit Visa and this can take up to 4 weeks to arrange. To check if you need a UK Transit Visa, visit www.gov.uk/transit-visa

Also, if you plan to travel to the UK at all during your Foundation studies, we recommend that you apply for you UK visa before you travel to Ireland. There can be long delays in getting your UK visa processed in Ireland.

Pre-Arrival Details

It is important that you notify DIFC of your travel and accommodation details as soon as possible. This helps us to support you with a smooth transition through Dublin or Cork Airport and settle in to start your studies with us.

All students must submit their Pre-Arrival details as early as possible via our website www.difc.ie/arrival-details

Passports & Immigration Control

At the airport, you will pass through passport and immigration control. To receive official permission to enter Ireland, you will need the following documents:

- Your valid international passport
- Your DIFC Final Acceptance Letter confirming your place

Students who needed to apply for a visa prior to travelling to Ireland will receive a temporary visa for 30 days and those who didn't need a visa to travel to Ireland will receive a temporary visa for 90 days.

Extending your Student Visa

Once you have arrived in Ireland and registered at DIFC, you will need to attend the GNIB to extend your student visa.

During induction week, our student services will assist you in collating the relevant documents needed to extend your student visa.

You will need to bring the following documents with you:

- Your passport
- Letter of registration from DIFC
- Bank statement and debit card confirming you have at least €3,000
- Your insurance policy

The cost to extend your visa is €300 and this must be paid by debit or credit card (no cash or cheque payments). Once approved, you will be issued with a GNIB identity card which you must carry with you at all times.

Your Induction Programme

On your first, exciting day with us it is important that you arrive on time. During your induction, you will have a complete introduction to Cork, Ireland, DIFC and Student Services.

What to bring with you on your first day

Please bring the following documents, so that we can register you on your course:

- Passport and visa
- Final Acceptance Letter
- Sponsor letter (if you are being sponsored)
- Original signed Guardianship form, original Birth Certificate and copies of your Parents' / Guardians' passports (for students under 18)

During your Induction Week, you will learn about:

Registering with DIFC

Once you are registered with DIFC, you will get a welcome pack with all the essentials you need to know about DIFC and life in Ireland.

Following this, you will get your student card and be able to set up and log on to the Griffith College internet network and access the library. You will also learn about the Griffith College student clubs and societies that you can join.

Free Irish Mobile SIM Card in your Welcome Pack

In your welcome pack, we'll give you a free 'pre-paid' Irish SIM card for your mobile phone so that you will have an Irish phone number.

A pre-paid (or 'pay as you go') SIM card means that you top-up your credit as needed, rather than get a monthly bill. With the pre-pay option, you purchase the phone and get a certain amount of free credit with it. Once your credit has run out, you can top up your credit a number of ways, including through an ATM, buying it in a newsagent or supermarket, or online.

Opening a bank account

Our partner bank, KBC Bank, will visit the college to assist you in opening a bank account. This is the easiest way for you to open a bank account in Ireland and is the bank with no fees for students.

In order to open a bank account, you will need:

- A passport
- Proof you are a student – we will issue you a letter

Your chosen programme

You will have an opportunity to meet all your teachers and tutors to find out what you need to do to be successful in your foundation studies. You will also receive your all-important timetable.

Public Transport in Cork

The easiest way to get around Cork is by public transport. Students can get discounted fares if they have a Student Leap Card. We will give you information and application forms about this so that you can obtain your Leap Card. These cards are loaded with credit and then you scan them when you get on and off any bus / commuter rail services in Cork. The fare is automatically deducted from your Leap Card account.

The card also entitles you to discounts in other stores. More details available here

www.studentleapcard.ie

Induction Week

Getting to DIFC by bus!



- First, open Google maps on your phone and input your destination (Griffith College Cork). It will show you all the bus lines to go there.
- Then, you can choose the best bus line (usually the first one in the list)
- After that, you can follow the maps to find the correct bus stop.
- Next, there is always a signpost to show the bus line and time around the bus stop. You need to keep an eye on the direction the bus is coming. (Note: Be careful not to take the bus in the wrong direction!)
- When the bus is coming, you need to wave your hand to get the bus to stop because sometimes if nobody is getting off the bus, the bus may keep going without stopping.
- Once the bus stops, get on the bus and pay. If you do not have a travel card, you need to ask the driver how much it will cost to arrive at your destination. You should have coins available to pay your fare, but you may also be able to pay with small notes.
- Take a seat and follow your journey using Google maps so that you know when to get off the bus. Push the red button to notify the driver that you plan to get off at the next stop.
- If you do not have Google maps on your phone, ask the driver to tell you when you are at the closest stop to Griffith College.

Sample induction week timetable

During your induction week, you will get an introduction to life in Ireland and what to expect from your Foundation studies. Below is a sample timetable of what to expect:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning	Registration of new students	Welcome Talks Campus Tour Tea/Coffee & cakes	Induction for minors English Language Entry test	Introduction to Subject Modules Maths Entry Test	Introduction to EAP, Tutorials and Online learning Q&A session with College Principal
Afternoon	Free	Free	Free	Free	Organised Social Outing

Key Dates for 2017/18

	IFY	PMP
	Term 1	
Induction Week	Monday 2nd October	
Classes Start	Monday 9th October	
Autumn Break	Classes finish at 5.00pm on Friday 27th October Classes start at 9.00am on Monday 6th November	
Christmas Break	Classes finish at 5.00pm on Friday 15th December	
	Term 2	
Induction Week		Wednesday 3rd January
Classes Start	Thursday 4th January	Monday 8th January
Spring Break	Classes finish at 5.00pm on Friday 16th February Classes start at 9.00am on Monday 26th February	Classes finish at 5.00pm on Friday 16th February Classes start at 9.00am on Monday 26th February
Easter Break	Classes finish at 5.00pm on Thursday 29th March Classes start at 9.00am on Monday 9th April	Classes finish at 5.00pm on Thursday 29th March Classes start at 9.00am on Monday 9th April
Exams	Exams start at 9.00am on Friday 8th June Exams finish at 1.00pm Tuesday 19th June	Exams on 12 and 13th June Dissertation Submission on Friday, 22nd June

Contact Details & Useful Links

DIFC Head Office

Suite 1, Osprey Business Complex,
Devoy Park,
Naas, Co Kildare
Ireland
T: +353 45 855571
E: info@difc.ie

Accommodation - Eazy City Cork

Homestay
Johanna Rigail
Cork@eazycity.com
Tel: +353 214222243

Self-Catering
Alessia Renzelli
Branch Manager – EazyCity Cork
Alessia@eazycity.com
Tel: +353 214222243

Short Term Accommodation

Staycork - Self Catering Apartments
www.staycork.ie

Public Transport

Bus Eireann - Cork City Bus
www.buseireann.ie

Irish Rail
www.irishrail.ie

Airport Coach
www.aircoach.ie

Visas/Immigration – Ireland

Irish Naturalisation & Immigration Service
www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/Study

Visas / Immigration - UK

Apply for a UK Visa – Transit or tourist
www.gov.uk/apply-uk-visa

Hotel Accommodation

Ambassador Hotel
www.ambassadorhotel.ie

Jurys Inn Cork
www.jurysinns.com/hotels/cork