



Working in Ireland

This document provides information on:

- ◆ Working in Ireland – EEA residents
- ◆ Working in Ireland – non-EEA residents
- ◆ Green cards
- ◆ Work permits
- ◆ Working holiday visas
- ◆ Becoming self-employed
- ◆ Intra-Company Transfer permits

1. Working in Ireland – EEA residents

- ◆ **I am from within the European Economic Area* (EEA) and I wish to come to work in Ireland. What do I need to do?**

If you are from the EEA* or Switzerland, you are not required to register your presence in Ireland with the immigration authorities and you do not need a residence permit. Citizens of EEA countries (with the exception of Bulgarian and Romanian nationals) or Switzerland are allowed to come to Ireland and to work without an employment permit.

- ◆ **I am a Romanian or a Bulgarian national and wish to come to work in Ireland. What do I need to do?**

You are a European Union (EU) national as of January 1, 2007. You can travel to Ireland without a visa and do not need to register with the immigration authorities. However the Irish Government has decided not to allow people who have entered the Republic of Ireland from Romania and Bulgaria after January 1, 2007, to work in Ireland without a permit.

(Please note, this restriction does not apply to the right of Bulgarians and Romanians to be self-employed in Ireland or to establish and run a private business. In addition, Bulgarian and Romanian nationals who are married to Irish

* The EEA stands for the European Economic Area and includes the countries of the European Union as well as Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein

citizens or citizens of EU member states (other than Romania and Bulgaria) are also exempt from the restrictions on the right to enter the labour market.)

If you have not worked in Ireland before, you will need to get an employment permit. You will need to find a job in Ireland first and then you or your employer can apply for a permit, which will allow you to work here. When you have worked here for one full year on an employment permit, you will no longer require a permit. You should visit the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment website at www.entemp.ie for more information on obtaining a work permit and for an application form.

◆ **I am a Romanian or a Bulgarian national who was working in Ireland for more than a year before the countries joined the EU. Do I still need a work permit to work here?**

No. If you were working in Ireland on a work permit for at least one year before Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU on January 1, 2007, you will no longer need a work permit to work in Ireland. (Please note that you must have had a valid work permit from January 1, 2006 to January 1, 2007.) If your husband or wife or children up to 21 years of age, were here with you as a dependant for that time, he or she will not need a work permit either.

2. Working in Ireland – non-EEA residents

◆ **I am from outside the EEA* and want to migrate to Ireland to work, what do I need to do?**

You have different options and these are explained in the sections below:

3. Green Cards

If you are a highly skilled worker in a specific profession, you may be entitled to a 'Green Card' which would enable you and your family members to travel to Ireland for the purposes of taking up employment.

The Green Card scheme is a scheme that was brought in by the Department of Enterprise in January 2007 to allow highly skilled people from outside the EU to come to Ireland to work. The following people can apply for a Green Card:

- People who will be earning more than 60,000 euro a year when they start work.
- People in certain job categories earning between 30,000 and 60,000 euro, for example nurses, IT professionals. Please note, the job categories to which this scheme applies were reduced from 16 April 2009. Please see the Department of Enterprise's website for a full list of the eligible categories (www.entemp.ie).

You will first need to find a job in an eligible category before you can apply for the Green Card. When you find a job, you or your employer can apply for a Green Card for you. The Green Card is for two years and there is a fee of 1,000 euro. This fee must be paid for by whoever applies for the Green Card, you or your employer.

◆ **I am a Bulgarian or Romanian national, am I entitled to a Green Card?**

The Green Card permit scheme is now available to highly-skilled citizens of Bulgaria and Romania. Bulgarians and Romanians who apply for a Green Card permit will not be required to undertake a labour market test. When a Green Card permit is issued to a Bulgarian or a Romanian, its duration will be for one year, after which the permit holder would be entitled to open labour market access.

◆ **What do I need to do if I am granted a Green Card?**

- I need a visa to enter Ireland

If you need a visa to come to Ireland (see www.inis.gov.ie to check if you do need a visa), you can apply for the visa at your nearest Irish Embassy or Consulate. If you are from a designated country, you must apply for a visa online at www.inis.gov.ie. You will need to provide a copy of the Green Card with your application. If you are granted a visa you can travel to Ireland. Please note, a visa entitles you to come to the border and seek entry to the State, but does not guarantee that you will be allowed to enter the State.

Once you are in Ireland, you will need to register with the immigration authorities. In Dublin, this is the Garda National Immigration Bureau and it is located at 13-14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2. In other areas of the country, it is the main Garda station in your locality that functions as an immigration office. When you register, you will get a Certificate of Registration (also known as a GNIB Card) for 1 year with Stamp No. 1 and your passport will also be stamped. You will need to pay a fee of 150 euro for your Certificate of Registration and this fee will be payable again the following year when you re-register.

- I don't need a visa to enter Ireland

If you do not need a visa to come to Ireland, you will still need to register with the Garda National Immigration Bureau when you arrive here and you will need a copy of your Green Card to show that you have the right to work here. You will receive a Certificate of Registration (also called a GNIB card) with Stamp No. 1 for which you will need to pay a fee of 150 euro.

◆ **Can my family members come to Ireland with me if I have Green Card?**

Yes. As a Green Card holder your spouse and dependants are allowed to live in Ireland with you and they are free to seek employment under the spousal/dependant permit scheme.

◆ **I am currently working in Ireland under the Green Card scheme. Can I change employer?**

You may change employer after you have worked for 12 months with your first employer and after you have received a new Green Card.

◆ **I am currently working in Ireland under the Green Card scheme but have recently been made redundant (lost your job). What can I do?**

You will need to find a new employer within 3 months of the date of your redundancy and apply for a new Green Card to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment website (www.entemp.ie) also contains information on the position of those who have been made redundant.

◆ **What do I need to do when my Green Card expires?**

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment announced in December 2008 that green card holders whose card is due to expire in 2009 will no longer need to renew their green card through the Department of Enterprise.

From 2009 you should do the following when your green card expires:

Within two weeks of your green card expiring, you should go to the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) to have your registration renewed. In Dublin, this is located at 13-14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2. In other areas of the country, it is the main Garda station in your locality that functions as an immigration office. You will need to pay a fee of 150 euro for your Certificate of Registration.

You will need to bring the following original documents with you:

- A valid passport (including any old ones)
- Your GNIB card (Garda Certificate of Registration)
- Your existing green card
- A P60 from your employer for the previous year
- Pay slips from the previous three months

If the GNIB is satisfied that you have complied with immigration conditions and are 'of good character', you will be issued with a Stamp 4. This Stamp 4 will give you permission to work for one year without a green card or work permit.

According to the Government, this Stamp 4 is not the same as Long Term Residency, but it is planned that you will be able to apply for long term residency later under a new system that has not been finalised yet. This process will depend on new immigration law that is due to come into force some time in 2009. Therefore the details of this procedure will be published at a later date – once the new law, entitled the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill 2008, takes effect in Irish law.

◆ **I am a non-EEA national who does not qualify for a Green Card. Are there any other options for me if I want to migrate to Ireland for employment?**

If you are a non-EEA national who does not qualify for a Green Card and you wish to migrate to Ireland, you have the options explained in the sections below:

4. Work permits

If you do not qualify under the Green Card scheme, you may be able to apply for a work permit if you meet certain conditions.

It should be noted that the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment is issuing work permits in very limited circumstances as it is expected that employers will fill their vacancies through the expanded EU.

The Government has announced changes to the eligibility requirements for work permits for first-time permit applications, effective from June 1 2009. The changes include:

- further restricting the categories of jobs for which the permits can be obtained
- increased fees for renewals
- ending the scheme whereby dependent spouses can get work permits without a labour market test
- introducing a higher level of labour market test requirements

If you find an employer who is willing to offer you a job, then you or the employer can apply for a work permit for that job. The salary for the job must be more than 30,000 euro per year. In certain exceptional cases, a permit might be issued for jobs where the salary is under 30,000 euro per year.

The employer will also need to satisfy a Labour Market needs test which means they need to show that they have made efforts to fill their vacancies from within the EU and that they have advertised the position in the local or national newspapers. There are additional requirements on employers in order to meet the Labour Market needs test for applications for work permits made from 1 June

2009. From this date employers are required to advertise the job vacancy for 8 weeks plus six days advertising in the national media.

If the work permit is issued, it lasts for 2 years and costs 1000 euro. It can be renewed at the end of that period for a further 2 or 3 years. For permits issued before June 1st 2009, the fee for the renewal of the permit for 2 years is 1000 euro or for 3 years is 1500 euro. Permits issued after this date are subject to a higher renewal fee of 1500 euro for a renewal of up to 24 months and 2250 euro for a renewal up to 36 months. Please contact the ICI's Information and Referral Service or check the website of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (www.entemp.ie) for more information.

Please note from June 1st 2009, if you are made redundant while holding a work permit the increased labour market tests (detailed above) will now be imposed if you wish to apply for a new work permit.

◆ **Restricted sectors of employment**

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment also publishes a quarterly list of occupational sectors for which applications for permits will not be considered under any circumstances. This list has been extended and is regularly reviewed. You can view the current list at www.entemp.ie

◆ **What happens if I am granted a work permit?**

If you need a visa to come to Ireland you can apply for the visa at your nearest Irish Embassy or Consulate. However if you are from what is called a 'designated country', you must apply for a visa online at the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) website (www.inis.gov.ie). Please note, you should check this website first to find out if you need a visa at all to enter Ireland, and if your country is listed as a 'designated country'.

When applying for a visa you will need to provide a copy of the work permit with your application. If you are granted a visa, you can travel to Ireland. Please note, a visa entitles you to present at the border and seek entry to the State but does not guarantee entry to the State.

Once you are in Ireland, you will need to register with the immigration authorities. In Dublin, this is the Garda National Immigration Bureau and it is located at 13-14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2. In other areas of the country, it is the main Garda station in your locality that functions as an immigration office. When you register, you will get a Certificate of Registration (also known as a GNIB Card) for 1 year with Stamp No. 1 and your passport will also be stamped. You will need to pay a fee of 150 euro for your Certificate of Registration and this fee will be payable again the following year when you re-register.

If you **do not need a visa** to come to Ireland, you will still need to register with the Garda National Immigration Bureau when you arrive here and you will need a

copy of the work permit to show that you have the right to work here. You will receive a Certificate of Registration (also called a GNIB card) with Stamp No. 1 for which you will need to pay a fee of 150 euro.

◆ **I am currently working in Ireland under the work permit scheme. Can I change jobs?**

If you are the holder of a work permit you cannot change employment until after you have worked with the same employer for 12 months and another employer has first obtained a work permit for you. The job must not be in a restricted sector of employment (please see above).

◆ **I have been working in Ireland under the work permit scheme and have recently lost my job. Can I get a new job?**

If you have been made redundant (lost your job), you can try to find another employer who is willing to employ you and then apply for a work permit on your behalf within 3 months of the date of your redundancy (if your permission to remain allows). From 1 June 2009, a labour market needs test will be required for any subsequent work permit application you make. If the job from which you were made redundant is now on the list of ineligible job categories, you will be entitled to apply for a new work permit for a position from that ineligible list.

◆ **I am working in Ireland under the work permit scheme. My employer is exploiting me. What can I do?**

If you are experiencing exploitation in the workplace, you can try to find a new job and then apply for a new work permit for yourself. Your new employer can also apply for a new permit for you. You will need to include some evidence that you are being exploited, for example, payslips that don't match your contract of employment, or proof that you are taking a case against your employer. Your employer will not need to advertise the position with FÁS and there are no restrictions on the type of job you can apply for.

◆ **I am working in Ireland on an employment permit. Can my spouse work as well?**

If you are the holder of a Green Card, work permit or if you are working in Ireland under the Intra-Company Transfer scheme (please see below for information on this scheme), your spouse and dependants may be allowed to apply for a work permit under the '**Spousal and Dependant work permit scheme**'. (Please note, this scheme no longer applies to future principal work permit holders (receiving permits from 1 June 2009). See above for further details.)

There is no fee for permits under this scheme and there are no restrictions on the type of work that can be taken up. There is no need for the employer to advertise the position with FÁS as a labour market needs test is not required for this permit.

(If you are a Bulgarian or Romanian national who holds, or has held, an employment (work) permit, your spouse is eligible to apply for a Spousal Permit and will, therefore, not be required to undertake a labour market test or to pay an application fee. Spouses and dependents of Bulgarian workers who have lived in Ireland with their spouse for more than 18 months after the accession are entitled to automatic access to the labour market. In these cases, “dependents” can be up to 21 years of age.)

- How do I apply under this scheme?

Your spouse or child will need to first find an employer willing to employ them. They or the employer can apply for a permit using the application form available on www.entemp.ie. The following documents will need to be included with the application:

- Copy of registration with appropriate medical body for the existing employment permit holder (if applicable)
- Dated letter from the existing permit holder’s employer confirming employment details
- Copy of the marriage certificate or birth certificate to prove the relationship to the employment permit holder
- Letter from employer confirming compliance with the protection of young persons (Employment) Act, (if applicable)

◆ Can my children work in Ireland when they are finished school?

If you have children under 18 years of age living with you in Ireland, then they can apply for a permit under this scheme. If they are over 18 years of age but entered the state before they turned 18, they can apply under this scheme as an exceptional measure.

If your children entered the state after they turned 18 years of age they will not be eligible to apply under this scheme.

The age limit for dependents of Bulgarian and Romanian nationals to apply under this scheme is 21 years.

◆ Does the scheme apply if the principal work permit holder is granted his or her work permit after 1 June 2009?

Please note, for principal work permit holders who receive their permits from 1 June 2009, this scheme no longer applies and spouses and dependants will be required to apply for work permits in their own right according to standard work permit eligibility criteria including a labour market needs test, restriction to vacancies in eligible job categories and payment of the standard application fee.

5. Working holiday visas

If you are a national of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Hong Kong or Japan, you can apply for a working holiday visa for 1 year which will allow you to work in Ireland for that period. You can visit the following website link for more information, <http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=8778>

6. Becoming self-employed

You can find information on becoming self-employed in Ireland on the 'Self-employed people' section of this website.

7. The Intra-Company Transfer permit

This scheme allows for senior management, key personnel and trainees to transfer from an overseas branch of a multi national company to its Irish branch.

In order to be eligible for an Intra-Company Transfer permit you must:

- be earning a salary of at least 40,000 euro per year
- have worked with the overseas company for 12 months

The fee for this permit is 1,000 euro and it can be granted for up to a maximum of 2 years. In certain circumstances it can be extended up to 5 years.

If you are the spouse or dependant of someone who holds an Intra-Company Transfer permit, you are entitled to seek work under the Spousal/Dependant work permit scheme.

ICI Information and Referral Service contact details:

Contact Details

Our Information and Referral Service can be contacted by telephone on **(01) 674 0200 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10 to 12.30pm and 2pm to 4.30pm**. Clients with general enquiries may be referred to another agency for assistance.

Clients with complex cases may be offered an appointment to speak to an Information and Officer in person on a confidential basis.

Consultations with Information Officers are **by appointment only**.

Immigrant Council of Ireland
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