

NCI Preparation Guide

Your journey to NCI

www.ncirl.ie/international



National
College of
Ireland



This guide helps you prepare for your journey to NCI.

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"A Journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" Lao Tzu



We are delighted that you have applied to study at National College of Ireland (NCI). This guide contains some really useful information and practical tips to help students plan for a successful, safe and stress free journey to Ireland.

Within the International Office we have a support team dedicated to help and guide students from before they arrive in Ireland, right the way through to their graduation. We are small team of 3 full time staff (myself Joana and Abigail) and we are supported by International Peer Mentors who are students that work with us on a part time basis.

I am really proud of our team and our role in supporting and engaging with international students from all over the world. We are passionate about what we do and the positive impact it has in helping students to 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 for the International Engagement Award.

From twelve weeks before the start of classes, we begin our engagement with all applicants on the important information they need to help plan their journey to NCI and Ireland. During these 12 weeks, every week we send an email with information and guides that cover a different topic. Later that same week we hold a webinar or a Facebook live session so students get to hear more information and to have the opportunity to ask questions or clear any doubts. It is really important to keep an eye out for these communications and take the time to read them.

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



Accept Your Offer

NCI will issue a full offer when you meet our entry requirements. To accept your offer and secure your place, you must pay the relevant tuition fees.

If you do not fully meet our entry requirements, we will issue a conditional offer. This will outline what else you must do to get a full offer. Still, you can accept your place with a conditional offer.

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

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 admissions@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](#).

Buy Medical Insurance

Private medical insurance is a requirement for your [Irish study visa](#) and if you are from a visa required country, you must submit your insurance with your visa application.

NCI do not provide medical insurance so you must buy this yourself.

Medical Insurance Providers

You can buy medical insurance from any provider in your home country* or from Ireland. The medical insurance must include hospital cover and a minimum of €25,000 for Accident and €25,000 for Disease. Also, you should ensure that it meets all your own needs, especially cover for any pre-existing conditions.

There are two types of medical insurance policies that you can buy from Irish providers.

- 1. Travel Policy.** These policies are cheaper than private health insurance. They are designed specifically for International students and currently meet student visa requirements.
- 2. Private Health Insurance.** There are a number of providers of private health insurance in Ireland such as VHI, Laya and Irish Life. They have a large range of insurance products available which can be more expensive than a travel policy and are generally designed for everyone living in Ireland. It is recommended that if you buy private medical insurance, you buy a product that is designed for international students.

For the most up to date information about insurance available to students, please see the [Insurance](#) section of the website.

*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.

Tips:

- Make sure you understand the policy and what it covers
- Understand how you go about making a claim and if there is an excess fee.
- If you defer your start date at NCI you must change the start date of your policy.
- If you don't join NCI remember to cancel your policy.
- Check if your insurance policy covers your journey to Ireland and if not, you might want to consider buying travel insurance.

Research 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 accommodation in Dublin, which has something to suit everyone's study and budget preferences.

You decide which option is right for you: student residence or privately rented accommodation.

Which option is best for me?



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

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, short and long term accommodation search engines as well as resources for further reading and support.

Our tips to help you with your accommodation search:

- > NCI doesn't provide accommodation.
- > We highly recommend booking student residences versus private rented accommodation.
- > 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.

Apply for Your Visa

Everyone arriving in Ireland has to pass through Immigration control. If you have obtained all the necessary documents in your home country before leaving, you should not have any problems on arrival.

Applying For a Student Visa to Enter Ireland

Students from certain countries will need an entry visa before arriving in Ireland. To find out if you need a visa please visit the [INIS](#) website.

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.

We recommend to students that to have a higher chance of a successful visa application you request the help of one of our highly trained agents for guidance, counselling and support in this progress. However, you do not have to use an agent and can apply directly to NCI but please note we cannot give any assistance to you in terms of your visa submission.

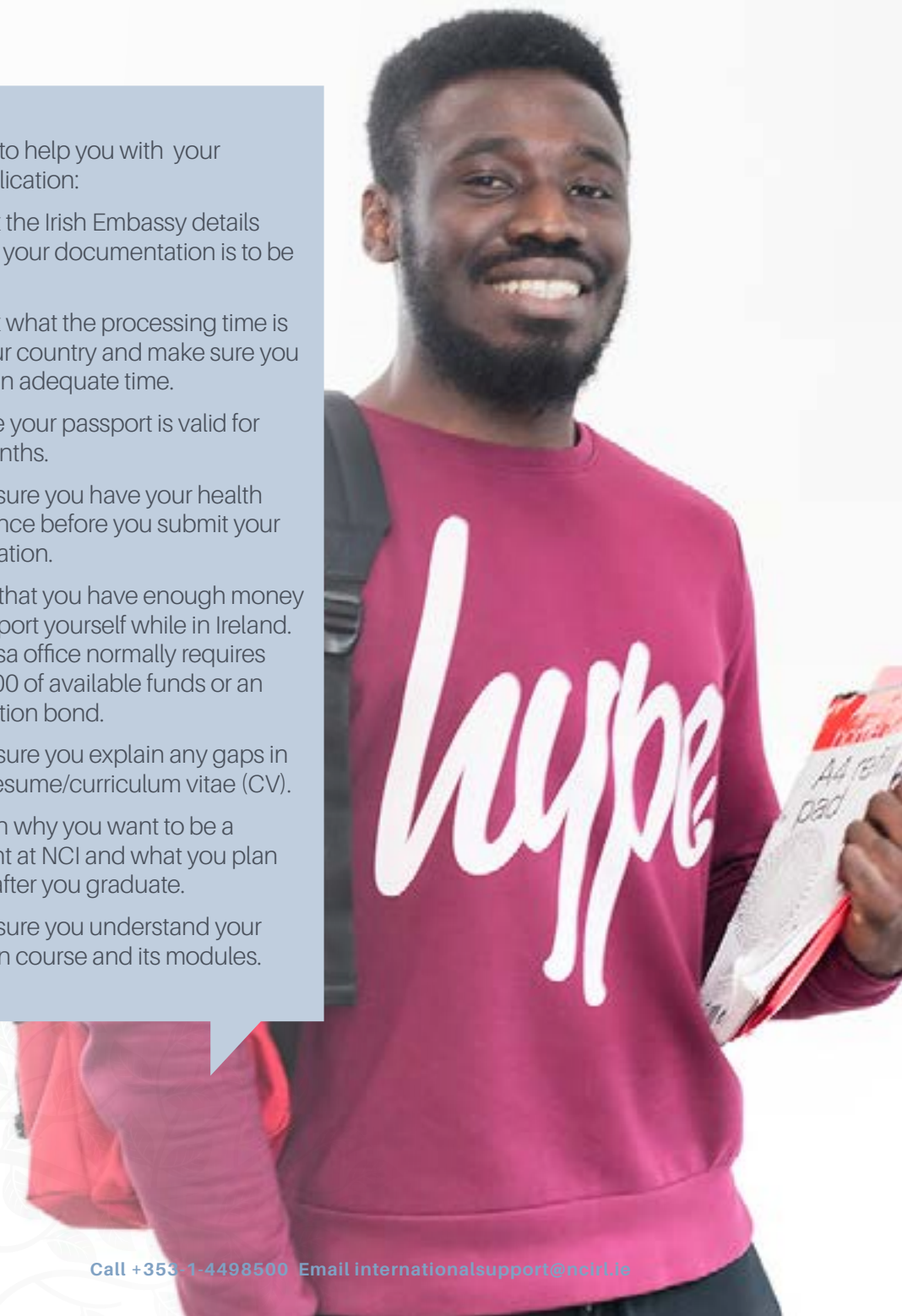
Checking on Your Visa Status

You should apply as early as possible for your visa for it to be processed. Each country will have a different processing time, which can range from one week to four months. You can track your visa on the [INIS](#) 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 until the next intake.

Tips:

Our tips to help you with your visa application:

- > Check the Irish Embassy details where your documentation is to be sent.
- > Check what the processing time is for your country and make sure you apply in adequate time.
- > Ensure your passport is valid for 12 months.
- > Make sure you have your health insurance before you submit your application.
- > Show that you have enough money to support yourself while in Ireland. The visa office normally requires €10,000 of available funds or an education bond.
- > Make sure you explain any gaps in your resume/curriculum vitae (CV).
- > Explain why you want to be a student at NCI and what you plan to do after you graduate.
- > Make sure you understand your chosen course and its modules.



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 INIS (€300). Please note you will have to pay €300 each time you renew your registration with INIS.
- > Medical Insurance. Please note you will have to renew your insurance after 1 year. Please see the insurance chapter in this guide.
- > Television Licence (€160) for your flat or house.
- > 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. The utilities company sets the fee and it can be up to €200, unless there is a 'pay as you go' system for the utilities in the property.

Average Cost of Living

Your biggest monthly expense will be for accommodation and we estimate you should budget for the following:

1. Student residence accommodation: average of €200 - €400 per week (private room), €110 - €200 (shared room).
2. 2-Bed apartment in city centre: average of €2000 - €2500 per month
3. Private room/studio: average of €600 - €1200 per month
4. Shared room: average of €350 - €600 per person per month

Monthly Living Expenses

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](#)

Additional Tips:

- > 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.
- > 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.

OPEN AN IRISH DIGITAL CURRENT ACCOUNT BEFORE YOU TRAVEL TO IRELAND

NCI have partnered with [Moneyjar](#) that provide an Irish digital bank account, so students can set up an account online from anywhere and even before traveling to Ireland.

See the [MONEY JAR guide](#) for NCI students. It includes a unique code for NCI students that gives 9 months free monthly fee, and you just pay for each transaction.

To open an account, you will need proof of identity such as a passport and to take your photo for verification. You do not need proof of address and you can use a temporary address in Ireland such as a hostel or hotel and then update your address later.

Connect With NCI

We always love to hear from students who are joining NCI and we communicate through different channels:

Email

We begin contacting students about twelve weeks before the start of classes and we do this mainly by email. These emails are followed by either webinars or live Q&A sessions. Every week our communications will include important updates to help students prepare for their journey to NCI so it is really important to keep an eye out for them.

Don't worry if you miss any of these emails. We will update our '[Before you Arrive](#)' section on our website with all of our communication.

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 a student: from confirming your place to study at NCI to helping you to get ready to come to Dublin and everything in-between. Our website is the place where you find all the up-to-date information you need. It is always a good idea to check here first if you have a question as most likely you will find your answers here.

Facebook

You can follow our [Facebook page](#) for up to date information.

Also, for each new intake we set up a specific closed Facebook group. Search for 'NCI International Freshers' and find the group for your intake. We encourage everyone to join their relevant intake group as this is great opportunity to connect with other international students and 'meet' the International Support Team before you have even travelled to Ireland. We will also do Facebook live sessions on a regular basis to answer questions you may have in preparation to starting your course at NCI.

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](#) for information on student recruitment, events organised for students, important updates, competitions, Q&A sessions and much more.

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

- Everyone must complete it

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 (1 week before classes start) and at least 5 days prior to your arrival.

All students must complete this form, and it is extremely important to ensure you send it to us on time (up to a week before classes start), and as soon as possible, as it will allow us to plan for your starting at NCI. It is only upon receipt of the completed form that:

- > **You are fully registered for your course**
- > **Your Welcome Meeting can be scheduled**

The Registration Form is made up of different sections:

1. Student information
2. Visa details
3. Accommodation details
4. Flight details
5. Declaration

Email the completed Registration Form to internationalsupport@ncirl.ie **before the deadline and at least 5 days before your arrival.**

Student Information

Please complete this section in full. If travelling from abroad, you will need to indicate if you are arriving for the start of your programme.

Visa Details

This section is to be completed by international students who are resident outside Ireland. Please remember you will require visa approval before the start of your programme.

Accommodation in Dublin

In this section you need to provide information about your accommodation in Dublin.

- > Accommodation can be either Short Term or Long Term:
 - Short Term Accommodation – such as hostels, hotels or Airbnb, accommodation for a limited period.
 - Long Term Accommodation – somewhere you will stay for an extended period in Dublin, a place where you can safely receive important documents such as your Irish Residency Permit (IRP) card.
- > Provide us with contact details of your accommodation (name of the hostel etc.) or the landlord.
- > Provide us with the address for your accommodation, and please remember to include the Eircode (Irish post code). If your accommodation changes, make sure to email us as soon as possible but keep in mind that this could affect your shuttle bus service.

Arrival Details

NCI offer a complimentary Airport Shuttle Service to accommodation in Dublin for new students when they travel to Ireland for the first time.

On page 18 of this guide, you will find information on how to book this service.

Pack Your Bags

Packing your bags is always a challenge, especially if you are going to a place for the very first time, but 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) to have easy access to money until you open a bank account in Ireland.

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 see the website of the Irish [Revenue Commissioners](#).

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:

1. No strong-smelling foods or drinks are allowed on the shuttle bus.
2. The service is for NCI students only. It is not available for family members, friends or students of other institutions.
3. There is a single drop-off rule in place, which means that the driver can only bring you from the airport directly to your accommodation in Dublin, as stated on the Registration Form, with no extra stops along the way.
4. Due to space restrictions, there is a limit of 3 pieces of luggage per student.

You should contact the driver via Whatsapp when you are boarding the plane, to let them know you are boarding as scheduled, or if there are any delays. On arrival in Dublin, you should make use of the free airport Wi-Fi to contact the driver again and let them know you have landed.



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 INIS (Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Bureau) 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

The Immigration Officer 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 with the immigration service (INIS) within 90 days to obtain your student visa. Do not worry as 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 again the [Irish Customs website](#) for more information.

Meet your driver

As soon as you land, let the 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.

Making your Own Way from Dublin Airport

Dublin Bus Airlink leave from outside the Arrivals Terminal at the airport. Check the [website](#) for updated timetables. The [Aircoach](#) service runs 24 hours a day and stops at various locations in the city centre. Taxis are all metered and you should also 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.

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 to 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 [starting at NCI](#) 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.

Useful Links

Reliable sources of information on travelling to Ireland:

Irish Government website	www.gov.ie/covid19
Irish Health Service	www.hse.ie
Irish council for International Students (ICOS)	www.internationalstudents.ie

NCI International:

Downloads	www.ncirl.ie/Students/International/Downloads
Confirming your place	www.ncirl.ie/Students/International/Confirm-or-Defer-Your-Place
Fees	www.ncirl.ie/Students/International/Fees-and-Funding/Payment-Options
Insurance	www.ncirl.ie/Students/International/Fees-and-Funding/Insurance
Before you arrive	www.ncirl.ie/Students/International/Before-you-Arrive
Starting at NCI	www.ncirl.ie/Students/International/Starting-at-NCI



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.



Preparation Guide

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.