

EMIGRATION - DON'T GO UNTIL YOU KNOW!

Be Informed – Preparation is the Key

It is vital that students prepare and make an informed decision to emigrate. The following information provides crucial pre-departure advice for prospective emigrants.

ÉAN is an Independent National Network

It is comprised of statutory and voluntary bodies as well as individuals and academics interested in Irish migration. Its members respond to the information and advice needs of emigrants (those thinking of emigrating from Ireland, emigrants abroad and returning emigrants) with a particular emphasis on the vulnerable. Our website www.emigrantnetwork.ie lists and has links to organisations working directly in pre-departure services in Ireland and with Irish emigrants abroad.

Emigration still Exists

Despite it being the lowest ever recording for emigration since the CSO began recording its series in 1987, the emigration figure of 18,500 for the year ending April 2004 remains significant in the fact that 54% of the emigrants were aged 15-24 years and 26.5% of the total travelled to the UK. Feedback from our UK affiliates indicates that while some were recent graduates, many were unprepared and travelled without documentation or any contacts. It is interesting to note that the highest percentage of these emigrants, 7,400, travelled to *the rest of the world*, outside of the traditional destinations of the UK, the EU and the US.

Checklist of What to Bring Regardless of Destination:

- Accommodation details – accommodation is vital. Contact ÉAN members for information of accommodation availability including hostel accommodation
- Current Passport
- Return ticket – so a return is possible if things do not work out
- Work visa where applicable – non Irish citizens may require a visa to travel to Britain and within the EU
- Long Birth Certificate
- Driving Licence/International Driving Licence
- International Student Card
- CV (preferably on disc so it can be updated as personal circumstances change)
- All qualifications/certificates
- References (work and personal)
- Money – ATM/credit card preferable
- Contact numbers and addresses/purchase local map



Pre-departure Information Sources:

ÉAN members as appropriate via the website www.emigrantnetwork.ie

Emigrant Advice: 1a Cathedral Street, Dublin 1 Tel: (01) 873 2844.

Email: info@emigrantadvice.ie or www.emigrantadvice.ie

Emigrant Advice is the only dedicated emigration advocacy service in Ireland that produces booklets on a number of destinations including the US, the UK and Australia. They are freely available and downloadable from the website. Their target group is the most vulnerable.

Embassies:

The Embassy of your country of destination is listed in the Golden Pages. The most popular are:

- British Embassy, 29 Merrion Road, Dublin 4 Tel: (01) 205 3700
www.britishembassy.ie
- US Embassy, 42 Elgin Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 2 Tel: (01) 668 8777
<http://dublin.usembassy.gov>
- Australian Embassy, Fitzwilton House, Wilton Terrace, Dublin, 2 Tel: (01) 679 5452. Department of immigration: www.immi.gov.au (for downloadable application forms)

Youth Information Centres

www.youthinformation.ie will guide you to your closest one

FÁS/EURES for information on emigration to EUROPE

www.europa.eu.int/eures will guide you to your closest office. Information on individual EU countries is downloadable.

Pre-Departure Information Particularly for the Vulnerable

ÉAN's primary concern is for vulnerable emigrants some of whom may be better remaining in Ireland if they have accommodation, access to services including welfare and a medical card. The following issues should be discussed with any potentially vulnerable emigrant:

- The reality of where the emigrant is moving – contact any ÉAN member for information on the ground abroad.
- Services abroad – welfare assistance or any means-tested payment in Ireland cannot be transferred abroad. Access to similar payments abroad generally does not exist. Welfare in the UK is usually only available to those over 18.
- Welfare in the US does not exist for non-green card holders and is limited for permanent residents.
- Travelling at weekends - not advisable when sources of information and advice agencies will be closed.
- Those emigrating to a country where English is not the spoken language will probably not find work if it is not organised prior to departure.



- Would-be emigrants with families should consider emigrating themselves first and once set up with accommodation, have other family members join them.
- Potential emigrants should be encouraged to obtain some sort of qualification before emigrating including a reputable TEFL course if moving to the EU.
- Emigration to the US - those intending to live and work illegally in the US risk incarceration pending deportation if apprehended without the required documentation. The situation in the US has tightened since 9/11 - undocumented emigrants can no longer hope to secure jobs, security cards, bank accounts or driving licences. Currently there is no hope of legalising for undocumented emigrants (*except for marriage to a US citizen, but if this is not genuine it will not stand up to immigration scrutiny*).
- For those requiring help or services with addiction problems, sexuality, and domestic abuse, contact any ÉAN member for local services in Ireland and abroad.

Health

Insurance is available through most health insurers or travel agents if travelling outside the EU. If travelling to Britain, an Irish citizen has the right to free medical treatment through the National Health Service (NHS). To avail of this, you need to register with your local GP once you have an address.

For travel outside Britain but within the EU, a European Health Insurance Card for emergency health coverage in the public system of any EU/EEA country and Switzerland can be applied for. Contact any health board or www.ehic.ie for more information.

Social Welfare

Entitlement to benefits if travelling abroad is not automatic. Benefits for new arrivals do not exist in most countries. However, those receiving Unemployment Benefit (i.e. based on PRSI contributions) in Ireland for at least four weeks and wishing to go to the EU to look for work, may receive payment of this benefit abroad for up to 78 days as long as the local Irish Social Welfare office is informed at least two weeks before departure and the applicant signs on with a new address within seven days of arrival.



EU countries comprise:

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Austria
Belgium
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Netherlands
Poland
Portugal
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
UK

For further information on eligibility for benefits, contact the relevant embassy.

Accommodation and Travel Warrants:

It is a common misconception that local councils in the UK are duty-bound to house new emigrants presenting as homeless. **This is not the case.** Housing authorities have no obligation to provide long-term housing to those who have voluntarily made themselves homeless by leaving any kind of accommodation including a homeless shelter. In fact, the emigrant may be housed in a homeless hostel overnight before being given a travel warrant to return to the housing they voluntarily left in Ireland.

For those who will be presenting as homeless in need of accommodation, the following information may help local authorities decide whether they might be housed – a letter from An Garda, Social Services or other reputable agency indicating why it is, through no fault of their own, the individual concerned feels compelled to leave their home in Ireland.



Facts for Would-be Emigrants to the UK:

- If you have voluntarily made yourself homeless by giving up accommodation in Ireland, housing authorities in the UK are under no obligation to provide you with long-term accommodation.
- The unemployment rate was 4.8% in the three-month period ending May 2005.
- Dole is known as Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and is not generally available to those under 18. For those who are eligible, identification (long form birth certificate) is necessary. It could take 6-9 weeks to process. If you are currently on the dole (contributions-based) or any contributions-based benefit in Ireland, it may be possible to transfer it – check with your local Social Welfare Office.
- You must apply for a National Insurance (NI) number, which is the equivalent of the Irish Personal Public Services Number (PPS) from the benefits agency in order to register with a doctor, find a job and access services.
- Register with a local doctor for free medical treatment through the National Health Service once you have an address.
- A disproportionate number of homeless people are Irish – the Irish account for 3% of the UK's population.
- Weekly bed-sit rents in London run from £90 – £150 with a month's deposit in advance generally requested

Facts for Would-be Emigrants to the EU:

- EU nationals do not require a visa to travel within the EU – however even within the EU a residence permit may be required so check with the relevant embassy. A residence permit, if required, is a formality and is issued by local police when a new emigrant has secured an address.
- Speaking the language is a necessity in order to work outside the tourist industry. Have your CV translated on disc so it can be changed as your personal circumstances alter.
- Unemployment rates through Europe in 2005 are higher than in Ireland (4.3%) with unemployment in France 10.2%; Spain 9.9%; Germany 9.6%
- Access to benefits in Europe is not automatic. In fact, benefits do not exist in some EU countries. If you are currently on the dole (contributions-based) or any contributions-based benefit, it may be possible to transfer it – check with your local Social Welfare office.
- A European Health Insurance Card for emergency health coverage in the public system of any EU/EEA country should be applied to before departure at any local health board.

Non-EU Countries - Visas

Travel outside the EU is done on an immigrant or non-immigrant visa. The first is a permanent visa while the second is a temporary. Travel outside the EU on an immigrant visa is difficult and complicated requiring visas whose eligibility is generally based on family relationships, age, education and skills as well as a medical test and evidence of savings. Details of these visas are available in booklets published by Emigrant Advice and on the relevant embassy websites – see Pre-departure Information for contact details. Most countries outside the EU require a work visa even for volunteer work! Workers without documents are quickly deported.

Outside the EU, the most popular destinations for Irish citizens are the US and Australia. The most popular and accessible visas for those destinations are the following:

- The one-year working holiday visa for Australia gives young people under 31 an opportunity to holiday in Australia and to supplement funds through incidental work. To apply in Ireland, the applicant must be a citizen of Ireland, the UK, Canada, Holland, Sweden or Denmark. Citizens of Germany, Malta, Japan, Hong Kong and the Republic of Korea must apply in their country of citizenship. Applicants must have a bank balance of €3,200, be able to prove binding ties to Ireland and pass a medical. Form 1150 (available from www.immi.gov.au) should be completed. For help with the form, contact any ÉAN affiliate by linking through the website: www.emigrantnetwork.ie
- J-1 visas for the United States of America Work and Travel Programme for full-time university or college students in an approved college allows entry to the US for up to four months and then travel for a further 30 days. Applicants must be aged between 18 and 29 years of age and must intend returning to Ireland for at least one year of full-time study. Further information is available from any local USIT office, the US Embassy or Emigrant Advice's website: www.emigrantnetwork.ie
- The US visa lottery, an annual lottery, whereby people born in Ireland and other qualifying countries worldwide can apply for permanent residency. There is no fee to apply. Winners are selected randomly. Applicants must have successfully completed a 12 year course of elementary and secondary education (leaving certificate (pass) qualifies) or have two years of work experience within the past five years in an occupation requiring at least two years training or experience to perform. No one country can have more than approximately 3,850 winners. Ireland has received just over 100 per year in recent years so this visa really is a lottery visa! More information on applying for these visas is available from ÉAN members, the US Embassy:
<http://dublin.usembassy.gov>



Facts for Would-be Emigrants to the US:

- You must have a permanent address (not a hostel or hotel) and a work or residence permit in order to apply for a Social Security Number equivalent to your Irish Personal Public Services Number. Without this number, you will not be able to find a job, open a bank account, apply for a driving licence or attend college.
- The unemployment rate was 5.0% in June 2005.
- Benefits are not available to new immigrants, regardless of status.
- If you already have health insurance through VHI or BUPA Ireland, it is possible to transfer it. If not, buy health insurance through your travel agent. The minimum cost of health insurance in the US is a minimum of €400 per month per person so it is advisable to look for a job that offers health coverage.
- A studio apartment in most city centres in the US (New York, Boston, Chicago and San Francisco) will cost at least €1,000 per month unfurnished with the exception of a fridge and cooker. Generally, a month's rent in advance as well as a month's deposit is expected.

Facts for Would-be Emigrants to Australia:

- You must have a permanent address (not a hostel or hotel) and a work or residence permit in order to apply for a Tax File Number (9TFN) equivalent to your Irish Personal Public Services Number. Without this number, you will not be able to find a job, open a bank account, apply for a driving licence or attend college.
- The unemployment rate was 5.1% in June 2005.
- Benefits are generally not available to new immigrants, regardless of status.
- Ireland has a reciprocal health agreement with Australia, which entitles Irish nationals who are temporarily resident in Australia to emergency medical cover and financial help with drugs prescribed on the same basis. If you are emigrating to Australia on a permanent visa and you already have health insurance through VHI or BUPA Ireland, it is possible to transfer it for a temporary period. If not, buy health insurance through your travel agent until you successfully apply for Medicare.
- Medicare is Australia's equivalent of Public Health Care and is available to people who reside in Australia and who have been issued with a permanent visa. Medicare ensures that all Australians have access to free or low-cost medical, optometric and hospital care while being free to choose private health services.
- A studio apartment in most city centres in Australia will cost at least €1,000 per month unfurnished with the exception of a fridge, cooker, washing machine and dryer. Generally a month's rent in advance as well as a month's deposit is expected

Questions a Guidance Counsellor might ask of a Would-be Emigrant:

Not all potential emigrants should be encouraged to emigrate, as is obvious from the issues discussed in **Pre-Departure Services for the Vulnerable**. There may be an element of dissuasive counselling required depending on answers to the following questions. It is advisable to ask a would-be emigrant to assess their overall situation:

- *Why have you decided to emigrate?*
- *Why did you choose the particular destination?*
- *What are your circumstances here in Ireland?*
- *Will you be emigrating on your own or with other family members?*
- *Whom do you know in the country of destination?*
- *Can you stay with this person and for how long or what is the situation with accommodation? Have you already checked this out/confirmed stay etc.?*
- *What kind of work are you looking for and what qualifications do you have for that type of work?*
- *How long do you think it will take you to find work?*
- *If not looking for immediate work, how do you hope to survive? Have you checked whether you will be eligible for any benefits? If entitled, what paperwork have you completed to ensure you can apply?*
- *How much money will you be taking with you?*
- *Do you have any health needs and have you assessed what services might be available in your chosen destination?*

Guidance counsellors are very welcome to join ÉAN for a nominal sum of €15. Please contact us if you require any information or guidance on emigration.

ÉAN, Offices 87/88 Senior House, All Hallows College, Dublin 9.

Tel: (01) 8574108

Email info@emigrantnetwork.ie

Web: www.emigrantnetwork.ie

