

Welcome to DCAS



STUDENT HANDBOOK



Updated in Oct/24
Revision 6.1

“DCAS mission is to empower people through language education

Our vision is to provide innovative learner-centred courses in an engaging environment whilst remaining true to our core values:

PASSIONATE ABOUT LEARNING - We're all about creating the best possible learning community

RESPECTFUL - We see respect as an essential part of our community

FUN-LOVING - We're serious about having fun while we learn

SUPPORTIVE - Whatever the issue, we're here to help

COOPERATIVE - We believe in working and learning together

TRANSPARENT - We want everything to be clear and understandable”

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PART 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION

Welcome to **Dublin College of Advanced Studies (DCAS)**. This Student Handbook is intended to introduce you to the school. In the following pages you will find information on the facilities and services provided by DCAS and some details of our policies. Always consult this official document; its latest version is available on DCAS website at this page: <https://www.dcas.ie/studenthandbook>.

HOW TO GET INFORMATION

Most information from the school will be sent to you by email, including official communication. An informative Student Orientation is also provided in the induction session, before classes start. Email communication is the quickest way to contact a member of staff. **Please ensure we have your up-to-date main personal email address**, or we will not be able to contact you as efficiently as we would like. All student requests and queries will be processed and answered within 2 working days. Further information can be obtained online through [DCAS website](#), and in person through our school staff.

REQUESTING SCHOOL LETTERS

You can request school letters using DCAS website, once logged into Student Area (<https://www.dcas.ie/student-area>). Access details to the Student Area will be given on the Student Orientation session and can also be obtained through school's reception. Typical letters requested by new non-EU students are 'Acceptance Letter for IRP Registration', 'Bank Letter', and 'Medical Insurance' confirmation. Once you complete your course (classes and exams), you can also request your Exit Letter/Attendance Letter from the Student Area at DCAS website, if you are planning to extend your Study Visa in Ireland. **Letters are issued within 2 working days from the request date, so make sure you request in advance of appointments where these letters will be required.**

KEEPING YOUR STUDENT DETAILS UP TO DATE

If you wish to update DCAS regarding a change in your circumstance (e.g. change of contact details, medical condition, emergency leave etc.), contact our Administration/Reception (admin@dcas.ie). Make sure your personal email account is not full and check the junk/spam folder for emails from DCAS, as we send important communication to students by email. **Official communication is also sent by email to students, so check your personal mailbox regularly, including the spam folder.** Use Google Translate or other translation tools if you can't understand the email.

LANGUAGE

Only English can be used in the classroom and wherever possible in every part of the school. If you feel unable to express yourself adequately, some members of staff are fluent in Spanish, Turkish, Russian, Portuguese, Mandarin and may be able to assist you. Swearing or using abusive or hostile language is not permitted – if you are heard using such language, you may face disciplinary procedures. Speak English outside the school too and make the most of the English language immersion Ireland provides.

OPENING HOURS

DCAS 1 – MAIN CAMPUS, Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 5:00pm / Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm

DCAS 2 – ULYSSES HOUSE CAMPUS, Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 5:00 pm / Friday, 12:30pm – 5:00pm*

*Opening hours might change based on number of classes running in a specific period/campus.

SCHOOL CLOSURE DAYS

The school is closed for 2 weeks for the Christmas break (check dates on the school Academic Calendar available here: <https://www.dcas.ie/student-services>). There are no classes during the Christmas break; however, these 2 weeks are not counted towards your total class weeks.

DCAS closes on other public holidays and Good Friday. These days are counted towards the total course attendance period. See the list of days below:

- a) **New Year's Day** (observed date)
- b) **St. Brigid's Day** (First Monday in February, except where St Brigid's Day, the 1st of February, happens to fall on a Friday, in which case that Friday, the 1st of February, will be the public holiday)
- c) **St. Patrick's Day** (17th March) – If this day falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the public holiday is observed on the following Monday
- d) **Good Friday** (Friday that precedes Easter Sunday)
- e) **Easter Monday** (Monday after Easter, typically in late March or mid-April)
- f) **May Bank Holiday** (First Monday in May)
- g) **June Bank Holiday** (First Monday in June)
- h) **August Bank Holiday** (First Monday in August)
- i) **October Bank Holiday** (Last Monday in October)

CAMPUS LOCATIONS (DCAS 1 & DCAS 2)

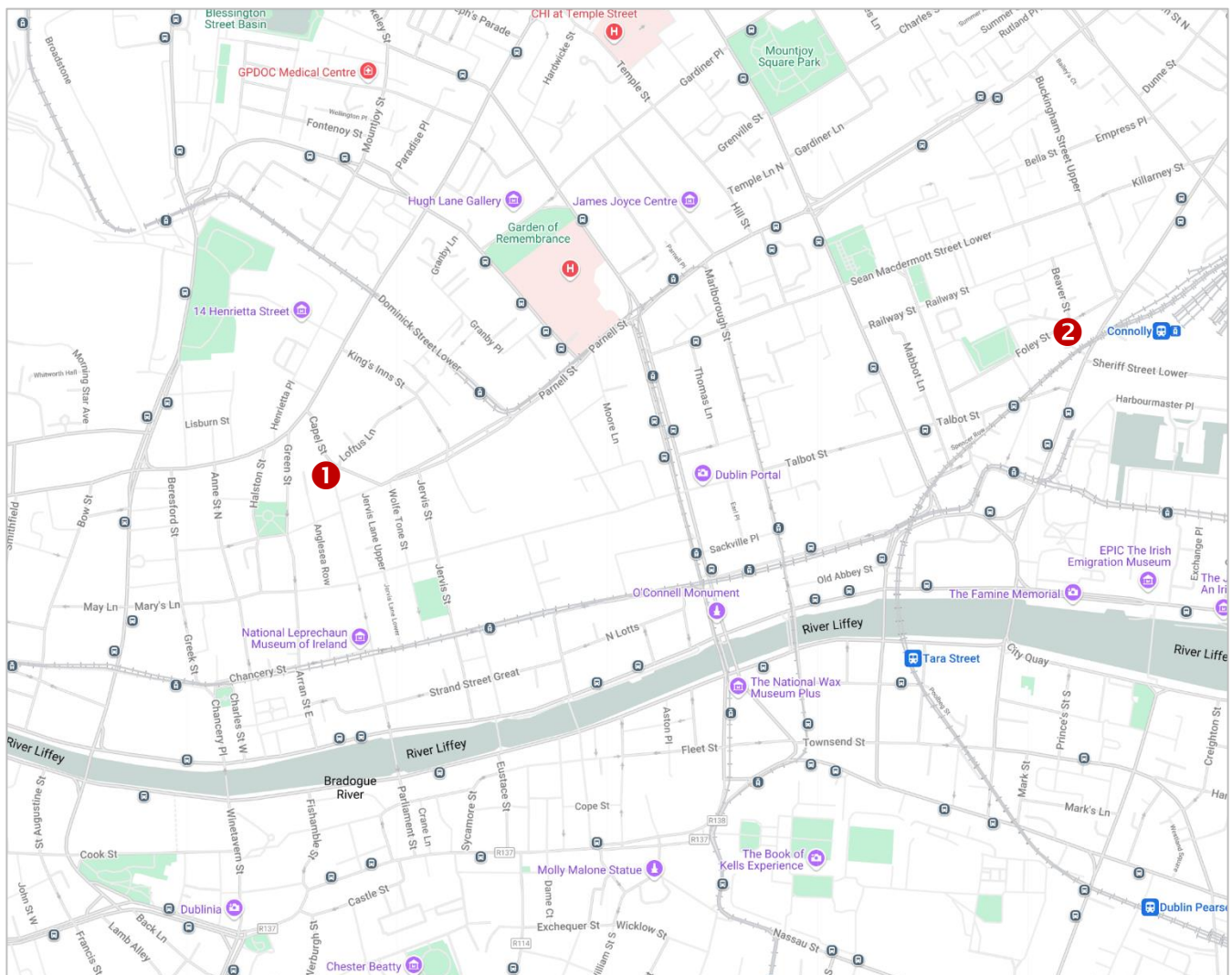
Our campuses are both within 10 minutes' walk of 'The Spire' on O'Connell Street in Dublin 1 and are easily accessible by public transport. The exceptionally central location of the school gives students the opportunity to immerse themselves in the rich fabric of social and cultural life that can be found in Ireland's capital. Below you can find Google Maps location links for each campus address, providing a more immersive and interactive map of our campuses' surroundings.

1 DCAS 1 – Main Campus

[98 Capel Street, Rotunda, Dublin 1, D01 HP52](#)

2 DCAS 2 – Ulysses House

[1st Floor Ulysses House, 23/24 Foley Street, Dublin 1, D01 W2T2](#)



IT FACILITIES & STUDY RESOURCE AREA

A computer area is normally available for student use during class time as part of a structured lesson and is also accessible for self-study and learning consolidation purposes on an ad-hoc basis. Students normally may use this as a resource for independent learning or as a study area. It has books and resources for self-study. Microwaves and tea/coffee-making facilities are also normally available. DCAS receptions in both campuses provide small volume 'black & white' printing service to DCAS students only. Information on other printing facilities nearby are available through the school receptions.

Wireless broadband Internet is also available to students in both campuses through the WiFi network 'DCAS - Student'. Password is **SpeakEnglish**.

DCAS CONTACT INFORMATION

Administration & Reception		
Lucia Kulihová DCAS1	01 878 3377	admin@dcas.ie
Roshni Nowjee DCAS2	01 515 2883	

Director of Studies		
David Kirwan	01 878 3377	david@dcas.ie

Assistant Director of Studies & Student Welfare Officers		
Cristina Dobrojan DCAS1	01 878 3377	cristina@dcas.ie
Conor Doonan DCAS2	01 567 2653	conor@dcas.ie

Non-Academic Management		
Sudesh Jeewon (CEO)	01 515 2883 (DCAS2)	sudesh@dcas.ie
Bruno D'Alessio (Head of Operations & Technology)	01 878 3377 (DCAS1)	bruno@dcas.ie
Samuel Correa (Sales & Marketing Manager)	089 986 2585	samuel@dcas.ie

Marketing & Sales / Admissions		
Sales Team/Admissions	+353 89 475 9934 (WhatsApp)	marketing@dcas.ie
Natalia / Emir / Berat / Jing / Tan / Shirley	01 878 3377	

DCAS Emergency Number		
Sudesh Jeewon	087 193 6500 (out-of-hours emergency calls only)	

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

112 or 999	Emergency Services – Garda (police), Ambulance, Fire Brigade
112	Emergency Services (same as above), works in any EU country
112 (SMS)	Use SMS to text 112 in an emergency situation if you cannot speak

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS & LINKS

1800 741741	Immigration Freephone for first time registrations (9am to 5pm, Mon-Sun)
01 5767454	Crawford and Company (Insurance Company contact for medical claims – email: internationalstudentmedical@crawco.com)
076107400	Citizens Information Phone Service (9am to 8pm, Monday-Friday)

01 660 5233	Irish Council for Overseas Students (ICOS)
1800 666111	Garda Confidential Line (freephone)
116 123	SAMARITANS 24/7 (freephone)
01 4537941	St. James's Hospital, Dublin 8 (Dublin southside)*
01 8301122	Mater Hospital, Dublin 7 (Dublin northside)*
0818 474 474	Grow Mental Health

* Check for the list of Approved Hospitals in your Medical Insurance policy prior to visiting any hospital.

[Citizens Information](#) | A national agency responsible for supporting the provision of information, advice, and advocacy to the public on the broad range of social and civil services.

[Irish Council for International Students \(ICOS\)](#) | An independent organisation advocating for the rights of all international learners in Ireland.

[Irish Immigration](#) – Immigration Service Delivery (ISD), from the [Department of Justice](#) | information for non EU/EEA learners.

[Immigration Service Delivery Registration Office Appointment Booking System](#) | Webpage from Irish Immigration website containing up-to-date full instructions for IRP registrations.

[Daft.ie](#) | Popular website in Ireland for searching Shared Accommodation options, short-term and long-term.

[Academy Plus Insurance](#) | Student insurance provider, offering Medical Insurance and Learner Protection to DCAS students.

[3ts Specialist Helplines & Support Services](#) | Source of information on a range of mental health issues in Ireland.

[Adverts.ie](#) and **[DoneDeal.ie](#)** | Popular “buy & sell” websites in Ireland.

[Jobs.ie](#) and **[Indeed.ie](#)** | Popular websites for Jobs in Ireland.

[Department of Education](#) | Department from Government of Ireland responsible for the development of the Irish education system.

[Department of Justice](#) | Department from Government of Ireland responsible for advancing community and national security, promoting justice and equality and safeguard human rights, to achieve their vision of a safe, fair and inclusive Ireland.

[Education in Ireland](#) | Information on studying in Ireland.

[Europass](#) | An initiative which aims to help learners ensure their skills and qualifications are clearly and easily understood in Europe.

[European Qualifications Framework](#) | Translation tool from the EU to make national qualifications easier to understand and more comparable. The EQF seeks to support cross-border mobility of learners and workers, promote lifelong learning and professional development across Europe.

[National Framework of Qualifications](#) | A 10-level system used to describe qualifications in the Irish education and training system.

[NARIC Qualifications Recognition](#) | Information on the academic recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland.

[Qualifax National Learners database](#) | The National Learner's Database which provides Information on further and higher education and training courses.

[SOLAS](#) | The Further Education and Training Authority in Ireland, responsible for funding, planning and co-ordinating training and further education programmes.

[Student Finance - Funding, Governance and Performance](#) | Source of information on financial support for further and higher education.

PART 2 – STUDENT JOURNEY

INDUCTION WEEK: STUDENT ORIENTATION & PLACEMENT TEST

All **visa students must attend the full induction session** which includes Placement Test and Student Orientation, all done in the same week. In the orientation session, students will be introduced to the structure of the school and key staff. Students will get familiar with our Punctuality Policy, Attendance Policy and other rules of the school. Students will receive information about the end-of-course exam and sign an agreement stating that they understand their rights and obligations, including the requirement to sit the end-of-course exam. Students progressing to a second course with DCAS are not required to attend the Student Orientation again.

The induction process begins during enrolment and registration; nonetheless, students are required to attend the Student Orientation session to ensure that they are as familiar as possible with their chosen course and with the school’s policies and procedures. The Student Orientation makes students aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to health and safety, discipline, student learning and development, complaints and grievances, appeals, information technology and any other relevant matters.

Before beginning their classes, **all students must take a mandatory Placement Test** to establish an appropriate level at which to commence their studies. **The Student Orientation is optional to short-term students only.**

Once Placement Test and Student Orientation are completed, the student can request letters through DCAS’ website [Student Area](#) to:

- Obtain a student card
- Open a bank account
- Register with Immigration (non-EU/EEA students)

Access details to the ‘Student Area’ are provided at the Student Orientation.

TYPICAL INDUCTION WEEK*

Placement Test (online):

Tuesday at 11am (AM students)
and at 2pm (PM students)

Student Orientation (in person):

Thursday at 2pm (all students)

**Students receive an email reminder with all details from the Academic department on Friday before the induction week*

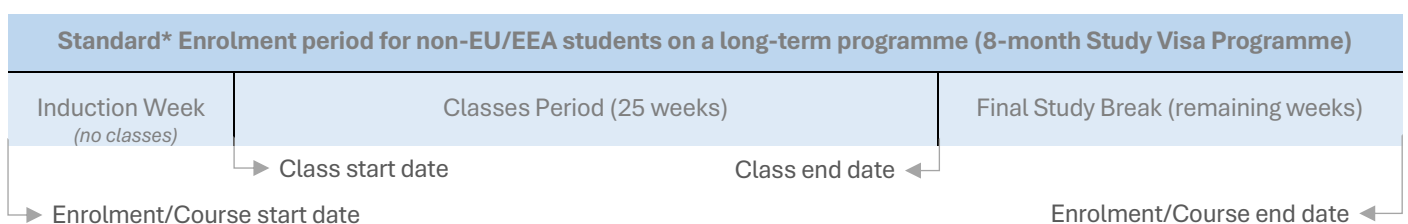
STARTING CLASS

New students start their classes on the Monday after the Induction Week, or on the following Monday, depending on class availability which may vary across different levels and study periods. New students will receive in advance an email informing when they need to start their classes. In the email they are informed of their timetable, campus location, classroom name, level, and teacher name. New ‘Class Details’ e-mails are normally sent on Fridays at 05:00 pm. Short-term students may start classes on the first Monday (or Tuesday, when Monday is a public holiday) after arrival in Dublin.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Clarity and consistency must be evident regarding students' timetabled hours. Once a student is assigned a study period, they cannot change it, apart from exceptional cases, at the school’s discretion and with the student’s agreement. Academic Calendars are available here <https://www.dcas.ie/student-services>.

International students on a Student Visa have their enrolment starting a week before classes commence, as during the first week Placement Test and Student Orientation take place (induction week). Enrolment period for long-term visa students comprises of ‘Induction Week’, 25 weeks of Classes, and remaining visa time as Study Break, typically scheduled towards the end of the enrolment, after class period is complete. Short term students should aim to complete a Placement Test prior to arrival at the school.



CLASS TIMETABLE

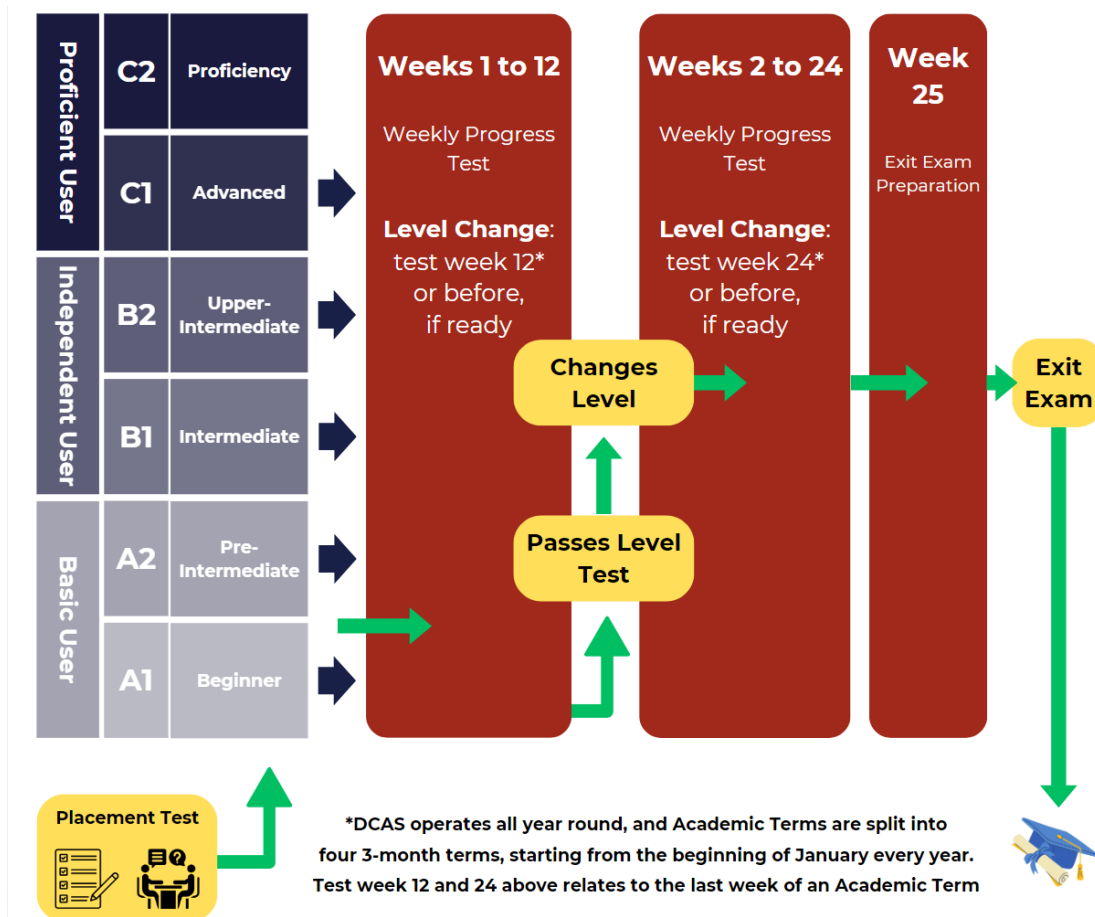
Full-time English language programmes run Monday to Friday for 15 hours per week. Students commence classes on Mondays (or next day, on weeks when a Public Holiday falls on Monday). Morning (AM) classes are delivered from Monday to Thursday from 09h00 until 13h00 with a 15-minute break between 11h00 and 11h15. Afternoon (PM) classes are delivered from Monday to Friday from 13h45 until 17h00 with a 15-minute break between 15h15 and 15h30.

Weekly Timetable	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning Classes (15h/week)	09:00 to 11:00 <i>Break</i> 11:15 to 13:00	09:00 to 11:00 <i>Break</i> 11:15 to 13:00	09:00 to 11:00 <i>Break</i> 11:15 to 13:00	09:00 to 11:00 <i>Break</i> 11:15 to 13:00	No classes
or					
Afternoon Classes (15h/week)	13:45 to 15:15 <i>Break</i> 15:30 to 17:00	13:45 to 15:15 <i>Break</i> 15:30 to 17:00	13:45 to 15:15 <i>Break</i> 15:30 to 17:00	13:45 to 15:15 <i>Break</i> 15:30 to 17:00	13:45 to 15:15 <i>Break</i> 15:30 to 17:00

Other courses might have different timetables. Check with the Admissions team for specific timetables (e.g. TESOL courses, etc).

CHANGING LEVEL

Students wishing to change level must consult with their teacher, who will decide whether they should sit a level progression exam based on the syllabus. The student should request the level test through the DCAS website (<https://www.dcas.ie/level-change-request>). If the student scores 75% or more, they may progress to the next level. Level change is only permitted on the first day of the week. Level Change updates should be obtained through the Academic Management (Assistant Director of Studies or Director of Studies).



SOCIAL & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The Social & Cultural Activities Co-ordinator organises cultural visits, social events and extra life-skills lessons on a regular basis. A programme focused on recreational activities is scheduled monthly, contingent on the levels of student interest.

A monthly Social & Cultural Activities calendar is available at the school's website: <https://www.dcas.ie/socialculturalactivities>. Students can also add the DCAS Interactive Calendar with all the events using the QR code here, adding it to their personal calendar.

Interactive
Calendar



EXTERNAL END-OF-COURSE EXAMINATIONS

All students on a Student Visa must sit a final examination when their class period is completed. It is the obligation of the school to register those students for an external exam and it is the students' obligation to sit the exam accordingly. Other students may take external examinations if they wish.

Students are informed of the date and time of their exam in advance. Following the exam, the Academic Department will inform students when their results are available and when external awarding body certificates are ready for collection, usually within 4-6 weeks from exam dates. Students will also receive by email a 'DCAS Certificate of Achievement' once exams and classes are successfully completed. If classes or exams are not fully completed, only a 'Certificate of Attendance' is available upon request.

Queries about exam preparation can be addressed to any of the DCAS teachers. Queries about exam dates, times etc. are to be addressed to the Assistant Director of Studies (ADoS): academic@dcas.ie.

END OF ENROLMENT - EXIT & ATTENDANCE LETTERS FOR VISA STUDENTS

All students on a Student Visa, **after their class period is completed and after sitting a final examination**, should request an Exit Letter / Attendance Letter through the [Student Portal](#) if they wish to extend their 'Irish Residency Permission' as a student (*IRP Stamp 2*). This document is required by Irish Immigration on IRP renewals. More details can be found [here](#).

STUDENT FEEDBACK

DCAS wants to provide students with the supportive and congenial environment needed to enable them to be successful in their studies and to get the most from their time in Dublin. At regular intervals, formal processes give you the opportunity to give feedback on the quality of the service provided. Nevertheless, if you have any comments about improving our facilities and services, feel free to contact a member of staff or share your experience using our online student feedback form: <https://www.dcas.ie/feedback>.

MAKING A COMPLAINT

If a student is not satisfied with any aspect of the service they receive, they have the right to complain, which is key for DCAS to continue improving the services delivered. The complaints process follows the three stages outlined below:

Stage 1: Firstly, the issue will be informally addressed with the relevant individual(s) and an attempt to resolve the situation will be made. Should this prove unsuccessful, complainants may progress to the second stage.

Stage 2: At this stage, the student completes the **Complaint Form**, available at the DCAS website (<https://www.dcas.ie/complaintform>), ensuring to provide full details of the nature of the complaint. Students must submit the online form along with any relevant documents attached, that will be analysed by the Director of Studies.

Stage 3: Once the complaint has been received, it will be reviewed by the Director of Studies and responded to within 7 working days. Where appropriate, the Director of Studies will provide a full explanation of any relevant errors and details of any remedial action taken.

After Stage 3 has been completed, DCAS will consider the matter resolved. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, DCAS will advise the complainant to bring the matter to the attention of the relevant statutory authority (contact details will be provided).

PART 3 – DCAS POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

When enrolling to DCAS, students are accepting DCAS' [Terms and Conditions](#), which also includes the policies/guidelines below.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance Rules:

Students who are on a Student Visa must attend class full-time (15 hours per week) and should aim for 100% attendance. **All visa students must attend at least 85% of classes**, as required by regulations from the Irish Immigration, Department of Justice (www.irishimmigration.ie). Students' attendance rates are reported to Irish Immigration every week on Friday. Attendance rates can be checked online through the [Student Portal](#), which is updated every Wednesday (with attendance records up to previous Friday).

Absence due to sickness:

On the first day of sickness and each day subsequently, the student must inform DCAS Administration (admin@dcas.ie) about their absence. Students can only be excused from class for the specific dates on a medical certificate. This medical certificate must be sent immediately to admin@dcas.ie, and may be requested to be presented in person to the school. **Digital copies (PDF) of the certificate are required and must be forwarded to the school along with the original email from the clinic/doctor.** Certificates presented more than 2 weeks from its issue date will not be accepted. All medical certificates must be provided by a medical practitioner who is listed on the Irish Medical Council (<https://www.medicalcouncil.ie/>). The school 'Management Committee' assesses the documents and makes a decision on excusing students from classes whenever appropriate. Please note that students can use medical certificates for no longer than two consecutive weeks. For periods of absence due to sickness that are longer than 2 weeks, students will be considered for an unscheduled emergency break. These breaks are considered on an individual basis and are not automatically granted. **Providing forged medical certificates may lead to expulsion from DCAS, and clinic may inform Garda and take legal action against the individual who committed forgery, which is a crime in Ireland.**

The above applies to non-COVID-19 related illnesses and absences; for information regarding COVID-19 illnesses, please see below.

If you are displaying any Covid-19 symptoms, take an antigen test, and:

- **If you test positive, DO NOT come to class** and inform the school immediately, e-mailing us the test result. You should self-isolate for a full 5-day period. Positive antigen tests are treated as medical certificates, granting the student authorisation for the class absences for those 5 days. All students who have COVID-19 must provide an image of their COVID test that is verified by formal identification by email to (admin@dcas.ie) i.e. send a photo of the test beside your IRP (Irish Residency Permit) card or a valid photo ID card/document with your full name.
- **If you test negative, you must attend classes wearing a face covering** if displaying minor symptoms. If symptoms are severe, you should seek a GP and obtain a medical certificate to be granted absence permission.

Absence due to Immigration/PPS appointments:

Students can be excused from classes if their Immigration and/or PPS appointments overlap with class time. Students must forward the appointment confirmation to admin@dcas.ie. Absences for any other reason, such as job interviews, work, other personal appointments, etc. cannot be excused. The 85% attendance requirement allows students to miss some classes (up to 15%) without a need to justify their absences.

Consequences of Poor Attendance:

If you do not comply with the Attendance Rules above, you will receive by email fortnightly:

1. **Warning Notification:** when your attendance is below 85%, after 2 weeks of class period completed
2. **Critical Warning Notification:** when your attendance is below 75%, after 4 weeks of class period completed

3. **Exit Letter / Expulsion Notification** to student: when your attendance is below 65% after 12 weeks of class period completed, or below 25% after 6 weeks of class period completed.

You will also receive by email a 'Courtesy Attendance Notification' fortnightly, if your accumulated attendance is below 90%.

If you receive an **Exit Letter** from DCAS due to poor attendance:

3.1 Your name is removed from the Attendance Register and you cannot attend classes anymore;

3.2 You have 5 working days to submit an appeal, which should be submitted to admin@dcas.ie (Please use the following format in the email: Subject: ATTENDANCE APPEAL – “STUDENT NAME”) along with supporting documentation (one PDF attachment);

3.3 With regard to attendance appeals, the DCAS Management Committee makes a decision and responds by email within 5 working days; this decision is final.

If your appeal is approved by the committee: Your name is returned to the Attendance Register; Further uncertified absences will result in another Exit Letter to you, which may lead to expulsion from the school.

If your appeal is rejected by the committee: an Exit letter is sent to Irish Immigration, and you are expelled from the school, and fees paid are fully forfeited; Irish Immigration are informed that you are no longer registered at the school. Your Study Visa and permission to stay in the country may be revoked.

Student Welfare:

The ADoS (Assistant Director of Studies), who provides pastoral care as part of their role as Student Welfare Officer, is on hand at the school campuses, to meet students who wish to discuss attendance, as well as other, issues (personal difficulties, mental health, etc). Please note that attendance issues can only be discussed in person **before the Exit Notification to student**, Stage 3 ('Exit Notification to student' described above). Once the student receives an Exit Notification, all further communication on the matter is by email; the student can submit an appeal to academic@dcas.ie along with supporting documentation.

PUNCTUALITY POLICY

For the consideration of other students and teachers, and in compliance with Immigration regulations:

1. **Students must be on time for the start of class:** all students must be in the classroom when the class starts (09:00am for morning classes and 01:45pm for afternoon classes)
2. **Students must return to class on time from breaks:** all students must be in the classroom when the class starts after break periods (11:15am for morning classes and 03:30pm for afternoon classes, unless your teacher has arranged breaks at different times, in that case you must return at the arranged time given by your teacher)
3. **Late students can only enter the class during the first 15 minutes of class:** (i.e. 09:01-09:15am or 01:46-02:00pm); students more than 5 minutes late will be given partial attendance for that class period (30 minutes absence)
4. **Students must stay to the end of their class.** If you leave class early, your attendance may be affected. Frequent early leavers will be given partial attendance for that class period (30 minutes absence)
5. **Students arriving more than 15 minutes late for class,** for either class sessions (before or after break) are not allowed to enter the classroom and will be marked absent for that class period; in that case the student should go to the classroom only during break time, before second class session starts)
6. **Students must not leave class for extended periods during lesson times:** students may only leave class for essential toilet breaks and emergencies, for no other reason

Complying with this policy will make the best of your study time and enhance everyone's learning experience.

STUDY BREAK POLICY

1. In compliance with Irish Immigration (ISD) regulations, non-EU students on an 8-month study visa programme:
 - 1.1. Must schedule all study breaks before they register with Immigration, at the induction week
 - 1.2. Are only permitted to take unscheduled study breaks in exceptional circumstances*
 - 1.3. In the interest of the students' academic progress, **only one Study Break can be scheduled**
 - 1.4. **Total scheduled Study Break between class start date and class end date must not exceed 5 weeks (including the 2-week Christmas break)**
 - 1.5. Students may schedule a Study Break of 2, 3, 4, or 5 consecutive weeks** during their study period (8-month study visa):
 - 1.5.1. One 2-week study break after completing 6 weeks of classes
 - 1.5.2. One 3-week study break after completing 9 weeks of classes
 - 1.5.3. One 4-week study break after completing 12 weeks of classes
 - 1.5.4. One 5-week study break after completing 15 weeks of classes

****1-week study breaks are not available**
2. Short-term students may request study breaks at any time throughout the course
3. **Study breaks must be requested at least 2 weeks in advance**
4. Study breaks cannot be scheduled to start in the middle of a week (must be scheduled from Monday to Friday)
5. Students returning from study breaks may be placed in a different class/campus on return at the school's discretion
6. Academic Management might refuse a study break request if it could affect the student's academic progress, such as in courses with special purposes classes (e.g. TESOL) within the programme schedule that are not available all year round (i.e. classes must be attended from beginning to end within a specific study term).

* **Unscheduled or emergency breaks** can be taken in cases of extended sick leave, close family bereavement, compassionate leave. Any other exceptional circumstances may be granted at the discretion of the Director of Studies.

Never book holidays or make any other arrangements (flights, hotel, work, etc) before your Study Break is approved.

Unscheduled Study Breaks

In the event of exceptional circumstances, such as a serious illness or a family bereavement, students must contact the school immediately and let the school know of the nature of the circumstance and details about the length of time the student expects to be away from class.

Students should request it by email to academic@dcas.ie, which will be analysed by the Assistant Director of Studies, who also looks after Students' Welfare and pastoral care. Students can also make the request in person. Students will be informed of the school's decision within 2 working days. Documentary evidence may be required to substantiate a request.

If an unscheduled study break extends beyond the study visa period, the student should seek visa extension directly with Immigration, presenting to them documentary evidence to support the request. The student might be required to obtain another medical insurance to cover updated period of their study visa.

COURSE & STUDY PERIOD CHANGE POLICY

The school assumes that all prospective students will have made a committed decision to study a given programme/course in a specific study period before applying for admission:

1. Once enrolment is completed, which happens when the Letter of Acceptance is issued and sent to the student, any course or study period change request may incur additional charges such as an administration fee and a payment of any difference in course fees if, for example, the new desired course or study period has a higher fee.
2. Non-EU students enrolled on a course/programme linked to a Study Visa (Irish Residence Permission - Stamp 2) cannot change their course during their first Study Visa. Students in other circumstances may request to change their programme/course at least 2 weeks prior to course commencement.
3. Non-EU students are required to have at least €4,500 for their initial living expenses in Ireland when enrolling into a 25-week course. These funds cannot be used towards a course or study period 'upgrade', e.g.: Changing afternoon classes to morning classes after a course has started.
4. An administration fee of €250 applies to all programme/course & study period change approvals. A payment of supplementary tuition fees also applies when the new course has a higher fee. No refunds are given if new course or study period has a fee lower than the original one.
5. Tuition fees applicable for the 'difference calculation' are the ones in place on the day of request, and not those applicable before the booking stage, which might be different. The calculation of fees is not pro-rata; therefore, the full programme fee difference applies, regardless of the number of weeks completed/to be completed.
6. Students may request to change their study period, although approval of requests is not guaranteed.

7. **Procedure to request a course/study period change:**

Make a request to DCAS Administration (email to admin@dcas.ie with subject 'Course/Study Period change request'). Our Admin team will liaise with the Academic Department to check availability. A response to the student will be given within 2 working days from the request day.

- i. If the request is rejected, an explanation will be given. The student can request a change again if they wish, after one month from previous request.
- ii. If the request is approved, DCAS Administration will inform the total applicable fees payable to confirm the change, deadline for payment, and date when the change will take place, if a student proceeds with their request.

The school will do its best to accommodate student requests, but availability may vary from time to time. Never confirm other activities/work during current course timetabled hours, as absence from classes may lead to expulsion and could jeopardise a student's immigration situation if on a Student Visa. Students must be familiar with the Attendance Policy and the Punctuality Policy, both of which are available on the Student Handbook.

STUDENT DISCIPLINARY POLICY & CODE OF CONDUCT

The aim of this policy is to address continuous breaches of conduct by students while attending a course at DCAS. Students, as part of their enrolment contract, agree to follow this Disciplinary Policy and adhere to the Code of Conduct displayed across the school. All breaches of Student Discipline will be recorded in the student's file.

Breaches of Student Discipline:

- Disrespect the 'always' and 'never' items listed in the DCAS Code of Conduct
- Continuous use of native language (L1) during class time
- Bullying and verbal abuse of any kind towards classmates, teachers or any member of staff
- Coming to school under the influence of alcohol or any other intoxicating substance

- Forging/falsifying records (signatures/L/LEs) on the Attendance Register or providing false medical certificates (Final Written Warning is given)
- Stealing, physical assault, drinking of alcohol, fighting, vandalism, intentional damage to school property (Final Written Warning is given; Garda/police may also be informed)
- Illicit drug consumption in the school (Exit Letter is given; Garda/police will also be informed)

The list above is not exhaustive. Staff members may give warnings in other situations where discipline and behaviour are understood as inappropriate. All warnings are recorded in the student’s profile on the school system.

Consequences of Breaches of Student Discipline:

If a student does not comply with the Student Disciplinary Policy, he/she will be subject to, according to the stages below and at the school’s discretion, a warning, or more serious action, as described:

1. **1st Verbal Warning:** If a staff member is unhappy with a student’s behaviour, they can give them a warning. The staff will warn the student that if they misbehave again, they will be taken to the Assistant Director of Studies.
2. **2nd Verbal Warning:** If the student misbehaves for a second time, he/she will be taken to the Assistant Director of Studies and warned about his/her behaviour.
3. **1st Written Warning:** If the student misbehaves for a third time, he/she will be given a written warning by the Assistant Director of Studies. The student will be warned that if they misbehave again, they will be reported to the Director of Studies.
4. **Final Written Warning:** If the student misbehaves for a fourth time or commits a serious offence, he/she will be taken to the Director of Studies and warned about his/her behaviour. Another staff will also be present while final warning is given. If they misbehave again, he/she may be expelled from the school.
5. **Exit Letter sent to student:** After receiving a Final Warning Letter, if the student misbehaves again, he/she will be expelled from the school.

If you receive an **Exit letter** from DCAS due to a **Breach of Student Discipline:**

- 5.1 Your name is removed from the Attendance Register and you cannot attend classes anymore;
- 5.2 You have 5 working days to submit an appeal, which should be submitted by email to admin@dcas.ie (Please use the following format in the email: Subject: DISCIPLINE APPEAL – “STUDENT NAME”) along with supporting documentation;
- 5.3 With regard to Discipline appeals, the Management Committee makes a decision and responds by email within 5 working days; this decision is final.
- 5.4 If the final decision is your expulsion, immigration authorities will be also informed, and fees paid will be forfeited. Your Study Visa and permission to stay in Ireland may be revoked as a result of this. If you have Medical Insurance associated with your course, insurance cover will also cease when your enrolment with DCAS ends.

Code of Conduct*

ALWAYS

- ✓ Show respect to others
- ✓ Pay attention to the teacher and your classmates
- ✓ Listen when others are speaking
- ✓ Participate in class and cooperate with others
- ✓ Ask questions and share ideas
- ✓ Speak English in class and the school
- ✓ Encourage others to speak English in class and the school
- ✓ Be punctual
- ✓ Complete tasks and activities assigned by your teacher
- ✓ Keep your classroom and the school clean and tidy
- ✓ Bring all necessary materials to class e.g. book, notebook, pen
- ✓ Keep your coursebook in a good condition for future use by other students

NEVER

- * Eat in class
- * Sleep in class
- * Drink hot beverages in class
- * Use headphones/earbuds in class
- * Use mobile phones or other devices in class unless the teacher permits
- * Write in the school coursebook, either with pen or pencil
- * Bring bicycles or scooters into the school building

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

The school offers the provision of pastoral oversight for non-academic problems, involving support to the students, advising them on financial, visa related, health/social or other problems. Students can receive advice and support regarding these issues through reception. Students may also enquire by email. Where appropriate, support is given to learners by the Assistant Director of Studies (ADoS) & Welfare Officer, or Director of Studies (DoS). Multi-lingual staff are available whenever needed. If necessary, the student will be referred to a relevant professional organisation to assist them in resolving issues they may have.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

At DCAS, we strive to maintain an unbiased learning and working environment in which nobody feels threatened or intimidated. Furthermore, DCAS recognises the real educational and organisational benefits of having a diverse community of staff and students.

To this end, the school works towards building and maintaining an inclusive environment which promotes equality, values diversity and respects the rights and dignity of all. Equality best practices at DCAS guarantee people's rights and ensure accordance with legislation. This means, the school embraces diversity, combats discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity for learners and staff.

DCAS believes in the principles of social justice, acknowledges that discrimination affects people in complex ways and is committed to challenging all forms of inequality. To this end, DCAS aims to ensure that:

- Individuals are treated fairly and with dignity and respect regardless of their: gender; civil status; family status; sexual orientation; religious belief or lack of religious belief; age; disability or the nature of their disability; race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin; membership of any particular community that is recognised by the state;
- An inclusive and supportive environment is promoted;
- Contributions to the achievement of the school's mission made by individuals from diverse backgrounds are recognised;
- DCAS complies with its obligations under the legislation and that no staff member or student is unlawfully discriminated against.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

DCAS is committed to fostering a culture of environmental awareness and responsibility within our school community. We believe that by taking proactive measures through collaboration and collective action, we can minimize our environmental impact, contribute to a more sustainable future, and inspire students to become environmentally conscious citizens. This policy outlines our approach to environmental management.

We aim to:

- Reduce our consumption of energy, water, and resources.
- Minimise waste generation and promote responsible waste disposal practices.
- Promote sustainable practices throughout the school.
- Raise awareness of environmental issues among students and staff.
- Encourage and facilitate student participation in environmental initiatives.

The School Management Team is responsible for overseeing this policy. Staff is responsible for promoting environmental awareness within their classrooms and through their own actions. Students are encouraged to participate in environmental initiatives and take responsibility for their own environmental impact.

PART 4 – INFORMATION FOR NON-EU/EEA STUDENTS

Immigration regulations are subject to change. Always consult the Irish Immigration Service website from the Department of Justice for latest immigration information and guidelines: <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/>.

IMMIGRATION BORDER CONTROL AT DUBLIN AIRPORT

All non-EU/EEA citizens who do not hold an EEA/EU passport, whether visa-required or not, are subject to immigration controls at the port of entry of Dublin Airport. The Immigration Officer on duty determines whether each non-EU student is allowed to enter Ireland. If your documentation is in order, the immigration officer will stamp your passport for up to three months (90 days).

Note: You should keep all personal documents, including school documents, with you in your carry-on luggage as immigration border control is before baggage claim.

IMPORTANT: All non-EU long-term students must register with the Irish Immigration Service Delivery within the time limit stamped on the passport.

Non-EU students enrolled on courses up to 12 weeks long (staying up to 90 days in Ireland) are considered to be an Educational Tourist, and will be subject to visit/holiday rules, obeying the laws of the state, not engaging in employment and leaving at the end of their visit. These short-term students do not register with Irish Immigration but must be able to financially support themselves and be covered by private medical insurance during their stay. If the short-term student is coming from a visa required country, a short stay 'C' visit (tourist) visa will be required before travelling to Ireland.

NON-EU/EEA STUDENTS REGISTERING WITH THE IRISH IMMIGRATION

To obtain a Student ("Stamp 2") Irish Residence Permit (IRP), international Non-EU students must register with the Immigration Service Delivery (ISD), from the Department of Justice.

Ensure you have completed at least one week of classes before attending an IRP appointment, as immigration officers might request your current attendance, even if this is your first course in Ireland. Take into account that attendance records are updated every Tuesday and letter requests are processed within 2 days of the request date, therefore your IRP appointment should be ideally 3 weeks after your enrolment start date – 1 week for Induction Week, 1 week of attendance completed, 3 days for attendance to be processed and letters to be issued. The school advises students to have their permanent address confirmed prior to register with Irish Immigration, as the IRP Card will be sent to that address, and students are required to keep immigration informed about their residential address in Ireland.

1. A) FIRST TIME IMMIGRATION REGISTRATIONS:

If you live in county Dublin, Meath, Kildare, Wicklow, Cork or Limerick, book an appointment for immigration registration at ISD website through this link: <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/burgh-quay-appointments/>. If you live in another county, you must register at your regional registration office, managed by Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB): <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/registering-your-immigration-permission/how-to-register-your-immigration-permission-for-the-first-time/>

B) SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT REGISTRATIONS ("RENEWAL"):

If you live in county Dublin, Meath, Kildare, Wicklow, Cork or Limerick, follow the steps here to renew your IRP Card: <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/registering-your-immigration-permission/how-to-renew-your-current-permission/registration-renewal-dublin-kildare-meath-wicklow-cork-or-limerick/>

If you live in another county, you must renew your IRP at your regional registration office, managed by Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB): <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/registering-your-immigration-permission/how-to-renew-your-current-permission/registration-renewal-outside-dublin-kildare-meath-wicklow-cork-or-limerick/>

Please note that ISD requests 'proof of home address dated within the last 3 months', so make sure to have that at hand.

2. Request your documents for IRP registration (Acceptance Letter + Medical Insurance) at DCAS website on the Student Area section (<https://www.dcas.ie/student-area>). Please note that documents are issued within 2 working days, so make sure you request the documents at least 1 week before your IRP appointment date.
3. Receive a copy of your Acceptance Letter (IRP Letter) and your private Medical Insurance certificate at your personal email account.
4. For your IRP appointment, remember to bring:
 - a. Your passport (this must be valid for at least another 8 months)
 - b. Letter of Acceptance from DCAS (IRP Letter), also confirming that your course fees were paid in full
 - c. Medical Insurance and Learner Protection certificate (sent to your email directly by Academy Plus insurance)
 - d. For 1st registration, you must demonstrate access to finances to a minimum amount of €4,500.00 in one of the forms below:
 - i. A statement in respect of an Irish bank account showing sufficient funds, where the student can open an Irish bank account
 - ii. A current foreign bank statement not less than one month old, together with a past statement, for an account in the student's name (as in his or her passport) accompanied by a debit card in the same name and same bank account
 - iii. Documentary evidence that money is held in trust for a student by a financial services body regulated in Ireland by the Central Bank of Ireland
 - e. Personal Credit or Debit Card to make a €300 payment for the IRP registration

DCAS submits student details to Immigration every Friday. Students should go to the Immigration office at their appointment date and time. Once the process is completed, you are issued an Irish Residence Permit (IRP) on a Stamp 2 (Student Visa), which is valid for up to 8 months. The IRP card will be sent by post to your Irish home address within 6 weeks. This card is your immigration registration certificate, and it must be presented to immigration/border control officers whenever you are travelling abroad.

LEARNER PROTECTION

A Learner Protection Scheme is included in the 25-week full-time English course fees for Non-EU/EEA students. All English language schools are legally obliged to provide non-EU/EEA students with Learner Protection Insurance. This insurance ensures that those students' fees and courses are guaranteed, in the eventuality that the booked 25-week full-time English language programme becomes unavailable. Please see below an excerpt of the Learner Protection document provided through DCAS. **Always check the actual full document which is sent to you from portal@academyplus.net for update-to-date and full insurance policy details.**

“What is insured

1 The Insurers will reimburse the Covered Student for the Transfer Costs up to a maximum of EUR 250; and

2 The Insurers will reimburse the Covered Student for all Fees paid to the Education Provider, by or on behalf of the Covered Student, for the originally enrolled Academic Course, up to a maximum of EUR 2,500 in the event the Academic Course is not provided or ceases prematurely and it is not possible to find a similar Academic Course within a 10-mile radius of the normal residence of the Covered Student.

Provided that the Covered Student has not withdrawn from, or ceased to attend, the Academic Course.”

MEDICAL INSURANCE FOR NON-EU/EEA STUDENTS

All full-time non-EEA students are required to have private medical insurance, obtained either personally or through a group scheme operated by their school, at the time of their registration. DCAS provides a group private medical insurance scheme through Academy Plus. The procedures for attaining medical insurance are as follows:

1. DCAS informs students of the insurance provision scheme in advance of their arrival in Ireland
2. Students are provided with a brief outline of the insurance coverage, such as the name of the insurance provider, cost, level of coverage etc.
3. The insurance policy is issued to students up to 90 days prior to their arrival at DCAS, once flights are confirmed.

Be familiar with the Insurance Policy document and understand that this is not a Health Plan. Similarly to any other insurance product, an excess payment is required to make an insurance claim. A €100 excess charge applies to insurance claims with Academy Plus. Important to observe the list of **Approved Hospitals** prior to present yourself to a hospital. The list is available in the insurance policy document sent by Academy Plus. Instructions on how to make a claim is available on the insurance policy document – you must inform the Policy reference number and details of the claim. Please see below an excerpt of the Medical Insurance document provided through DCAS. **Always check your actual document which is sent to your email for update-to-date wording and full insurance policy details.** Your insurance documents are sent by email from portal@academyplus.net.

“All Student Academic Protection (ASAP) is designed to protect Covered Students from non-EU countries attending an Academic Course in Ireland against:

- the costs of medical treatment and services in an Approved Hospital if the Covered Student suffers Bodily Injury or Illness while attending the Academic Course in Ireland up to the limits of cover set out in the Policy;
- liability for Bodily Injury caused to others and liability for damage to third party property.”

IMPORTANT: If your enrolment with DCAS is terminated for whatever reason, your insurance cover will be ceased immediately, from the moment you are not a DCAS student anymore.

PPS REGISTRATION – APPLYING FOR A PERSONAL PUBLIC SERVICE NUMBER

A Personal Public Service (PPS) Number helps you access social welfare benefits, public services and information in Ireland. A PPS Number is always 7 numbers followed by either one or two letters.

To get a PPS Number, you must provide evidence of your identity (your Passport), why you need a PPS Number, and your address.

If you are applying for a PPS Number to work in Ireland, you must have a signed offer of employment from your employer confirming when your job is due to start or when it started. This letter should be on company headed paper with the employer’s contact details and employer/company registered number. You do not need a PPS Number to look for work or for an employer to make an offer of employment.

Full details can be found here: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/12e6de-get-a-personal-public-service-pps-number/>

STUDENT CARD

In Ireland, similarly to other countries, provides lower transport fares to students, as long as the student has a valid **Student Leap Card**. You can get 50% off adult public transport fares with the Young Adult or Student Leap Card. The Young Adult Leap Card is available for all 19- to 25-year-olds. The Student Leap Card is only available for students in full time education who are either 16 -18 years of age or 26 years and above.

Student Leap Cards must be ordered online. You must then go to one of the following Student Leap Agents to verify you are an eligible student and collect your card. Full details can be found here: <https://about.leapcard.ie/young-adult-and-student-card-launch>

Having a Student Card also gives students access to student discount on various retail shops and restaurants in Ireland. When travelling, be aware that many countries in Europe only provides reduced fee for students under the age of 26, either on transport, tourism attractions, etc.

DCAS does not provides its own student card, instead an Enrolment Letter confirms the student status. You can request an up-to-date letter anytime, and requests are processed within 2 working days.

PART 5 – HEALTH & SAFETY AT DCAS

HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is essential that while at school, students take responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of others as well as themselves. In that regard, the following list details some of the DOs and DON'Ts, which will make the school a safer place to study.

ALWAYS:

- I. Know and observe the code of safe practices that applies in your area of study
- II. Know and observe the rules that are designed for the computer area and classrooms, as well as those that relate to certain equipment and materials
- III. Be aware of potential hazards and use common sense to try to lessen the risk of accidents
- IV. If you are not clear about anything to do with health and safety, ask for help and advice
- V. Read all the safety notices in the school

NEVER:

- I. Misuse, neglect, damage or interfere with anything that is provided for safety
- II. Run within the school buildings
- III. Obstruct any traffic areas of the school
- IV. Eat food or consume hot drinks in classrooms, during class time
- V. Bring a bicycle or (e-)scooter to the campus (it is strictly forbidden)
- VI. Smoke or light a candle in the school

DCAS ensures the school is a safe place to all students, staff, and visitors. The school has trained staff as listed below:

First Aid Officers:

- David Kirwan, +353 1 8783377, david@dcas.ie
- Conon Doonan, +353 1 5152883, conor@dcas.ie
- Roshni Nowjee, +353 1 5152883, rosheen@dcas.ie
- Cristina Dobrojan, +353 1 8783377, cristina@dcas.ie

Fire Wardens | Fire Marshals:

- Roshni Nowjee, +353 1 5152883, rosheen@dcas.ie
- Cristina Dobrojan, +353 1 8783377, cristina@dcas.ie
- Natalia Haide Santos, +353 1 8783377, natalia@dcas.ie

Safety Officers:

- Sudesh Jeewon, +353 1 5152883, sudesh@dcas.ie
- Bruno D'Alessio, +353 1 8783377, bruno@dcas.ie

PART 6 – LIVING IN IRELAND

Facts

Capital: Dublin (population: 1.45 million) – (Census 2022)

Time zone: Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), with Daylight Saving Time (GMT+1) from 31 March to 27 October

Population: Ireland 5.15 million (2022)

Average Age: 38.8 years (2022)

Official Languages: English & Irish (Gaelic, or *Gaeilge*). Only about 2% of Ireland population speak Irish as a first language, mostly situated in rural areas and on the east coast of the country. And 98% of the Irish speakers in the world live in Ireland.

Currency: Euro (€)

Climate: Ireland has a mild oceanic climate. All year average temperatures are 2 – 10 C° in winter and 15 – 22 C° in summer. In June, Dublin has over 17 hours of daylight a day, with the sun rising before 5am and setting almost at 10pm; by contrast, in December, the sunrise is around 8.30am and sunset just after 4pm, with about 7.5 hours of daylight during Christmas time.

Political Status: Ireland is a parliamentary, representative democratic republic and a member state of the European Union (EU).

HDI (Human Development Index): 0.945 (8th in the world for 2021) for Ireland, 0.950 for Dublin (very high human development).

Living in Ireland

Ireland is a modern, English-speaking country with a dynamic economy. It has one of the highest standards of living in Europe, average earnings are well above the European average. Job opportunities are available in the hospitality, retail, IT, pharmaceutical, financial, and service sectors.

Famous for its friendliness, Ireland has a vibrant multicultural population. Ireland is world renowned for providing quality education. Currently, more than 100,000 international students are studying at colleges in Ireland.

Accommodation & Housing

Private Rented Accommodation

Rent a house, flat, or apartment from a landlord or property agency.

Shared Accommodation

In shared accommodation or "house share," you rent a bedroom and share common areas like the kitchen, living room, and bathroom with others. This option is common and more affordable in Ireland.

Finding Private Rented Accommodation

Search for rentals through local newspapers, estate agents, or websites like www.daft.ie, www.let.ie, or www.myhome.ie. Always view properties before signing a lease due to varying quality. Be prepared for high rents and limited availability. Bring references from your employer and previous landlords to viewings.

Rent Payments

Rent is usually paid monthly in advance. You will need to pay a security deposit and typically one month's rent before moving in, though sometimes landlords may ask for 2-3 months' rent in advance. Always get a receipt for payments.

Rent Payment Methods

Rent can be paid via standing order from your bank or in cash using a rent book. A rent book or lease agreement is required by law and should include:

- Accommodation address
- Landlord's contact information
- Your name
- Tenancy start date and duration
- Deposit and rent amount
- Payment details for additional services (e.g., heating, cable)
- Rights and duties of landlords and tenants
- Inventory of provided furnishings and appliances

For more details, visit http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/renting_a_home/rent_books.html.

Assistance with Rental Issues

- **Threshold:** Offers advice on finding accommodation, tenancy issues, and ending tenancies (www.threshold.ie).
- **Residential Tenancies Board (RTB):** Supports the rental sector and resolves landlord-tenant disputes without court involvement. Check tenancy registration, tenant rights, and dispute resolution at www.rtb.ie.

Safety at Home

Landlords must ensure properties meet minimum standards, including smoke alarms and fire blankets. For more information, visit <http://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/private-rented-housing/inspections/minimum-standards-rented-accommodation>.

Shared Accommodation Costs

In shared accommodations, household bills are typically split among residents.

Health

Introduction to the Irish Healthcare System

The Irish healthcare system includes public and private services managed by the Health Service Executive (HSE). More details can be found at www.hse.ie.

General Practitioner (GP)

A GP (a medical doctor) provides health services in their office or at patients' homes. Without a Medical Card or GP Visit Card, you will need to pay for services, typically around €60-€80 per visit. Check with your local medical clinic for specific costs.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health services can be accessed through your GP or HSE community and hospital-based services. For more information, visit www.yourmentalhealth.ie.

Voluntary organizations providing mental health support:

- Aware: Support for depression (www.aware.ie)
- Pieta House: Support for suicidal individuals or those bereaved by suicide (www.pieta.ie, Freephone: 1800 247 247)
- Samaritans: Confidential support for distress (www.samaritans.org, Freephone: 116 123)
- Jigsaw: Mental health support for young people aged 12 to 25 (www.jigsaw.ie)
- Mental Health Ireland: Promotes positive mental health and supports those with mental illness (www.mentalhealthireland.ie).

Working in Ireland

Students holding a valid immigration Stamp 2 are permitted to work 40 hours per week during the months of May, June, July and August and from 15 December to 15 January inclusive. At all other times they will be limited to working 20 hours per week.

International students who wish to take up work in Ireland must obtain a Personal Public Services Number (PPS Number). An employer can only pay employees with a PPS number, and funds will usually only be paid to an Irish bank account. Students will also be required to comply with the Universal Social Contribution (USC), Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI), employment laws and taxation requirements.

Ireland's minimum wage is €13.50 per hour (From 1st January 2025) for people aged 20 or above. For those aged 19 and 18, minimum rate of pay is respectively 90% and 80% of minimum wage. For under 18 years' old, the minimum rate of pay is 70% of minimum wage.

Culture & Society

Overview

Irish culture is rich and diverse, often referred to as the "land of saints and scholars" or the "emerald isle." For more information, visit:

- Culture Ireland (www.cultureireland.ie)
- Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (www.chg.gov.ie)

The Irish Flag

The Irish flag, introduced in 1848 and officially adopted in 1919, consists of three colours:

- Green: Represents the Gaelic tradition and the Roman Catholic majority.
- Orange: Represents the Protestant minority.
- White: Symbolizes peace between the two communities.



The Constitution

The Constitution of Ireland, *Bunreacht na hÉireann*, is the country's fundamental law and can only be amended by a public referendum. It was ratified in 1937 and is available in both English and Irish at <http://archive.constitution.ie/>.

The National Anthem

"Amhrán na bhFiann" (The Soldier's Song) is Ireland's national anthem, adopted in 1926. Written in English by Peadar Kearney and translated by Liam Ó Rinn, it is often sung at Gaelic Athletic Association events. "Ireland's Call" is also sung at international events to include both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The National Symbol

The harp is the symbol of the Irish State, used by government entities and on all Irish coins. It also appears on the President's seal and flag. More details can be found at Department of the Taoiseach (www.taoiseach.gov.ie).

The National Holidays

St. Patrick's Day

St. Patrick's Day, celebrated on March 17, is Ireland's national holiday. It commemorates St. Patrick, who is credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland. The day is marked with parades and wearing shamrocks, symbolizing the Trinity.

St. Brigid's Day

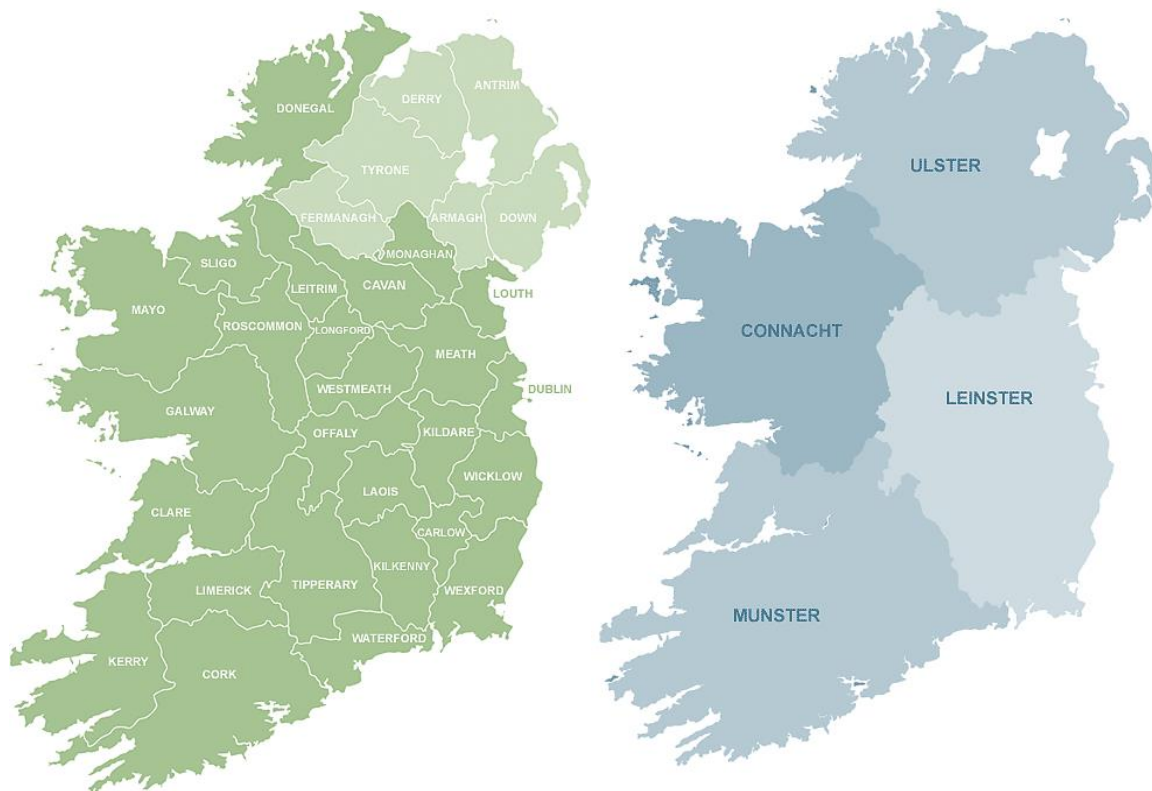
St. Brigid’s Day, celebrated on February 1, is Ireland's newest public holiday. It honours St. Brigid, one of Ireland's patron saints, known for her charity and healing. The day marks the beginning of spring and is celebrated with various cultural events and traditions, including making St. Brigid’s crosses from reeds or rushes.

Popular Culture

Irish popular culture includes TV, cinema, music, and literature similar to other Western countries. Unique to Ireland is pub culture, where pubs serve as social hubs. Note that smoking is banned in pubs and all enclosed workplaces since 2004.

Geography

Ireland is divided into 32 counties and four provinces (Connaught, Leinster, Munster, and Ulster). The Republic of Ireland consists of 26 counties, while Northern Ireland comprises six. County identity is strong, especially during GAA matches.



For more on Irish culture, visit Culture Ireland (www.cultureireland.ie).

Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)

The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) is Ireland's largest amateur sports organization, promoting Gaelic games like hurling, camogie, Gaelic football, handball, and rounders. Gaelic football, hurling, and camogie are the most popular. There are about 2,500 GAA clubs in Ireland.

Irish Society and Migration

Historically, Ireland has been a nation of emigration, especially after the famine in 1845 and during the 1950s and 1980s. This changed in the late 1990s with Ireland's economic boom, attracting immigrants and prompting many Irish emigrants to return. Millions worldwide, particularly in the UK, USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, claim Irish ancestry. This global diaspora is a significant aspect of Irish identity.

Travellers

Travellers are an indigenous group in Ireland with distinct cultural values, traditions, and their own language, Cant. Historically nomadic, many Travellers now live in housing estates, though some continue a nomadic lifestyle. There are about 25,000 Travellers

in Ireland, and they often face prejudice and discrimination. Recognized as a distinct ethnic group in 2017, Travellers have advocacy organizations such as [Pavee Point](#) and [Irish Traveller Movement](#).

Customs

Greeting People - Irish people are known for their friendliness. Handshakes are common for first meetings, while friends may hug or kiss on the cheek. Making eye contact shows trust and interest.

Time Keeping - Punctuality is often relaxed in Ireland in casual settings. An arrangement for 8pm might mean arriving around 8:15pm or later.

Thanking People - Saying "thank you" is common, such as thanking bus drivers when exiting the bus.

Gaeltacht

What is the Gaeltacht?

Gaeltacht is the Irish word meaning 'Irish speaking region'. The Gaeltacht consists of areas in Ireland where Irish is still spoken as the community language. The Gaeltacht covers large parts of counties Donegal, Mayo, Galway and Kerry and also parts of counties Cork, Meath and Waterford.

Where can I get more information about the Gaeltacht?

Údarás na Gaeltachta was established in 1980 and is the regional authority responsible for the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht: <http://www.udaras.ie>.

A Brief History of Ireland

Early Irish History

Ireland was first settled around 10,000 years ago, with the first farmers arriving around 4000 BC, marking the New Stone Age. Around 300 BC, the Celts arrived, significantly influencing Irish culture and language. The current official language, Irish (Gaeilge), stems from the Celtic language.

Early Christian Ireland

Christianity began to spread in Ireland in the early 5th century with the arrival of Saint Patrick and other missionaries. By 600 AD, it had replaced the indigenous pagan religion. Irish Christian scholars excelled in Latin, Greek, and Christian theology, and created treasures like the Book of Kells and many carved stone crosses.

The Viking and Norman Eras

Vikings from Scandinavia invaded Ireland at the end of the 8th century, establishing Dublin in 988. Their influence faded after the Battle of Clontarf in 1014. In the 12th century, the Normans arrived, building walled towns, castles, and churches, and enhancing agriculture and commerce.

Plantation, Penal Laws, and Union with Great Britain

From the mid-16th to the late 17th century, English and Scottish Protestant settlers arrived due to an official policy of 'plantation'. This led to sectarian conflict, harsh Penal laws, and the Act of Union in 1801, uniting Ireland politically with Britain. Daniel O'Connell's efforts led to Catholic Emancipation in 1829.

The Great Famine and Modern History

The Great Famine of 1845-1851 led to the death or emigration of two million people. Home Rule efforts by Charles Stewart Parnell in the late 19th century set the stage for the Easter Rising in 1916, followed by the War of Independence and Civil War. The 1937 Constitution established the Republic of Ireland. Joining the European Union in 1973 and economic reforms in the 1980s led to the Celtic Tiger period in the 1990s, transforming Ireland into a country of immigration.