



Coming to

IRELAND

Think Ahead

Why Ireland?

The economy of the Republic of Ireland is a highly developed knowledge economy, focused on services in high-tech, life sciences, financial services and agribusiness, including agrifood. Ireland is an open economy (5th on the Index of Economic Freedom) and ranks first for high-value foreign direct investment (FDI) flows in the global GDP per capita IMF tables, Ireland ranks 4th of 186.

13.5% Growth in
GDP in 2022

Ireland is the seventh largest provider of wholesale financial services in Europe

The financial services sector employs approximately 35,000 people and contributes two billion euro in taxes annually to the economy. Ireland is the seventh largest provider of wholesale financial services in Europe. A number of these firms are located at the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in Dublin.

1,500

Accounting jobs vacancies on [irishjobs.ie](https://www.irishjobs.ie) (October 2022)

2,100

Accounting jobs on ACCA careers with the key word 'Ireland' (October 2022)

€57,000

Is the average pay for accountants in Ireland (Glassdoor August 2022)

Life in Ireland

Ireland is stunningly beautiful, with fabulous coastline and mountains and a rich heritage. The country is not called the Emerald Isle for nothing and plentiful rainfall and clean air ensures the land keeps well-watered and green.



Music and dance have always been part of Irish culture. Going for a 'pint' in the local pub is something of a national hobby. Many pubs offer live music and comedy, and all are smoke-free. Tourist information centres have a generous amount of information on the sites to visit with details of the culture, theatre, music, art and exhibitions.

English is an official language of Ireland, but you will hear almost every major world language on a night out. Ireland is also notable for its transformation from a country holding overwhelmingly conservative attitudes to one holding overwhelmingly liberal views in the space of a generation. Attitudes in Ireland towards LGBTQ+ people are among the most liberal in the world.

Dublin, the capital city, is a beautiful, cultural city full of character. Dublin is a warm and welcoming city, known for multiculturalism, friendliness of its people and famous for its craic ('crack'). Craic is a mixture of repartee, humour and intelligence. Dublin is a mixture of faded grandeur and modern buildings. Dublin is famous for its night life but is also a very green city hosting many large public

parks and open spaces. Wherever you're standing in Dublin, you're never any further than twenty minutes away from nature, whether it's a beach, the mountains or a park.

Cork and Galway are other Irish cities full of character. Both are on the Wild Atlantic Way and offer clean air and lots of opportunity for outdoor living. Galway is a centre for MedTech with a number of multinational companies having large operations located on the outskirts of the city. Smaller towns such as Letterkenny boast incredible scenery and a less hectic pace of life.

With the influx of international company headquarters into Ireland, as well as an attractive quality of life, families and international travellers from all corners of the world are settling here. With the mix of nationalities comes a hugely varied restaurant cuisine, from authentic Asian food to French bistros, to casual Sushi take-out. With very affordable community rated medical care and high quality free public education, Ireland is an ideal place to start a family.

Cost of living for a student

Precisely how much you will need will vary depending on the type of accommodation you choose and, of course, on your own personal lifestyle. But, on average, a student will spend somewhere between €10,000 and €16,000 per year (Education in Ireland website, 2022).

More about living in Ireland is available at this [link](#).



Coming to Ireland to complete your education and get work experience Irish work and study visa options explained

THE OPTIONS

1. ACCA members: two year renewable critical skills work visa

2. ACCA members and affiliates: one year full time masters with two years stay back work visa

3. ACCA affiliates: up to four year work visa to work in accounting roles

4. ACCA students: up to four year full time accounting work and part time study visa

5. ACCA students: up to four year part time work and full-time study visa

Summary of the requirements for Non-EEA (excluding UK and Ukraine) ACCA members, affiliates and students to come to Ireland:

Option	Status	Accounting job offer	Non-accounting work	Length of stay	Can convert to:
1.	Member	Required	n/a	Two years extendable	Citizenship after five years or Green card
2.	Member or affiliate	Third year required, year one and two allowed	First two years	Three years (two years if not doing accounting type work)	Option 1
3.	Affiliate	Max four years	n/a	Four years	Option 2 or 1
4.	Registered student with any degree	Max four years	n/a	Four years	Option 3 or 2 or 1
5.	Registered student	n/a	20 hours max	Four years	Option 4 or 3 or 2

EEA, UK and Ukrainian students, affiliates and members have visa free travel and a right to work in Ireland with no preclearance required. EEA, UK and Ukrainians just have to register for taxation purposes at www.revenue.ie for a Personal Public Service (PPS) number prior to starting work.



OPTION 1

Two year renewable critical skills work visa for ACCA members

This visa is open to ACCA members wishing to come and work in an accounting role in Ireland. See [this link](#) for more details. The process is to obtain a job offer from an Irish employer in one of the areas listed as having a skill shortage. The [skills shortage list](#) is updated occasionally and currently includes members of ACCA with 'compliance, regulation, solvency or financial management or related and relevant specialist skills, qualifications or experience' (Category 2421).

The critical skills visa is issued for two years and is renewable and after five years can under certain circumstances be upgraded to full Irish citizenship or can be converted to a stamp 4 visa or 'green card'. The full application process usually takes a minimum of 12 weeks (Oct 2022) and is a two-step process. Applications from a conflict zone usually take two additional weeks.

Step one

An Irish employer makes a job offer to a non-EEA ACCA member. Once the job offer is accepted, the Irish employer makes an [application for the permit](#) on the prospective employee's behalf. The application processing can take six weeks and once the job offer is one that is listed on the critical skills shortage list and the paperwork is all correct, a work visa will then be issued.

Step two

Once the work visa has been issued, the employee applies for a [residency permit](#). The permit will be applied for as an individual but also allows for a spouse and children to accompany the applicant and come to Ireland as well. This process can take up to six weeks but is generally quicker when applied for from an Embassy as opposed to a Consulate. Spouses accompanying the critical skills visa applicant, can in certain circumstances apply for a permit to allow them work while in Ireland. Residency visas from a conflict zone will take on average two weeks longer to obtain.

A critical skills visa is for a fixed two year contract, it is very difficult for an employee to change employment during that period. Typically, the critical skills visa is rolled over with the same employer or with a different employer or converted to a 'green card' until eventually the employee decides to return to their home country or apply for Irish citizenship or continue to work under the green card status.

**OPTION 2**

One year masters with up to two years stay back work visa for ACCA members or affiliates

There are a number of one year full time Masters programmes available in Ireland which offer the option of working part time during term time (up to 20 hours) and working full time outside of term time and working for up to two years in a relevant employment after the course is completed. See [this link for more information](#). At the end of the two year stay back period, an ACCA member could seek to change to a critical skills visa, Option 1 on this information sheet. An ACCA affiliate should be able to obtain almost enough work experience to convert to full membership in the term time working and during the two years stay back period. Most of the programmes come with integrated work placement. The alumni from these courses report that the teaching and work placement allowed them to greatly improve their business English and localise their experience. Alumni report that they can find employment after the courses and were then more easily able to convert to a critical skills visa after their two year stay back visa expired.

Although all courses entry requirements differ slightly, the basic requirements to be accepted onto one of these courses are:

- Be an ACCA member or affiliate
- Proof of English Proficiency
- Proof of funds **or a bond**
- Obtain a student visa (see below)

Colleges and Universities where the masters programme is available:

- **Griffith College Masters in Accounting and Finance**
- **ATU Masters in Governance & IT in Financial Services**
- **ATU Master of Arts Accounting**
- **ICD Postgrad Diploma in Accounting and Financial Services**
- **ICD Masters in Accounting & Finance.**

Tuition fees range from **€6,000** to **€14,000** depending on the college and the course chosen and most include a period of paid work placement. Other colleges also offer suitable masters programmes.

OPTION 3

ACCA affiliates: up to four year work visa to work in accounting roles

This visa is open to ACCA affiliates wishing to come and train in an accounting role towards getting their ACCA experience. The requirement is the same as a student seeking to complete their exams part time and working full time (a **stamp 1A** visa). The main requirement is to obtain an employment offer from an Irish employer in a trainee accountant role. The application process is:

- Get an exam status report from ACCA (from accaglobal.com and self-serve from myacca) showing that you have passed all your ACCA exams
- Have a trainee accountant employment contract from a Irish employer
- Proof of funds **or a bond**
- Have a letter of good standing from ACCA (self-serve on myacca)

- Obtain preclearance for your visa if you are a national of a preclearance required country
- Register for a Stamp 1A visa on arrival if you are a national of a non-preclearance required country

This visa can be upgraded to a critical skills visa once the affiliate is accepted for full ACCA membership. Subject to certain conditions, the critical skills visa can then be upgraded to Irish citizenship after five years.



OPTION 4

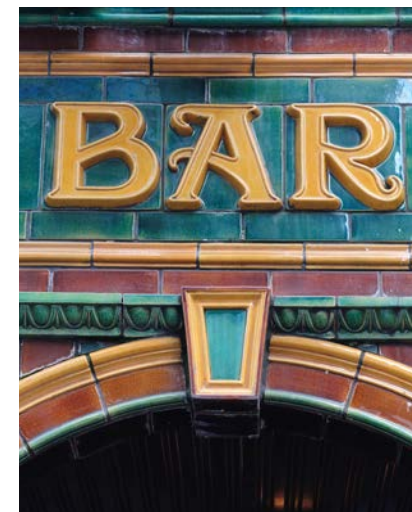
ACCA students: up to four year full time accounting work and part time study visa

This visa is open to people who have registered as ACCA students in their own country and have a trainee accounting position with at least a one year contract and are graduates.

- Get an exam status report from ACCA (from accaglobal.com and self serve from myacca) showing you have achieved the minimum entry to ACCA studies (any recognised degree will qualify for minimum entry requirements for ACCA)
- Have a trainee accountant job offer from a Irish employer for a minimum of one year contract
- Have signed up for part time ACCA tuition
- Proof of funds **or a bond**

- Have a letter of good standing from ACCA (self-serve on myacca)
- Obtain preclearance for your visa if you are a national of a preclearance required country
- Register for a student working visa on arrival if you are a national of a non-preclearance required country
- Progress in the exams, passing at least two exams a year

The full list of approved ACCA tuition providers in Ireland is [here](#).



OPTION 5**ACCA students: up to four year part time work and full-time study visa**

This visa is open to people who have registered as an ACCA student.

- Get an exam status report from ACCA (from accaglobal.com and self serve from myacca) showing you have achieved the minimum entry to ACCA studies (any recognised degree will qualify for minimum entry requirements for ACCA)
- Have signed up for full time ACCA tuition
- Proof of funds **or a bond**
- Have a letter of good standing from ACCA (self-serve on myacca)
- Obtain preclearance for your visa if you are a national of a preclearance required country
- Register for a student visa on arrival if you are a national of a non-preclearance required country

The full list of approved ACCA tuition providers in Ireland is [here](#).

Dublin Business School and **Donegal Education and Training Board (ETB)** offer full time ACCA education. Other providers may also offer full time education as well. However, it is also possible to do a degree in Ireland that also qualifies for a study visa and that degree can give up to nine ACCA exemptions. The student can transfer from the degree to the final level of ACCA either under scheme 5 (full time study and part time work) or 4 (part time study and full time relevant (accounting) work).



Obtaining a student visa (option 2, 3, 4 and 5)

How to apply for long term study visa. Nationals of some countries need a visa prior to arrival and nationals of other countries do not, see **Visa-and-Non-Visa-Required-Countries**. Both have the same basic requirements, but non-visa waiver countries need to apply for preclearance to travel in advance and non-visa required countries do not need to apply for their visa in advance but need to have the various documents with them on arrival. Locations on the list that do not require preclearance include Hong Kong (SAR), Australia and New Zealand, USA, Malaysia, Ukraine and of course all EEA countries are on this list. Locations on the list that require preclearance includes most African countries, Pakistan, People's Republic of China, India, and Afghanistan.

Students, whether they apply in advance for preclearance or on arrival, will need:

- Proof of English language proficiency (Duolingo or similar) and
- Have proof of having registered and paid for their chosen course:
 - > for the masters programme that will be supplied by the college who have their own acceptance criteria.
 - > For ACCA students that will require:
 - An exam status letter from ACCA saying you are a current student (self-serve from my ACCA on accaglobal.com) and
 - confirmation from an **Irish approved learning partner** that you have enrolled in ACCA professional exams tuition
 - Full details of the accounting training schemes are [here](#).
- Have proof of funds (**or a bond**) to show that they can support themselves during the course of study. Note that some bond companies will refuse to provide the bond to certain nationalities where their country is subject to sanctions or other financial services restrictions. ACCA does not have a solution for the unbanked or those living in a country with a non-functioning banking system or in a country subject to financial sanctions.



Working while studying

On the full-time masters programmes, students can work 20 hours per week during term time and work full time outside of term time (eg midterm break and vacation periods). They also qualify for an up to two year (**stamp 1G visa**) full time work visa after their studies if they secure a relevant to their study job (ie an accounting job).

ACCA students can work up to 20 hours in any employment while studying full time. Students that obtain a relevant employment (accounting type work) can change to a **stamp 1A visa** and study ACCA part time and engage in full-time work. While on the 20 hours work regime, the immigration authorities police this quite strictly and will cancel a visa for people who breach the rules or who for example attend less than 85% of their classes or fail to progress in their exams.

CASE STUDY: Fan Ye

Fan completed an undergraduate degree in China and then came to Ireland to do a master's degree in Maynooth University.

The master's student visa allowed Fan to work part time during term time and full time outside of term time and to stay and work for a 'stay back' period after the master's degree was completed. After the course Fan secured a trainee accountant job with a local accounting practice in Dublin and that allowed him convert to a student visa. The student visa allowed him work full time and study part time.

Fan had exemptions from three ACCA exams (F1-F3) based on his previous study and he worked full-time and studied in the evenings.

For the remaining 10 ACCA papers, he completed them over the next three year period, sitting and taking exam tuition with Professional Accountancy Trainers (PAT).

At the end of the three years training period and after successfully completing his exams, Fan became a member of ACCA. Fan then used his full membership status to change his visa status to the critical skills visa and worked for two years at the end of which he was eligible to apply for a Irish Stamp 4 visa (AKA 'green card').

Fan choose a green card and can now stay in Ireland indefinitely and is free to work in any employment here. In three more years, he could apply for Irish nationalisation, but Fan plans to retain his Chinese passport.

Fan has advice for anybody considering coming to Ireland. 'Ireland is a very expensive place to live' he advises with most people needing €1,000 a month spending money on top of their rent. He also advises that getting a job is difficult and requires hard work and getting out and meeting employers. Finally, Fan advises that the ACCA exams are difficult, and you need to pass two exams a year to retain your student visa, so students need to balance work, study and a social life carefully.

CASE STUDY: Jalal Nezami

Jalal finished college in 2013 with a 96 percent average grade and got a scholarship to do ACCA.

Jalal notes that 'ACCA was my dream professional qualification'. Jalal started his ACCA journey in 2015 but due to security and other challenges in Afghanistan at the time, he had to take a number of breaks in his study. During this time he moved to India as a refugee with his family and there he took English classes and continued with ACCA. After completing his exams, he returned to his homeland and worked as an ACCA lecturer and Finance Manager in Afghanistan. From Afghanistan he applied for a job in Ireland. He was successful and accepted a job with a fund accounting company based in the Southwest of Ireland. He now works as Senior Officer Fund Accountant with Alter Domus in Cork city.

Jalal advises that 'for ACCA members and students coming to Ireland, you need to apply for a visa in person and there are some countries where there is neither a consulate nor an Irish Embassy to make that application. In these cases, you need to apply in a neighbouring country. In my case I needed to go to either Iran, Pakistan or the UAE. I choose Pakistan and waited 2 months before getting my visa'. Applications for a visa sent to an Embassy are processed more quickly than applications to a Consulate. Jalal also advises that 'Getting a job in Ireland was not very

easy, first you need to apply for the jobs through different company job application portals, then pass the interview and then get an offer'. The next step would be to get your work permit which will be applied for by your employer and then you apply for your residency permit for you, and if required, your spouse and children.

The biggest challenge in Ireland is finding permanent accommodation as Ireland has a housing shortage. Accommodation is quite expensive, but on a qualified accountants wage, it is possible to find somewhere you can afford to live.

Another piece of advice from Jalal is to apply for your PPS (Social Insurance and tax) number as soon as you come to Ireland. If you delay in applying for this you will end up on 40% emergency tax rate. He also recommends that you open your bank account immediately because a lot of Irish payments are only accepted contactless or require online payments. Finally, he recommends that as soon as you find your permanent house, immediately complete the application for your Residence Permit before you are too late.

Jalal noted that Ireland has very clean air and it is very green and he also found the people to be very cooperative and kind.

Disclaimer

While every effort has been made to ensure that this summary is correct, the visa schemes change occasionally, and colleges change their courses offering. This document is no substitute for reading the most up to date requirements on the Government immigration website and contacting the colleges mentioned directly. You are advised to check the latest up to date visa situation prior to making any relocation plans and prior to travelling. We would also strongly advise that matters such as temporary accommodation on arrival and longer-term accommodation be attended to carefully as accommodation in Ireland can be difficult and expensive to secure.

This information sheet is for guidance purposes only. It is not a substitute for obtaining specific immigration advice. While every care has been taken with the preparation of the information sheet, neither ACCA nor its employees accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned by reliance on the contents.

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