

GUIDE NO. 1

Guide For Migrant Jobseekers in Ireland



THE INTEGRATION CENTRE
Connecting Communities • Advancing Integration

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Disclaimer

The information contained here does not constitute legal advice. While every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this publication is accurate, The Integration Centre does not accept legal responsibility for any errors, howsoever occurred.

Introduction

This is a guidance document for immigrant jobseekers about the recruitment process in Ireland. It will help users to present themselves successfully in the labour market. The guide shows how to avoid mistakes in the job seeking process and maximise your chances of securing employment.

Some recruitment processes can be less formal than others and therefore some of the information in the booklet may not be relevant for all applications. Also, different employers may apply slightly different criteria even in the same sector depending on their needs. They are free to do this as long as they treat each candidate the same way and they comply with the regulations of professions and employment permit requirements. This is why it is crucial to learn as much as possible about what an employer expects from a candidate.

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Part 1: Before Applying For Jobs

When looking for work, it is important to learn about the occupation you wish to enter, and to know where you can find out about vacancies. Similarly, you should understand job descriptions and what criteria you have to meet to get a position. You also have to find out how your (foreign) qualifications and skills fit in an Irish context and what positions you can apply for with your qualification.

The following section looks at:

- * Where to find job advertisements and learn about different occupations
- * Vocabulary in the job market and the workplace
- * Recognising personal skills and strengths
- * Useful contacts
- * Involvement in activities outside of work

Where to find work

- ▶ The **National Entitlements and Employment service** (formerly FÁS), advertises many vacancies in its offices nationwide and online www.fas.ie
- ▶ **Private online recruitment sites** such as www.jobs.ie, www.recruitireland.com, www.irishjobs.ie and www.monster.ie. These sites also allow you to upload your CV
- ▶ If you are looking for work in the community and not for profit sector, take a look at www.activelink.ie for vacancies
- ▶ **National newspapers:** Irish Independent (Thursday), Irish Examiner (Friday), Irish Times (Friday) and Sunday Business Post (Sunday).
- ▶ **Local papers**
- ▶ **Private recruitment agencies** nationwide
- ▶ Many organisations have a recruitment section on their website and have application forms available online
- ▶ **Graduate fairs** in colleges and other public venues provide a great opportunity for professional graduates to receive career advice. Bigger colleges in general have a designated

web portal for career advice. Keep an eye out for careers fairs like the Gradireland fair and Choices Expo. These fairs showcase job and/or study opportunities, and often include seminars delivered by expert speakers on a range of useful topics

▶ Jobs in shops, workshops, restaurants and hotels may get advertised in **shop windows** and notice boards.

▶ **Word of mouth** is a very important way of learning about opportunities. Many vacancies in Ireland are not advertised but are promoted through local networks, so you should inquire in your area.

▶ **Social networks sites** e.g. LinkedIn or Twitter. Many jobs are advertised on Twitter that aren't advertised elsewhere or are only advertised on individual company websites. Search for the #jobfairly hashtag to view recent tweets about job vacancies in Ireland.

Learning about the occupation

You should learn about the occupation that you are interested in to increase your job prospects. There are several websites that describe the different types of careers in Ireland and give information about the entry requirements for the various jobs such as www.careersportal.ie and www.careerdirections.ie

Graduate Ireland (www.gradireland.com) also offers information for graduate jobseekers about how to enter careers in different sectors including job-seeking techniques and recruitment practices.

You can find information about trends in the labour market and possible skill shortages in occupations at www.skillsireland.ie and www.careersportal.ie.

You should enquire in your local area about the occupation you are interested in. Citizen's Information Centres, colleges, business directories and even members of your local community may offer you information or direct you to more useful sources and contacts.

Self-Presentation in the Irish Labour Market

The Language of Job Descriptions	
Job description describes the main requirements for the job. This can be short but more and more organisations use a detailed description of the job.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasks and responsibilities • Position information – job title, supervisor, department • Selection criteria for the post
Tasks (duties) a set of activities for the role	e.g.: writing letters, preparing accounts of the business
Role is a list of responsibilities. A job can involve several roles	e.g.: bookkeeping (preparing accounts, ordering) administration (writing letters, updating the customers' database)
Supervisor is the person that the future employee has to report to. This gives an idea how the job fits into the organisation	e.g.: you have to report to the manager of the company
Person specification/criteria	What employers expect from the candidate
Competencies are criteria that many employers (but not all) use to measure candidates in the application and interview process. They describe the concrete knowledge, skills and personal strengths that are considered necessary for a position	<p>Knowledge ‘what you need to know’ e.g. Diploma in Business Administration, IELTS</p> <p>Skills ‘what you need to be able to do’ e.g. preparing invoices, updating database of clients.</p> <p>Personal strengths ‘your characteristics’ e.g. ‘attention to detail, outgoing personality’</p>
Experience/proven track record: this means that you have worked in a similar role for some time. You may not see a list of competencies but they always ask for experience	Basically you have to show that you have used the required knowledge skills at work or maybe as a volunteer. e.g. experience in sales; experience in product development etc...
Essential criteria it is critical to match the criteria that are mentioned here	You should clearly demonstrate those competencies in your application.
Desirable criteria are beneficial to meet. You can show that you have the potential of developing them quickly in the new role	You can illustrate that you have done something comparable e.g. as a receptionist you dealt with customers and developed customer service skills.

Qualifications and membership of professional bodies

❖ In skilled positions you have to present your qualifications to show that you have the required knowledge for the position. Foreign qualifications have to be officially translated into English

❖ The National Qualification Authority of Ireland (www.nqai.ie) provides information on both Irish and foreign educational and qualification systems

❖ Both individuals (the jobseeker) and organisations (the employer) can apply for a statement that will show what the most similar Irish qualification is to the foreign qualification in question. Please note that the statement is an advisory document and not a legal one. You can appeal the decision if you wish to do so

❖ Applicants have to submit the official translation of their qualification and other documents that give details of their studies (transcript and syllabus)

❖ A number of professions are regulated such as accountancy, law, architecture, engineering, social work, medicine and nursing. You have to be registered with the relevant professional body to be able to practice the profession in Ireland. Usually you have to demonstrate professional practice before getting a licence by the professional body. Foreign trained applicants may have to take an exam or go through an adaptation period in Ireland. At www.nqai.ie you can also find links to contact details of regulated professions and be directed to the relevant body

Skills

Skills are gained through a variety of activities: work, volunteering, hobbies, education/training and social activities. You should identify the skills that are relevant for the job to which you are applying to (e.g. good organizational skills, IT skills) and think about experiences in which you have demonstrated or developed these skills.

There are general skills that are not limited to particular jobs (transferable skills). So if you learn these skills in one situation you can also use them in another activity. This can also be useful when you have to prove how you meet the desirable criteria of the job description. Some skills are so important for employers they are included in the job description (core skills).

Soft skills can be developed without specific training/study but you can improve them through training (e.g. supervisory skills course). Many of these have strong links to your personality (social skills); it is hard to separate some soft skills from general behaviour e.g. attention to detail, outgoing and friendly personality, flexibility.

Hard skills are skills that you learn mainly through training/study. Further training may be necessary.

- ▶ Full B driving licence for cars (in Ireland this means you have passed the practical exam)
- ▶ Occupational First Aid (certificate in Ireland)
- ▶ Health and Safety in Construction ('Safe pass')
- ▶ Touch typing

Here is a list of soft skills:

Soft Skill	Example
Communication skills is the ability to give information (writing, speaking) and receive and interpret information (reading, listening) effectively.	e.g. writing/reading reports, letters, newsletters, memos, leaflets; dealing with complaints in person or by phone, teaching, speaking in public
Interpersonal skills generally mean you can demonstrate that you build good relationships with different types of people.	e.g. working with different ages, social groups (students, workers, managers, ethnic groups)
Teamwork means being a useful member of the team who co-operates with colleagues and contributes to the success of the team.	e.g. working as a chef as part of the kitchen staff, working as a receptionist as part of the front line staff
Leadership is the ability to motivate and mobilise people and necessary resources and take important decisions for a group.	e.g. supervise a shift in the medical device factory
Customer care means understanding customer needs and helping with their problems.	e.g. dealing with clients in a shop and ordering a specific product that was not available in the shop
Ongoing development can be described as willingness to learn and develop new skills.	e.g. signing up for training at the workplace: doing training courses in colleges or at home (e-learning)
Problem solving/Taking Initiative is the ability to act independently by thinking through problems, recognise the cause and suggest or take useful measures	e.g. sorting out a problem in the database of products and making a new list
Organising/planning can be shown by organising several tasks at the same time to meet deadlines/ goals. You manage your resources and time well (time management).	e.g. ordering all the products for a new shop whilst also advertising the opening.
Basic computer skills are important for many positions especially if you have to do administrative tasks. It is useful to have an ECDL certificate.	e.g. you are comfortable with Microsoft Office applications such as Word, Excel and Powerpoint, managing e-mails and browsing the internet.
Language skills can be a requirement in some jobs and an advantage in others. You may be asked for a language certificate.	e.g. demonstrate the level to which you can speak the language and communicate in writing.
Numeracy is working with numbers/data and being able to make calculations and an analysis.	e.g. using measurements in construction/making crafts, budgeting for an organisation or working as a cashier
Technical skills are needed when installing, operating and repairing machines/equipment.	e.g. fixing the car at home or operating construction related tools

Self-Presentation in the Irish Labour Market

English language is the main language used in Ireland and it is one of the most important skills for jobseekers. You should be comfortable with communicating in English when you search for jobs. You may need a lower level of English for manual jobs and more advanced for higher positions.

Please note that a number of professions in Ireland require non-English speakers to present an **official language exam** certificate such as IELTS. You can find out more about this exam at www.ielts.org

Even when it is not required, you can benefit from holding a language exam certificate. To get general information on exams and test your level, visit www.examenglish.com.

Personal information on the internet

These days it is common for people (particularly younger generations) to be members of social networks and upload pictures/videos to the internet. Remember that an increasing number of employers now search the internet/social networks for information about you before calling you for interview or offering you a job, so you should be very careful about what you share with the public in case the material may convey some negative characteristics about you.

Type your name into Google to see what comes up; delete any inappropriate tweets, comments and photographs and apply strong privacy settings to your Facebook profile.

Creating a professional LinkedIn profile is useful for middle and high skill level positions.

Protection against discrimination

Jobseekers should be treated the same way irrespective of their personal circumstances and cannot be discriminated against. Legislation sets out specific aspects of personal life which are protected. In Ireland discrimination is prohibited on the following nine grounds:

Gender, Marital status, Family status, Sexual orientation, Religion, Age, Disability, Member of the Traveller community and Race. Race includes a particular race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin.

Employers are allowed to treat candidates differently to meet a genuine (real) and determining occupational requirement. However, the objective of the different treatment has to be legitimate (legal and justifiable) and the requirement proportionate. One explicit example would be public organizations such as Garda (Police) that requires citizenship/residency by candidates.

Similarly, actions taken in accordance with the employment permit regulations are also

permitted. For more information download ‘The Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2007’ from www.equality.ie or contact the Equality Authority at LoCall 1890 245 545.

Employment permit requirements

The following groups of people do not need an employment permit:

- ① EU/EEA¹/Swiss citizens
- ② Non-EU/EEA/Swiss citizens with a Stamp 4 in their passport
- ③ Non-EU/EEA/Swiss full-time students in an accredited school and trainees in accountancy firms (See Appendix for more details).

Third level graduates with at least a primary degree can stay in Ireland for six months or one year (if holding a Master Degree or above) following their graduation to find a job.

All other groups of people (apart from asylum seekers) may apply for permission to work at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

A Work Permit can be applied for with lower skilled jobs between the salary level of € 30,000 and 59,999 and very exceptionally below the salary level of € 30,000. There is a long list of occupations that are not eligible for Work Permit.

A Green Card is issued for a specific list of skilled occupations at the salary level of € 30,000 and 59,999 and for above € 60,000 any occupation (if it is not contrary to public interest).

A Spousal/Dependant Permit is issued to family members of Work permit/Green card holders such as wives, husbands and dependent children. Family members arriving after 1st July 2009 need to secure a work permit in their own right.

There are special schemes in place to facilitate the hosting of Non-EEA researchers and the transfer of senior management, key personnel and trainees of a multinational co-operation.

Both employee and employer can apply for a permit but a job offer is required in both cases. For more information, visit www.enterprise.gov.ie or call 01-4175333. LoCall: 1890 201 616. You can also contact the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland at www.mrci.ie or 01-889 7570.

1. EEA includes Liechtenstein, Norway and EU Member States

Support organisations

National Employment and Entitlements Service (formerly FÁS)

What: Currently FÁS, employment support service is integrated into the National Employment and Entitlements Service. The service integrates the provision of employment services and benefit payment services under the remit of the Department of Social Protection. In this new approach staff works with clients to prepare, execute and monitor a personal progression plan. FÁS offices continue to be used nationwide. FÁS still offers training courses but in the future these will be run by the Vocational Educational Committees as part of the new organisation, SOLAS. See www.fas.ie and www.qualifax.ie.

Who: EU/EEA citizens and non-EU/EEA citizens with Residency Stamp 4 can avail of all services offered by the Employment Service. In general all other groups can only avail of the self-service job-searching facilities.

Local Employment Service

What: This a local service aimed at supporting the long-term unemployed in entering the labour market. They offer one-to-one guidance and group sessions, and information on training, educational opportunities, and available financial support.

Who: EU/EEA citizens and non-EU/EEA citizens with Residency Stamp 4 can use the facilities of LES.

The EPIC Programme in Business in the Community Ireland

What: A free service supporting migrants in securing employment, training and education. It provides a 6 week classroom based training on Pre-Employment topics. Career guidance and individual assistance applying for jobs and training are provided. To find out more visit www.bitc.ie/employment-programmes/employment-for-immigrants/ or call 01-8743840

What: A 6 week pre-employment course covering job specific vocabulary, CV and Cover Letter preparation, Interview Skills training, talks on Living and Working in Ireland, and IT training, as well as individual support for all course participants.

Who: EU citizens and non EU/EEA citizens with Stamp 4, based in Dublin or the Greater Dublin Area with intermediate to high level of both written and spoken English.

Where: EPIC is based in Dublin City, 30-31 Lower O'Connell Street, Dublin 1.

Centres for the Unemployed/Resource Centres

What: They sponsor job clubs and provide information on welfare entitlements in regard to work. The job clubs provide training on job seeking techniques and health and safety issues. You can visit your local office or check www.fas.ie or www.inou.ie for details of your local centre.

Who: In general all job seeker immigrants can use these facilities if they are entitled to work.

Migrant organisations

What: Migrant organisations offer information and support for jobseekers in general and some operate job clubs as well.

There are many organisations in Ireland. You should enquire in your local area. You can also find an extensive list of organisations/groups at www.integration.ie

Who: In general all jobseeking immigrants can contact migrant organisations. However, you should find out if they provide specific support to some groups (e.g. refugees or migrant workers).

General information on support services

The website of the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed lists different type of general support services for jobseekers. You can find the contact details of the services near you on a map. See www.inou.ie.

Part 2: Selection Process

This section provides information about;

- ❖ How to apply for jobs - writing CVs, cover letters and filling out application forms
- ❖ What additional documents you may need for your application
- ❖ How organisations may select a group of candidates for interview including specific tests in use

Curriculum Vitae

For most job applications you have to submit a CV. A CV is the summary of your personal data, work experience, education, skills and interest.

Personal data	Your personal data should include your postal and e-mail address, phone number and full name. You can include your date of birth but this is not a requirement. In Ireland you don't have to write about your family background and photos are not commonly used.
Work experience	You should state the name of the organisation, your job title and the main duties/responsibilities. You should focus on what is relevant to the position that you are applying for Do not leave out experience from your country of origin Internships and Work Placements can also be mentioned here if they are relevant to the position. Regular self-employment activities can be listed as well.
Education	You should include the various qualifications you got in third level education, further education, and secondary education. Try to pick the three or four pieces of education that are most relevant to the position you are applying for, the rest can be summarised below. Mention the title of your qualification, the place where you got it and the dates. You may list the main subjects of your study. Check APPENDIX 1 or www.nqai.ie for the definitions of qualifications in Ireland to find the best way to explain your foreign qualifications e.g. similar/equivalent to a Bachelor Degree. Translate all the details into English e.g. translate Universidad de Barcelona to "University of Barcelona".
Training and skills	Training and skills is where you can mention any additional training; short courses that you have taken. i.e. typing – able to type 50 wpm, Computer skills- Proficient in PowerPoint, Word and Excel, Languages- Fluent in English, French and Spanish. Sage line 50, CPR.

Hobbies and interests	You can demonstrate here that you are an active ('rounded') person and that you do activities that would be relevant for the position. Pick hobbies that are interesting and show positive aspect of your personality and skills. Only mention recent activities and make sure you give concrete examples e.g. don't say 'I like music and computers' but give an example such as 'singing in choir; editing blogs'. You can include relevant achievements. You can list recent membership in a club, society or organisation or fundraising activities or charity events you have been involved in. It is good to list a hobby that involves teamwork and another one that you do on your own.
Achievement	An achievement is a task that you have successfully completed, or an activity that stands out - especially if it is not part of your everyday tasks at work. You can list achievements within the work/study/interest sections or have a separate section. You can include prizes, awards, medals, membership, publications, media coverage or special events you organised. It should be a concrete example (with figures if possible) e.g. organised a forum for local business where 20 businesses came together. The event was covered in the local newspaper
Personal profile	This is optional. A personal profile is a two line summary of your most relevant education, experience, skills and personal qualities. It should be on the top of your CV.

Layout of CVs

Below are two of the most common types of CV layouts, however there are other ways of formatting your CV.

Chronological CV

Begin with your most recent work experience. You then continue with the one before that and so on. Next list your qualifications in the same chronological order - starting with the most recent one.

Then list your other activities following the qualification section.

It is recommended that the chronological CV include a skills section where you highlight your most relevant skills e.g. IT skills or languages. If you have a gap in your CV for a good reason, make sure you explain it.

Functional CV

Try to combine jobs where you worked in the same role by writing about them under the same heading. This way you do not repeat responsibilities/duties.

You can even divide the document into skill sections and for each section give examples from work/educational/social activities.

This type can hide gaps but does not show progress clearly. You should add a short list of

work history in chronological order.

Customise

Many experts suggest that you should change your CV slightly for each position. Put what is relevant for a specific job at the top of your CV. This catches the attention of the person reading it. Employers usually only spend 15 seconds looking at your C.V. before deciding whether or not you are suitable for the position. No matter what format you use, your CV should focus on the criteria of the job description.

For more information visit www.careerguidance.ie, www.graduateireland.com, www.recruitireland.com, www.cviareland.ie

Tips for your CV

How your CV is presented is just as important as what you include in your CV. You have to draw attention to your CV in a very short period of time. Good presentation can create a good impression and help to get you to an interview. Poor presentation can hide important information from the reader and suggests that you have not taken care in presenting the information properly.

- * **Keep it short!** In general your CV should be no longer than two pages.
- * **Make it easy to read!** Use space and bold letters to highlight the most important elements of your CV. But do not put everything in bold: the best is to put your name, headings and titles in bold. Avoid using italics.
- * **Use fonts that are easy to read** and typed on good quality white paper! Recruiters/ employers reading through a lot of CVs look for something that stands out. Key words will help your CV to get noticed.
- * Ensure that capitalization, punctuation and date formats are consistent!
- * Make sure that all the **information is accurate** in your CV!
- * **Don't write full sentences** and use action words: arranging, organising, making, preparing and designing. You should use bullet points if possible and avoid using abbreviations
- * Emphasise your results/achievements!
- * **Don't leave mistakes!** You should always check for mistakes before sending your CV. Get someone to read it for you.
- * **Make it clear!** If you send the CV electronically, you should also make it clear in the

subject line why you are sending it. You are expected to give your name to the file e.g. 'CVJohnSmith' because employers may delete CV's which are named simply as 'CV's.

* **Make it special!** Try to think about how you can make your CV unique. You may use coloured paper or some simple graphics but make sure it looks professional. Do not use more than two font types. If you have an address it is better to post your CV than e-mail it.

Cover Letter

- A Cover Letter is a one page document which gives details about why you are applying for the job. It is not a copy of your CV and it should be specific to the job you are applying for. Make sure you change it when you apply for different jobs.
- It has to be typed and divided into paragraphs.

Start with your name and address then follow with the name, job title of the person who was mentioned in the job description and location of the business you are sending the CV to.
It should be addressed to a person: You should write 'Dear Mr/Ms or his/her Title e.g. Dear Manager and finish with 'Yours sincerely'. Mrs is no longer common. If you don't know the person: 'Dear Sir/Madam' and finish with 'Yours faithfully'. Do not write 'Lady'
State where you saw the application and what job you are applying for. You may have to include a reference number
Describe the main benefits of employing you for the post: relevant experience, qualifications and skills and how they match the job requirements
Describe why you would like to work with them: how this position fits into your plans. You shouldn't say that you want to work with them because you would like to improve. They don't hire you because they want to help you.
In Ireland employers expect you to say that you are available for interview. Finish up by thanking them for considering your application

The websites mentioned earlier also give you tips on how to write a cover letter: www.careerguidance.ie, www.graduateireland.com and www.recruitireland.com.

Other types of application

Application forms are relatively common with bigger organisations. Application forms are in fact a standard format of CV type questions.

↪ It is important to fill out all sections in block letters or type it if it is an online application. It needs to be easy to read. Get ready to summarise your activities as there is not much space for each question. You can also use the additional information section.

☞ Photocopy the form so that you can practice.

☞ Don't miss the deadline! Check if you can post it online.

☞ You can send a CV and cover letter to a company even when they have not advertised an open position explaining that you are looking for a job and why you think they should consider your application. With small and medium size employers some jobs don't get advertised or the advert is put up only on notice boards or the front window.

☞ It is better to hand in your CV in person, possibly to the manager for jobs in construction, workshops, restaurants and shops. Do not forget that this is your first contact with the employer. A good appearance and serious attitude can open doors for you.

Additional documents

You may need to prepare the following documents:

Copies of qualifications with an official translation (this is called 'certified translation')

ID and documents related to immigrant status

Employment permits in Ireland (Work permit or Green Card or Spousal/Dependant permit)

References in Ireland

What

Jobseekers normally have to give two references to their potential employers to support the information in their application.

Referees are the people who give you a reference. They have to be available to speak about your performance, attitude (e.g. punctuality) and personality (e.g. relationship with colleagues) so that the potential employer can make sure you will 'fit in' with the new organisation.

How

You can give reference letters but employers in Ireland prefer to contact referees before making a job offer. You have to give employers the contact details of your referees so it is important to talk to your referees before going for an interview.

Who

Employers prefer a reference by a manager or someone who supervised your work. They may accept references from a volunteer/traineeship position. Choose a referee with care; someone who will say good things about you.

One character reference from a school, community organisation, or even bank or landlord can be accepted. In some cases you can have one reference from a friend if she/he works in the organisation but in general referees have to have some authority.

Foreign reference letters should be translated and your referees should be able to speak English. It is useful to give e-mail addresses for foreign referees. You should get at least one Irish reference if you can as most Irish employers (especially smaller organisations) feel more comfortable with Irish references.

Other selection methods

Apart from shortlisting people on the basis of their CV and cover letter, there are other types of exercises that are used to select the right candidates. Here are some examples.

◆ **Ability/aptitude test:** this is designed to test candidates' natural abilities and reasoning. Normally you have to do a number of tasks against the clock. You can skip tasks that you find too hard as the test is designed in a way so very few people can actually answer all of the questions.

Your manual skills can be tested to find out how good you are with your hands

Numeric reasoning measures how well you work with numbers

Mechanic reasoning focuses on the operation of machines

Verbal reasoning looks at your understand of written text by asking questions on a text.

◆ **Personality test/inventories:** these written tests are designed to analyse your personality to establish if you would fit into the work culture of the organisation. They study how you react or behave in different situations.

Different organisations look for different personalities but most of them want to hire individuals who comply with rules, work well with their colleagues and can handle pressure.

The best advice for you is to be honest.

This method is common with larger service and manufacturing companies and in the public service. You either have to fill in a form or answer questions on the phone.

Part 3: Interview Stage

In most jobs candidates are interviewed.

This section highlights the most important elements of the interview process such as:

- ↔ **How to prepare for an interview**
- ↔ **What are the most typical questions asked in an interview**
- ↔ **How the candidate should behave in an interview**
- ↔ **Acceptable body language and communication in an interview**

Preparation

It is useful to do the following:

- ▶ **Research the employer** in order to get as much relevant information as possible such as:
 - Profile, services, type of customers
 - History, future plans
 - Achievements, reputation
 - Size, locations
 - Strategic plan, mission statement (bigger organisations).
 - Characteristics of the industry and recent events that took place. The company website and browsing the web is a good place to start. A local business directory, newspapers and people from the locality should also be able to give you useful information.

Read the job description and your CV thoroughly. Think about examples of how you have completed those tasks in an earlier job or activity e.g. if you served customers in a shop this could be relevant to how you would deal with customers over the phone.

Learn your CV off to remember details such as dates. However, you should still take it with you in case you need to check details. You should also be ready to give information about your work experience/study which are not on your CV.

Put yourself in the interviewer's shoes – what would you expect from a candidate?

Prepare a list of questions for the interview that you can ask at the end of it. This is a chance to show interest through your knowledge of the employer. Here are a few examples of topics:

- The company culture
- The future plans of the company and how this position fits into that
- If you would work on your own or as part of a team
- Where you would be located

Check the place, time and how to get there. If you can, you should try to go there a day before to be sure about the length of the trip and location of the office.

Give yourself **extra time for the trip** in case anything happens on the way. Ideally, you should be there about fifteen minutes before the starting time of the interview.

Take a contact number with you in case you have to call the company.

Practice with someone, this will help you to prepare. The Local Employment Service or private recruitment agencies may organise a mock interview for you.

Useful expressions for interviews

Here are a few expressions that you can use when you are talking about your work experience, qualification and skills. You shouldn't get nervous if you can't remember them at the interview. You may be asked questions you did not expect. The most important thing is that what you say is clear.

Criteria Examples	
Work Experience	I have 5...years' experience as a customer service agent/mechanic I was employed, I have worked as a ...chef, mechanic I was in charge of, I was responsible for ...supervising staff I undertook different tasks such as ... writing reports and memos I provided ... technical support to customers
Education	I attended... an ECDL course I graduated as an... engineer I have a degree in...Biology I am a qualified ...electrician I have an ...IELTS certificate
Skills	It helped me to develop OR enhance my... reporting skills I am competent with...computer applications I am good at ...problem solving I am able to...engage people I am skilled in the use of ... a forklift, Autocad

Try to avoid saying:

- I worked for this company since March
- The job was ok
- I don't have any experience
- I am sympathetic with people
- I am interesting

Frequently asked questions at the interview

* **Tell me about yourself!** This question is designed to make you more comfortable at the beginning of the interview. Think about personal aspects and interests that you can relate to duties of the job you are applying for. You can give a background to your career and studies without getting into actual details. It is common to mention a few events from your life e.g. when you relocated to Ireland or changed your career. You can talk about your community life such as volunteering but don't give details about your family.

* **What do you know about the company?** This is where you should list all the information you collected when preparing for the interview.

* **Why did you apply for this job?** Show what attracted you to the job and why it is important for you to work in this area. You can also demonstrate here that you have researched the company.

* **Why should we employ you?** Emphasise your competencies, and demonstrate how they fit the job description and the ethos of the company.

* **Why did you leave your last job?** If there was an issue with your last employer, it is better to describe your experience in positive terms e.g. 'I wanted a new opportunity'. If you can't avoid talking about problems, use the word difficulty or challenge. 3. Interview stage

* **Where do you see yourself in five years time?** You should show that you want to progress at the company or in your career. This is also a chance to tell them that you are not just there for a few months e.g. 'I would like to develop my skills so that I can apply to be a supervisor in the hotel'.

* **How would you deal with a difficult situation in the workplace?**

Think of examples of how you reacted well when you faced difficulty in your work/study/ community and what positive result this had.

* **How would you describe yourself?** This question focuses on your personality. You are expected to illustrate your relevant personal strengths and achievements and not to talk about your personal qualities in general.

* **What are your strengths?** It is good to make a general statement first e.g. 'I have good organisational skills'. But then you should present an example of a situation and/or task you had to face e.g. 'I had to receive delegates for a conference and I also had to answer e-mails about new offers at the hotel'; then the action you took 'I wrote a general e-mail about the new offers at the hotel'; and the result was that 'I had more time to help the conference delegates.'

* **What are your weaknesses?** It is important to show how you got over some difficulties e.g. I had a problem with using computers but I took lessons and now I am more proficient'. Don't say that English is your weakness; this suggests that you will have communication problems at work.

* **Give an example of when you showed initiative!** This is where you have to list any new ideas/solutions that you used or events/projects you organised not only at work but also as a student or in your community.

* **Why do you have a gap in your CV?** Remember, this is the chance to explain that you were not lazy during this time. Tell them why you couldn't work and show also that you were active e.g. domestic duties, travelling, relocating, volunteering or home-study.

* **How do you think the company would benefit from hiring you?** You are expected to show a good understanding of the career in Ireland and possible differences to your own work experience. Use this question to point out how the employer could profit from what you learnt in other jobs you had before in your country of origin e.g. highlight new ideas/solutions that you could bring to the company.

Potentially discriminatory questions in an interview

As mentioned before, you are protected against discrimination when applying for work. Interview questions should focus on your work competencies (qualification, skills and ability to do the job) and on your work experience and NOT on your personal, family or other circumstances (caring responsibilities, pregnancy, family arrangements for childcare). Therefore, the interviewers should ask questions that are relevant to the position and aim at assessing candidates in relation to the agreed criteria.

If you have a disability, you are entitled to request specific support that allows you to participate in the interview on an equal basis with others. Interviewers may ask you questions about your disability which are related to job performance or supports required in the workplace. Please note that an employer is obliged to take appropriate measures to enable a person who has a disability to access employment unless the measures would impose a disproportionate burden on the employer. For more information, visit www.pwdi.ie or contact People with Disabilities in Ireland at 01 8721 744.

You can ask the interviewer to clarify questions that do not seem to be relevant to your ability to carry out the job and might be of a personal nature² It is possible that employers may want to find out about your competencies or availability but ask the wrong question e.g. ask about your children instead of your availability for nights.

Useful websites: www.equality.ie, www.equalitytribunal.ie.

2. Please note the employers are permitted to treat candidates differently to meet special occupational requirements. See protection against discrimination (p. 11.)

General Tips for Interviews

Do's	Dont's
Switch off your mobile phone	Don't be nervous about using the right expression as long as it is clear what you want to say.
Make sure you greet everyone. Even before you enter the room you should behave politely	Do not bluff the answer it is better to admit you don't know. Do not lie about past experience, they will find out.
Speak slowly; especially for non-English speakers as the accent could be unusual for interviewer(s)	Do not answer Yes/No unless necessary.
Listen carefully and ask for clarification if necessary. You can also buy time this way	Do not interrupt the interviewer or talk about something that is not relevant.
Try to think about stories when you talk about past experience. This way you grab attention.	Do not talk about what you can't do but what you can. Highlight your skills and knowledge in your answers.
Show interest in the job without going overboard. You should get a sense of how much passion is needed.	Do not forget that this is also an opportunity for you to find out if this job is for you.
Remember that this is also a difficult situation for the interviewer. A positive attitude can increase your chances.	Do not show your additional materials, such as a portfolio, unless they ask for it.

Body language and customs in an interview

➤ **Dress** neatly!

➤ When you greet everyone, say something neutral e.g. **'It is nice to meet you'**.

They may ask 'how are you?' but this is usually a greeting so you should give a short answer e.g. 'I'm fine, thank you.'

➤ Interviewers may make **small talk** at the beginning e.g. the weather, traffic and media events.

➤ Greet them with a **firm handshake** but don't overplay it. Shake hands in the order you are introduced. It does not matter if they are men or women or if you think someone in the panel looks more important than others. You should address every panel member the same way during the interview.

➤ Make sure you **face the people who ask you** questions and make eye contact with them, nod if necessary. In Ireland this means that you are confident. If you don't look people in the eye they may think you are dishonest.

- **Sit up straight**, hands should be on your knees, do not cross them or cover your mouth. Do not tap your fingers/feet.
- When you talk about your skills and strengths, it is better to **describe how you have developed** them (with examples) than to state you are good at something.
- Irish people tend to be **friendly but also tactful**. This means that you don't have to be too formal in an interview but you should avoid speaking about personal/sensitive issues openly. Of course, you may be interviewed by people of other nationalities.
- If you practice with others you can learn how people from other cultural backgrounds interpret your tone and gestures. As a result you will be aware of situations when people might misunderstand your message and you will be better prepared to understand the communication styles of the various cultures e.g. in some cultures people speak directly while in others many things are left unsaid.

Follow up

- Check with the people who agreed to give you **references, that they are still available** because the employer might call them.
- Employers normally tell candidates **when to expect results** but you can ask them for the date. If they do not inform you by that date you should call them.
- If you did not get the job you should still **ask for feedback**. This is very useful for finding out why you were not selected and you also show interest by asking for feedback. However, do not be discouraged if they do not give feedback; employers simply might not have the time.
- Do not forget that a job search can be a long term process. You should **keep your confidence** and remain active e.g. work on your skills, get involved in the community and look for opportunities.
- If you feel that you have been discriminated against during your job search, you can contact the Equality Tribunal at 1890 34 44 24 or info@equalitytribunal.ie.
- If you **got the job** in most places you still have to **pass a probation period** which is normally six months. Both parties can quit (finish the contract) without giving reasons during this time.
- In most Irish workplaces there is a friendly atmosphere and you are expected to socialize a little e.g. talk with your colleagues at the break. Keep in mind that it is always important to prioritise your work if you need to choose.

Part 4: Training and Work Experience

Getting work experience

❖ **Internships** have become more common in Ireland in recent years. This is a supervised and structured form of work experience for jobseekers where you do not get paid but you may receive some expenses. The application process is very similar to applying for a job.

❖ **The Work Experience programme** is available at SOLAS (FÁS) for unemployed immigrants with Residency Stamp 4. Participants may keep their social welfare payment if they have received it for at least three months. Details of available internships through the Work Placement Programme can be found on www.fas.ie. If you are not eligible for a social welfare payment, you can still apply for a Work Placement Programme, but you will not receive any payment while participating in the internship.

❖ The **Job Bridge** scheme is available to unemployed people who have been receiving jobseeker/one parent family payments³ for over three months. Participants retain their social welfare payment while on the scheme, and also get an extra €50 per week allowance for the duration of the placement. Information about the scheme can be found at <http://www.jobbridge.ie/>

❖ Many **community organisations** advertise internships at www.activelink.ie

❖ The **Community Employment scheme** provides work experience in local authorities, community organisations and in the non-profit sector for people who have been receiving a job seeker's payment for over one year.

❖ The **Tús initiative** is a community work placement scheme providing short-term work opportunities for unemployed people. These are meant to benefit the community and are to be provided by community and voluntary organisations in both urban and rural areas. The Tús initiative is managed by local development companies and Údarás na Gaeltachta for the Department of Social Protection, which has overall responsibility for the scheme. Unemployed people who are eligible to participate in the scheme are selected and contacted by the Department of Social Protection

3. People on disability allowance are also eligible.

❖ You can apply for **unpaid Work Experience** with businesses, organisations or with self-employed people. However, this may depend on employers' willingness and insurance requirements.

❖ You might in the first instance secure a job which is below your skill and qualification level. However, it is likely that the organisation will have vacancies from time to time and it can therefore be worthwhile starting a position at a different level than you would normally have worked at. This provides a great opportunity for you to display your skills and your motivation, which could lead to job opportunities in the future, within the organisation, or with a colleague's contact in another organisation. Sometimes it is possible to volunteer a few extra hours in the organisation to work in a different section where you can use your skills.

Volunteering

* There are many **community and voluntary organisations** that welcome volunteers. In some cases you may be asked to do occupation related tasks. Even if the activity is not related to your field you can develop skills (such as social skills), improve your confidence, develop your understanding of the culture in workplaces in Ireland, improve your English, get Irish work references and build networks in your local area. In Ireland volunteering is valued for the benefit it provides to the community.

* Volunteering is a less formal activity than employment and usually volunteers are asked to work less hours. However, it still requires a responsible attitude. In some cases you may have to fill in an application form or go for an informal interview.

* **Volunteer Ireland** is a nationwide organisation that supports and facilitates voluntary activity in Ireland visit www.volunteer.ie. You can contact your local Volunteer centre to find out about opportunities, or visit www.activelink.ie.

* Please note that even if you are not paid you may be required to undertake police clearance (Garda Vetting) if you want to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. The organisation should assist you with this process.

* You can also help out in festivals and other community events. Even if you do not volunteer, you should make an effort to get to know local people. This way you can settle in more easily and also learn about employment opportunities.

Training and educational options

👉 You can **contact colleges and training institutions** or visit www.qualifax.ie to find out about your study options. The study options available, including courses which are below your qualification level, can be a useful opportunity to learn about the field in Ireland,

develop your occupation-specific English vocabulary, get Irish references and establish useful contacts. A work placement as part of the course may also be available.

↪ You can improve your skills through short courses as well e.g. IT skills training, or you could consider learning about a new area within your occupation e.g. green technologies in construction. Mostly further education colleges, adult education centres and FÁS run shorter training courses.

↪ If you consider longer courses, you should review options available at the institute of technologies, universities or further education colleges.

↪ Unemployed EU nationals and non-EU citizens with Residency Stamp 4 (similarly to Irish citizens) may receive financial support (e.g. Back to Education Allowance).

↪ Immigrants can apply for **student grants** if they belong to the following groups of people:

- Irish nationals
- EU nationals
- Non-EU refugees and their family members
- Non-EU nationals with subsidiary protection and their family members
- Non-EU nationals with leave to remain (permission to remain)⁴
- Non-EU family members of an EU/EEA/Swiss national
- Non-EU spouse/partner/dependent children of an Irish national⁵

↪ You may be **exempt from tuition fees** at third level if you have lived in Ireland/EU/EEA/Switzerland for three of the last five years and are a member of the following groups:

- Irish nationals
- EU nationals
- Family member of EU nationals
- Refugees and their family members
- Non-EU nationals with leave to remain (permission to remain)
- For more detailed and up-to-date information, contact your college or visit www.studentfinance.ie.

↪ The **Springboard** programme offers job seekers, including EU nationals and non-EU nationals with Residency Stamp 4 the option to take up a part-time course in higher education and training, free-of-charge. Learners can study information and communications technology (ICT); the green economy; qualifications for the bio-pharma-pharmaceutical sectors as well as a range of courses developing innovative business and entrepreneurship skills.

4. See Appendix for full title.

5. This also includes the dependent child of a person who has acquired Irish citizenship under part III of the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Acts 1956 to 2004.

✚ If you are unemployed and want to get detailed information on social welfare support and training and work experience options you should order or download the **publication**,

“**Working for Work**”, by the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed. See www.inou.ie or phone 01 8560088.

Improving your language skills in Ireland

There are many ways you can improve your English language skills.

By yourself

◆ You can read self-study **books** to improve your general and vocation specific vocabulary and communication style in English on your own e.g. books published by Oxford and Cambridge University Press; see www.cambridge.org/elt and www.oup.com/elt.

◆ There are **websites** where you can study on your own: e.g. www.linguasnet.com, www.usingenglish.com, www.efl.net and www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice.

◆ Try to read **newspapers** (paper copies or the online version). This will help you to become familiar with written English and local phrases.

◆ Watch Irish **TV programmes** and listen to Irish **radio programmes**: news programmes are useful because they repeat information which helps you to learn words and pronunciation. The Irish accent is different to the one in the UK and the US so it's important to become familiar with Irish pronunciation. Watching movies with subtitles can be another way to improve your understanding of spoken English. Many programmes on RTÉ (the national television channels) also have subtitles that can be turned on by using teletext.

◆ **Audio books** can be a good way of practicing listening as you can pause and replay parts if necessary. In Ireland you can borrow text books, CD's and DVD's from public libraries. All you need to do is to register with your local library. Dublin City Library offers an online learning site called 'Tell me more campus' see www.library.ie.

◆ **English for work purposes**: It is important to learn and understand the English language used in the work place. It is also useful to learn words and phrases specific to a job or profession. You can benefit from reading trade and professional journals and visiting websites that are related to the area of work where you hope to gain employment. In general it is worth studying Business English for any higher level positions and read related books. Your library is good starting point for those materials.

Providers

◆ There are a variety of courses at private schools and universities. Some private schools and universities offer free classes from time to time when trainee teachers do their practice.

- ◆ Further education and community colleges and adult education centres offer part-time and evening courses with low cost. Contact your college or visit your adult education guidance service. It is worth checking the website www.qualifax.ie and www.acels.it/seach.htm.
- ◆ There are a number of free and low cost English courses by voluntary providers in Ireland. Local partnerships often support English classes in their area. One of the most successful voluntary initiatives is the FailteIsteach programme that runs weekly conversational English courses across more than 50 centres in Ireland. Check out your nearest centre at <http://www.thirdageireland.ie/what-we-do/65/where-we-are.html>.
- ◆ **Private** one-to-one lessons are available from teachers who advertise in papers and on notice boards and websites such as www.gumtree.ie.
- ◆ **Libraries** organise language exchange groups and people also do individual language swaps: this is where you teach other for free: you teach them your language or another language you know well and they help you with your English. Language departments in universities and libraries often have notice boards where students looking for language exchange partners can put up notices, and you can put up a notice, too.
- ◆ **Toastmaster clubs** offer participants a good opportunity to practice public speaking. This is useful for those who are confident in everyday conversations but want to improve their speaking skills, especially in formal situations such as events and meetings.
- ◆ Universities and private schools offer many courses to prepare you for **exams** such as the TOEFL, IELTS, Cambridge First Certificate or other exams.
- ◆ General information: Your local citizen's information centre and adult education guidance service should be able to direct you to the various places where you can get language support. Visit www.citizensinformation.ie.

Appendix 1

The National Framework of Qualifications

- ▶ **Level 3 Junior Certificate:** The Junior Certificate is an award given to students who have successfully completed examinations from the junior cycle which is the first three years of secondary education.
- ▶ **Level 4/5 Leaving Certificate:** Leaving Certificate and its various programmes is placed at **Levels 4 and 5:** It is the final course in the Irish secondary school system. It takes two or three years preparation following the Junior Certificate.
- ▶ **Level 6 Advanced Certificate:** An Advanced Certificate award enables development of a variety of skills which may be vocationally specific and /or of a general supervisory nature. Advanced Certificate is given those qualifying as craftspeople.
- ▶ **Level 6 Higher Certificate:** The Higher Certificate is normally awarded after completion of a programme of two years duration in a recognised higher education institution.
- ▶ **Level 7 Ordinary Bachelor Degree:** The Ordinary Bachelor Degree is normally awarded after completion of a programme of three years duration in a recognised higher education institution.
- ▶ **Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree:** The Honours Bachelor Degree is normally awarded following completion of a programme of three to four years duration in a recognised higher education institution.
- ▶ **Level 8 Higher Diploma:** The Higher Diploma is normally awarded following completion of a programme of 1 year duration in a recognised higher education institution. Entry is typically for holders of Honours Bachelor Degrees but can also be allowed for holders of Ordinary Bachelor Degrees.
- ▶ **Level 9 Masters Degree:** There are two types of Masters Degree in Ireland: taught Masters Degrees and research Masters Degrees. The taught Masters Degree is awarded following completion of a programme of 1 to 2 years duration. Entry to a programme leading to a Masters Degree is typically for holders of Honours Bachelor Degrees, however people with Ordinary Bachelor Degrees may also be permitted.
- ▶ **Level 9 Post-graduate Diploma:** The Post-graduate Diploma is normally awarded following completion of a programme of 1 year's duration in a recognised higher education institution. Entry to a programme leading to a Post-graduate diploma is typically for holders of Honours Bachelor Degrees but can also be for holders of Ordinary Bachelor Degrees.
- ▶ **Level 10 Doctoral Degree:** These are normally awarded on the basis of research but may also have taught components. Entry to a programme leading to a Doctoral Degree is typically for holders of Honours Bachelor Degrees (with high classification) or Master Degrees.

Appendix 2

Main immigrant groups and their entitlements

Main Immigrant Groups	Description
<u>EU/EEA Nationals</u>	A citizen of any one of 27 EU states / or Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway. They are allowed to work or study or set up business.
<u>Asylum seeker</u>	A person who seek protection from the state due to fear of persecution. They cannot work or start a business.
<u>Non-EU Stamp 1</u>	Non-EEA nationals who have received an employment permit or business permission
<u>Non-EU Stamp 1A</u>	Non-EEA nationals who do full-time training (accountancy). They can work 40 hours a week.
<u>Non-EU Stamp 2</u>	Non-EEA nationals on student visa who are attending a recognised full-time course of at least one year. They are permitted to work for 20 hours a week during term time and full time during holidays
<u>Non-EU Stamp 2A</u>	Non-EEA nationals who are not attending a course recognised by the Department of Education and Skills. They are not permitted to work.
<u>Non-EU Stamp 3</u>	Non-EEA nationals who in general are not permitted to work. The main categories are: visitors; family members of employment holders; retired people with independent means

(Cont'd on next page)

<p><u>Non-EU: Stamp 4</u></p>	<p>Holders of Stamp4 residency permission do not need an employment permit, business permission or student visa. The main groups are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People on long term residency status (can be applied after 60 months on work permit) • Convention and programme refugees and their family members • Family members of EU/Norway/Lichtenstein/Switzerland • Persons who have been granted subsidiary protection or (humanitarian) permission to remain following the Minister's decision not to deport the person under Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999. Previously people received permission that explicitly stated humanitarian grounds but this is no longer specified. • Spouses and civil partners of Irish nationals • Parents and siblings of Irish citizen child granted permission to remain on that basis (IBC scheme, 2004; Zambrano ruling, 2011)
<p><u>Non-EU Stamp 4 EUFam</u></p>	<p>Family members of EU nationals who have exercised their right to move and live in Ireland. They do not need an employment permit or business permission or student visa.</p>
<p><u>Non-EU Stamp 5</u></p>	<p>After 96 months (8 years) legal residency non-EEA nationals can apply for permission to remain in Ireland without as to condition to time. The permission is valid until the expiry of their passport.</p>

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Connecting Communities • Advancing Integration

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