



## **Guidelines for Administration of the BridgeUSA Intern Work and Travel (IWT) Program with Ireland**

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The Department of State is pleased to announce that on January 30, 2023, the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United States signed Diplomatic Notes to extend the BridgeUSA Intern Work and Travel (IWT) program Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the next five years, until January 30, 2028. The IWT program, which has been in existence since 2008, ceased to be a 'pilot' program under the terms of the 2023 extension.

### **Program Administration**

Irish exchange visitors coming to the United States on the IWT program must be bona fide post-secondary students or recent graduates (i.e., an Irish citizen who will commence his or her program in the United States within 12 months of the conferring date indicated on his or her scroll) and provide evidence from the appropriate post-secondary institution to this effect. They may enter the United States to participate in internships and travel for a period of up to 12 months. No program extension beyond the 12-month maximum program duration will be permitted. Irish exchange visitors may neither be accompanied by nor seek to be joined later by dependents.

Citizens of Ireland traveling to the United States on the IWT program will do so under the Department's existing Intern category regulations (22 CFR 62.22) and applicable sponsor program rules, with the exception of participant pre-placement. The Form DS-2019 issued to an IWT exchange visitor should reflect this information in the Subject/Field Code Remarks Box which will print on Form DS-2019 (e.g., IWT program).

### **Placement**

For this program, Form DS-7002, Training/Internship Placement Plan, is not required for the purpose of the visa application, as participants may enter the United States without regard to pre-placement. Sponsors will be responsible for completing the Form DS-7002 when participants advise them of their internship location. IWT exchange visitors must have an internship secured and a site of activity updated in SEVIS no later than 90 days from the program begin date.

## **Screening and Selection of Interns**

Screening and selection of exchange visitors is the responsibility of designated sponsors and may be conducted by the sponsor or in cooperation with the sponsor's overseas partners/agents. All exchange visitors must be interviewed either in-person, by web camera/videoconference, or by telephone and must meet the following program eligibility requirements:

- Be citizens or legal permanent residents of Ireland.
- Be bona fide post-secondary college/university students (enrolled and participating) or a recent graduate.
- Vocational students pursuing studies at a tertiary level accredited academic institution are not eligible for participation unless such vocational study is part of a structured program leading to a degree or other credential recognized as equivalent to Level VI of the Irish Higher Education System.
- Provide proof of sufficient financial resources, prior to the issuance of a Form DS-2019, to support themselves throughout their exchange visitor program and for their return home.
- Not be accompanied by spouse or dependents.

## **Monitoring and Support**

Within 10 days of arrival in the United States, IWT interns are required to notify the sponsor of their arrival and their U.S. residential address; they must confirm the commencement of their program or job search. After receiving the interns' information, the sponsor must validate the intern's SEVIS record within 30 days from the program begin date to reflect the current U.S. address (residence). Within 90 days from the program begin date, the sponsor must update the intern's SEVIS record with the primary site of activity (internship location).

Sponsors must continue to contact interns and host organizations every 60 days thereafter throughout the duration of their participation in the sponsor's program.

Sponsors must promptly update SEVIS with any changes of U.S. address or approved changes of the site of activity.

Sponsors are to "End the Program for EV" of an exchange visitor who fails to find an internship within 90 days or who leaves the program (without incident) prior to the expiration of the Program End Date reflected on the Form DS-2019 by entering an effective date of completion. This will ensure that the participant is not negatively impacted.

Program terminations are to continue to be completed as stipulated by the regulations.

The MOU with Ireland also includes a reciprocal program for Americans, which is implemented by BridgeUSA program sponsors. To learn more about the reciprocal program for Americans, please go to the following link: [Working Holiday Authorisation - Department of Foreign Affairs \(dfa.ie\)](https://www.dfa.ie/working-holiday-authorisation)