



Northern Ireland

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About Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, which also includes England, Scotland and Wales. As a result, it uses the currency of pound sterling rather than the euro, which is used in the Republic of Ireland. Its health care and legal policies are also those of the United Kingdom rather than the Republic of Ireland.

Although you will be studying in Northern Ireland, and thus in the U.K., one of your program excursions will take place in the Republic of Ireland. Most of the information in this book relates to Northern Ireland because that will be your home base while you are abroad. However, we have included some information on the Republic of Ireland, especially information you might need while traveling.

The term "Republic" in this book refers to the Republic of Ireland. All references to Northern Ireland use the term "Northern Ireland." The term "U.K." means that the information applies both to Northern Ireland and the other countries of the United Kingdom.

Note that in the Republic of Ireland, "Ireland" generally refers to the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland collectively. Northern Ireland is generally referred to as "the North."

Dunluce Castle, Antrim Coast.



Northern Ireland--An Overview

Geography

Ireland is an island on the western edge of Europe, 480 km (300 miles) long and 240 km (150 miles) wide. The island is divided politically into the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Republic covers 26 of the 32 counties and has a population of more than 4 million. Its capital city, Dublin, is home to a million people. The other six Irish counties comprise the country of Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom. Its capital city is Belfast. Northern Ireland is home to about 1 million people. Both Northern Ireland (as part of the U.K.) and the Republic of Ireland are member states of the European Union.

Ireland has a temperate climate with summer temperatures that range from 60°F to 75°F. Because of the moderating effect of the water surrounding Ireland, the temperature rarely drops below freezing. However, the wind, rain and dampness can make the climate seem cooler. The weather changes rapidly, and days often feature rain followed by sun followed by more rain.

People

The people of Ireland descend from a mix of Celts, Vikings and Anglo-Normans. The Celts first invaded Ireland circa 700 B.C., eventually colonizing most of the island. The Celts had been driven into Ireland by the Romans and called themselves *Galli* (the origin of the Irish word *Gael*). Unlike nearly all of the rest of Europe, Ireland was never subject to Roman rule, which allowed the Celtic influence visible in parts of Scotland and Wales to come into full strength in Ireland.

Successive waves of Vikings and Normans arrived and intermarried with the Gaels, lending new cultural dimensions to the population. In 1609, the Ulster Plantation took place, whereby large numbers of Scottish Presbyterian loyalists were given lands in what is currently the area of Northern Ireland. This process further strengthened the religious affiliation and loyalty of the people in this area and produced the unity with Britain that still exists today.

Today, the Republic and Northern Ireland both have fairly homogenous populations. You'll find friendly, welcoming people with a tradition of music, dance and storytelling that persists to this day. However, Ireland also has a large immigrant population. We recommend that you read up on the history of Ireland before going abroad. Check out our "Information Resources" section at the end of this book.



Cathedral in Belfast. Photo by Chris Harrison

Religion

Religion has played a huge role in the history of Ireland. Today, the two principal religions of Northern Ireland are Roman Catholicism and various strands of Protestantism (e.g., Presbyterian, Methodist and Church of Ireland).

There are few non-Christian

places of worship in the North, although Belfast has a Jewish community and a synagogue.

Politics

The existing political division in Ireland dates from the Government of Ireland Act 1920. After centuries of British rule, 26 of the 32 counties of Ireland gained independence. The remaining six counties formed Northern Ireland, which were governed by the Belfast Stormont Parliament under the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom until 1972. People in all parts of Ireland found this an unsatisfactory compromise, and conflict continued throughout the following decades.

From the early 1980s onward, the British and Irish governments began to cooperate more closely in an effort to achieve a widely acceptable political resolution to the Northern Ireland conflict.

In referendums held in 1998, the people of Ireland, both north and south, overwhelmingly endorsed the Good Friday Agreement that ultimately led to the Northern Ireland Assembly governing Northern Ireland. This was the first occasion since 1918 in which all the people in Ireland voted together to decide their political future. The electorate in the Republic approved amendments to the Irish Constitution, which formed part of the Agreement, to take effect when the British-Irish Agreement entered into force. The Northern Ireland Assembly temporarily disbanded on four occasions between 2000 and 2007 due to disagreements between Unionist and Nationalist parties but has been in operation since May 2007.

“The Troubles”

This is the phrase used to describe the period of political and violent upheaval in Northern Ireland, primarily from the 1970s onward. Northern Ireland is now and has always been one of the safest places in Europe to study. The crime rate in Northern Ireland is one of the lowest in the world, and the people of Northern Ireland are friendly, outgoing and hospitable.

Since the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, everyday life for the residents of Northern Ireland is similar to life in the Republic or the rest of the U.K. Northern Ireland’s universities are strictly nonsectarian and have taken a leading role in bringing together people of different backgrounds to foster understanding and peace.

For more information, see “Northern Ireland Safety Issues” on page 27.



IFSA-Butler students celebrate St. Patrick’s Day in Northern Ireland. Photo by IFSA-Butler student Elaina Laughlin, Shenandoah University

Academic Differences

Specialization in Northern Ireland

The primary difference between educational systems in the United States and Northern Ireland is the level of specialization. In the United States, you are probably accustomed to a liberal arts education in which you select courses in a wide variety of subjects from introductory to advanced levels. Most students in the United States aren't required to narrow their academic focus until their second or third year of university. Students in Northern Ireland, however, begin to specialize during secondary school (equivalent to U.S. high school).

Until the age of 16, all students in Northern Ireland study eight subjects. Those planning to apply to university then narrow their focus to three to five subjects for the final two years of secondary school. Students who do not plan to go on to teacher's training college or to university generally leave school to take jobs.

At the end of secondary school, all university-bound students take essay exams designed to test knowledge of the three to five specialized subjects that they have studied for two years. Students qualify for university study through their exam scores on these subjects.

Of all secondary school students, only a small number (about 15 percent) are accepted to, and ultimately attend, university. They enter university already possessing an extensive background in the subject(s) they plan to study. In this specialized system, students enter medical school and law school right out of secondary school.

Degrees in Northern Ireland

With such a competitive system, students focus on no more than two subjects in their first year and generally go on to get their degrees in a single subject.

In order to earn a degree, students must pass a degree exam at the end of each year. These essay-based exams are composed by a committee of specialists outside the university and administered at the end of each year of the degree study. These exams are then marked by faculty inside and outside the university. Students in Northern Ireland must achieve a certain standard in these exams in order to pass on to the next year of study for the degree.

Managing Money

We suggest you rely upon a combination of credit cards, traveler's checks, a U.S. ATM card and a Northern Ireland bank account. We'll give you additional advice on money management during orientation; in the meantime, here are a few guidelines. The best way to save money while studying abroad is to live the way Northern Ireland students do.

Exchange Rates

Northern Ireland uses pounds sterling (£), the same currency as the rest of the U.K. There are 100 pence to the pound. Many U.S. banks sell traveler's checks in pounds sterling (see the "Traveler's Checks" section).

Banking

We recommend that you open a bank account once you know your local address and have determined which bank is located closest to your university campus. Universities in Northern Ireland have bank branches on their campus. At some university sites, students have found that they can get accounts only at branches located on campus.

The largest banks are the Northern Bank, Bank of Ireland, First Trust Bank and the Ulster Bank. Typically, banking hours in Ireland are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Past students have found a student deposit account with an ATM service to be the most useful type of account. You may open an account by presenting your passport or your university ID card, which you will receive once you officially register on campus.

Banks in Northern Ireland will not cash checks; they must be posted to an account and cleared before cash can be obtained. Checks can take seven to 10 days to clear. You should not take, and your parents should not send, checks written in U.S. dollars. Use traveler's checks or wire transfers instead.

U.S. Bank Account ATM Cards

ATM networks are available at all banks, which means you may be able to access your U.S. bank account using your U.S. ATM card while abroad. Cirrus and Plus systems are widely available. Be sure that your ATM card lists one of these networks. Keep in mind that many U.S. banks charge a fee for each transaction.

Contact your U.S. bank to make sure that you will be able to use your card in Northern Ireland and throughout Europe. Some U.S. banks block usage of ATM and debit cards in certain countries because of concerns about fraud.

Keeping a U.S. bank account allows your parents to deposit money into your account at home so that you can withdraw it directly from an ATM in Northern Ireland. Accessing money this way is nearly instantaneous and relatively easy, provided you find a machine that will accept your ATM card from home. Receiving money is easier if you and your parents have a joint account.

Don't rely entirely on the ATM service. If your card is lost or stolen, you won't have access to emergency funds. Keep some traveler's checks as an emergency reserve in case you lose your card. Be sure to record your bank's customer service telephone number and your account number in case you need to report a lost or stolen card. Be aware that ATMs offer easy access to your money, which means you may have a harder time sticking to a budget. Be realistic about how much money you'll need.

We recommend that you bring a duplicate card with you if your bank will issue one to you.

Credit Cards

Do your own investigation into the advantages and disadvantages of various credit card companies. You might want to look for the ability to draw cash advances through banks abroad (both in Northern Ireland and throughout Europe) and the ability to purchase traveler's checks. Past students have commented that Visa and MasterCard are the most widely accepted both in Northern Ireland and throughout Europe.

Regardless of which card you select, the card you use must have your name on it as given on your passport. If you plan to use a parent's credit card, he or she should request an extra card in your name. Keep a list of your credit card numbers and the customer service numbers in case your cards are lost or stolen.

Wire Transfers

If you need money in a hurry, you can have it sent to you via American Express or Western Union. You don't need an American Express card to wire money.

Although wiring money involves a fee, it is relatively safe, and you can usually receive the money within one day. Generally, you need a photo ID (use your passport) to collect the money, though it can be arranged to use a reference number or secret question in the event that your photo ID is lost or stolen. Some banks may also accept wire transfers.

Cost of Living

We've designed this section to give you and your parents an idea of what it costs to live abroad as a student. Generally, you can expect to spend more money in Belfast than students in Coleraine or Jordanstown. Not only is the cost of living slightly higher, but the number of opportunities for spending money are greater. The many theatres, clubs, cinemas, shops, restaurants, pubs, department stores and concert halls can rapidly drain financial resources.

As you plan, be aware that you will probably spend a lot of money in your first few weeks in Northern Ireland. Don't panic if you find your funds rapidly diminishing. Initially, you will spend more money getting settled, exploring and socializing. As you establish a routine and start to live like a Northern Ireland student, you will probably spend less.

Emergency Reserve

You should always have some money set aside for emergencies, whether it is your credit card or a cash reserve.

Textbooks and Supplies

Teaching staff use a variety of textbook sources, which can be expensive. Many students rely on the library to loan textbooks or make photocopies of the necessary readings. Literature students may need to purchase novels or other reading materials. Be sure to budget enough money to purchase some books and cover the cost of copying.

Dining Out

The cost of dining out can range enormously; the best approach is to follow the habits of local students. Much of the social life in Northern Ireland centers around the pub and club scene. Past students warn that overspending is easy, as buying drinks can quickly destroy your budget.

Meals in student cafeterias are fairly inexpensive (equal to or cheaper than pub grub), as are those in many fast-food restaurants. Northern Irish breakfasts, called "Ulster Fry," are generally very hearty. There are no free soda refills in Northern Ireland, and soft drinks can be expensive. You can order tap water to save money; it is perfectly safe to drink.

Groceries

Depending on what you purchase, groceries can cost more than at a supermarket in the United States. The exchange rate and the food prices in general may be higher than you expect, so make sure your food budget is adequate. As you will be cooking for yourself, take some time to learn a few easy recipes before you leave, or bring a small cookbook from home. Make sure your cookbook has metric equivalents or bring a cheap set of measuring cups and spoons with you.

Personal Expenses

Budget for toiletries, phone cards, haircuts and other personal items. Past students recommend stocking up on certain toiletries and prescriptions before leaving the United States, if there is room in your luggage. In your planning be sure to include laundry, postage, school supplies, photocopying and so forth. See your budget planner for more information.

Review the section on "Telephones and Mail" in this guide. Calls from within Northern Ireland generally cost more than calls made from the United States, which is why a U.S. long-distance calling card or a Northern Ireland cell phone saves you money. Use Skype to save money on long distance calling.

Be sure to set aside money in case you need to visit a doctor or have a prescription filled.

Transportation

Walking, cycling, and taking the bus or the train are the most common forms of transportation in Northern Ireland. In many cases, your student status will qualify you for discounts on bus and train fares and bike rentals. Visit www.translink.co.uk for information on public transportation options in Northern Ireland.

Some students use bicycles to get around. You can find fairly decent second-hand bicycles through newspaper ads, bulletin board notices and bike rental shops. The bus system is extensive locally and regionally.

Taxis in many areas charge on a meter-based system, but in some cities the price is fixed within certain areas. Our Ireland staff will advise you during orientation about ways to save on commuting costs.

Communications

Please review the section on telephones and mail in this guide. Calls cost less if you use a phone card or purchase a cell phone once you arrive in Northern Ireland. Never make a phone call from a hotel room! Most hotels impose high surcharges.

If you purchase a U.S. phone card before leaving home, you can enjoy better international rates. In the U.K. the post office offers calling cards with good rates to the United States (see www.postoffice.co.uk). You can also purchase a cell phone in Northern Ireland after your arrival.

Entertainment

The range of social activities in Northern Ireland is wide enough to offer something for everyone. The Riverside Theatre in Coleraine and Waterfront Hall, Lyric Theatre and Odyssey Arena in Belfast are just a few of the bigger attractions.

Tickets range in prices, but student discounts (called “concessions”) are sometimes available. Local newspapers and the students’ union at the universities are useful sources of information. Cinema tickets tend to be more expensive for first-run films than they are in the United States, but always ask for student rates and have your host university student ID handy.

Travel

Buy a good guidebook to use when planning and budgeting for travel. Past students highly recommend the *Lonely Planet Guide* and the *Rough Guide*.

Cycling is an inexpensive way to see Northern Ireland, and bikes are available for rent. The rail system is generally reliable, reasonably priced and fairly comfortable. Trains and buses run to and from Belfast and Dublin and connect the main cities, including Coleraine and Derry. Check with your host university’s student travel office once you arrive on campus to explore discount deals on bus and train passes.

Lodging

Hostelling International has youth hostels throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, ranging from a castle in Kilkenny to overlooking the ocean from the North Antrim coast to a mountain lodge in Tipperary. For information about joining, contact:

Hostelling International USA
8401 Colesville Road, Suite 600
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: 301-495-1240
www.hiusa.org

You may also purchase a Youth Hostel Card at a campus travel office once you arrive in Ireland.

Hostelling International has offices in Northern Ireland and in the Republic. Contact them at the addresses below:

Hostelling International Northern Ireland

22–32 Donegall Road
Belfast
BT12 5JN
Telephone: +44 (0)28 9032 4733
Fax: +44 (0)28 9031 5889
www.hini.org.uk

An Óige, Irish Youth Hostel Association
61 Mountjoy Street
Dublin 7
Telephone: +353 1 830 4555
www.anoige.ie

Independent youth hostels are more plentiful and usually more modern, but they may cost a little more. Independent hostels don’t require a membership.

A variety of reasonably priced lodging in the form of guest houses, town and country homes, and bed and breakfasts also are available throughout Ireland.

Value Added Tax

All stores throughout Ireland charge a value added tax (VAT) on various purchases. In Northern Ireland, the VAT is charged at 20 percent on all goods and services. In the Republic, the VAT ranges from 13.5 percent for service industries to 21 percent for luxury goods, clothes and electronics.

To avoid the VAT, you can have the goods sent directly to your U.S. address; otherwise, you will have to pay the tax at the time you purchase the merchandise.

If you do not ship your goods directly, you should ask the retailer for a cash back voucher at the point of sale. Before departing the U.K., you can go to a cash back desk at the airport and receive the VAT refund in dollars or pounds, less a small fee. You may also send your receipts with a self-addressed, stamped envelope from the United States to the cash back headquarters and receive a check at home within a month’s time. Cash back vouchers are valid for three months from the date of sale.

U.S. Customs will charge you if you return with more than \$800 in foreign goods.

Overall Budgeting

As the spending habits and resources of each of our students differ so greatly, we can’t estimate any one person’s budget needs. For an individual and accurate estimate, please complete the budget planner on our website.

Getting Ready to Leave

Official Travel Documents

You will need the following documents for travel and immigration purposes:

- Passport
- PBS Tier IV visa

Passport

You must have a passport that is valid for six months past the time you plan to be abroad. If you don't have a passport, apply for one immediately. Normal processing takes six weeks and may take longer during peak travel times.

We provide the following information as a guideline to get you started, but you should investigate current requirements immediately. For complete information about applying for a passport and application fees, go to the State Department's website at www.travel.state.gov, then click on "Passports."

You can apply for your passport through a passport acceptance facility. A list of locations is available at the State Department's website.

You must present the following documentation to obtain a U.S. passport:

- Proof of U.S. citizenship—either a certified copy of a birth certificate, a previously issued passport, a naturalization certificate, a certificate of citizenship or a consular report of birth of a U.S. citizen born abroad
- Two recent, identical passport-size photos (2" x 2")
- The completed passport application

If you have non-U.S. citizen status, make sure both your green card and passport are current and valid. You might need to check with the local U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office near your university or home (check the web at www.uscis.gov). To apply for a non-U.S. passport, contact your embassy in Washington, D.C., and allow several weeks for processing.

If your passport is lost or stolen while you are abroad, contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

PBS Tier 4 Student Visa

The British government requires that students who meet certain criteria have a visa in order to study in the U.K. Students studying for the full year and students who plan to pursue part-time or volunteer work in the U.K. **must** apply for a PBS Tier 4 student visa. Your PBS Tier 4 student visa is the only way you

have permission to do student teaching or volunteer in a classroom.

You will receive instructions regarding applying for the PBS Tier 4 student visa approximately three months before the program begins.

If you do not obtain a PBS Tier 4 student visa, your passport will be stamped by immigration officials granting you student visitor status. **You must fly directly from the United States to Belfast or to another U.K. airport, where you will clear immigration and then fly to Belfast. Do not fly via the Republic of Ireland or any other European country.**

Visas for Non-U.S. Citizens

If you are not a U.S. citizen, you should contact the British Embassy in Washington, D.C., or the British Consulate in New York, whichever is nearest your home, to determine if you will have to take any additional steps to obtain a visa. You can find more information at www.ukvisas.gov.uk.

Visas for Vacation Travel

If you want to travel to certain countries in Europe or Africa, you might need a tourist visa. Usually you can get specific information for acquiring a tourist visa by going to the appropriate embassy. In some cases you must apply for a tourist visa **before** you arrive at the border, so check the requirements for travel before leaving the United States. Although you can obtain a European visa in Northern Ireland, you must allow adequate time for processing. For most countries in Western Europe, you can obtain a "border visa," meaning that passport control personnel stamps your passport as you go over the border.

As requirements for visas vary, you should contact the embassy in Washington, D.C., for information on any country in which you plan to travel **before you leave the United States.**

Copies of Your Travel Documents

Keep track of all your travel documents. Make two copies of your passport and entry clearance visa; leave one copy with your parents and pack the other copy in your luggage separate from your passport. If you lose your passport, having a photocopy to take to the U.S. Embassy will speed the replacement process. Also, keep copies of your credit cards and record the numbers of your traveler's checks. You'll also need the customer service telephone numbers in case your credit card or traveler's checks are lost or stolen.

Insurance and Health Care

IFSA-Butler Group Medical Insurance

The IFSA-Butler program fee includes a medical insurance and assistance plan through Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI). CISI specializes in providing medical insurance for U.S. students who will receive treatment when outside the United States.

The CISI program covers the following:

- Eligible medical expenses covered at 100 percent to \$500,000 with no deductible
- Emergency medical evacuation to \$250,000
- Emergency reunion of family members
- Mental health coverage up to \$10,000 for outpatient
- Medical and travel assistance services
 - Worldwide hospital and physician referral
 - Emergency prescription replacement/shipment
 - 24 hour emergency travel arrangements
 - Emergency translation service
 - Lost document and credit card assistance
 - Worldwide legal assistance

Coverage of pre-existing conditions, and alcohol and drug abuse are also part of the plan benefits. There are exclusions to coverage that are outlined on the "Student Insurance" page of our website, located in the "For Students" section.

All students can print an individual insurance card and plan details before departure via the CISI website utilizing your personal account, which you will need to create after your acceptance into the program. Coverage begins on the program departure date and ends on the program end date. Coverage is applicable anywhere outside the United States, not just the location in which the student is studying abroad.

We strongly recommend that you review the program medical insurance and assistance plan to determine whether you need additional insurance. In particular, students with pre-existing conditions should investigate their options carefully.

Please remember that IFSA-Butler does not provide travel or personal property insurance. If you want to insure your belongings while you are abroad, contact a travel insurance provider.

Additional Insurance Sources

To obtain travel, property or additional medical coverage, we recommend contacting an insurance company that specializes in coverage for U.S. students abroad. Cultural Insurance Services International, which provides the insurance plan for IFSA-Butler students, can provide a range of insurance services.

Cultural Insurance Services International
800-303-8120
Fax: 203-399-5596
www.culturalinsurance.com

Health Care

Have your family physician prepare a summary of ongoing treatment and bring a list of any medications you take regularly. Bring an adequate supply of your medications and leave them in their labeled containers. You should also ask for a prescription with the generic name of the medication(s) if refills are required abroad. We recommend complete physical and dental exams prior to departure and an update of any vaccination(s) your physician suggests.

If you have a specific health problem of which we should be aware, please inform us by returning the medical form included in your acceptance packet. Please tell us about any physical or mental health problems so that we can help make your study abroad experience as comfortable as possible. We keep this information in the strictest confidence.

If you have been treated for depression, anxiety, eating disorders or anything else that can be classified as a mental health condition, please carefully review the medical insurance and assistance plan included in your program fee to determine whether it will meet your needs. You may need additional insurance coverage for treatment abroad. You could end up with very large bills if you are not adequately insured.

Prescription Drugs

Northern Ireland pharmacists are under no obligation to fill U.S. prescriptions. If you are taking any medications into Northern Ireland, you will need proof, in the form of a written prescription that includes the generic name of the drug, that it has been prescribed for you. You are allowed to bring a three-month supply of any prescribed drug. If you need more than a three-month supply, you will need to make an appointment with a doctor in Northern Ireland to get a prescription.

Students with Disabilities

We encourage students with disabilities to explore studying abroad through our programs. Laws governing access, support and services for the disabled vary from country to country.

If you require modified facilities or specific equipment, we can investigate their availability. We can also seek information about local medical facilities or relevant services accessible from your proposed study site. If you have a learning disability documented by a health care provider who describes your academic needs, we can work with you to obtain equipment or services. Note that these may result in additional cost to you.

You can inform IFSA-Butler of any medical condition by filling out the medical form enclosed in your acceptance packet. Medical conditions have no bearing on your admission, but your study abroad experience may be negatively affected if all parties involved are not adequately informed of your needs. Please supply us with any pertinent documentation.

Packing

Don't pack more than you can carry at one time. Storage space in rooms is usually minimal; university halls rarely contain dressers, and closets are very small. If you are in university housing and staying over a vacation period, you might be required to store your things in a centrally secured room during the break.



Antrim Coast.

Pack wisely and use suitable luggage. Trunks are impossible to handle alone, and suitcases are bulky and tiring to carry. Past students suggest a sturdy, internal-frame backpack as the ideal piece of luggage. **A backpack, small suitcase and small carry-on is all the luggage you should need.** A money belt or waist pouch is also practical for vacation travel.

Climate

Northern Ireland has a mild, damp climate. Temperatures are fairly constant over the whole country, averaging 35° to 45°F in January and February and 57° to 72°F in July and August. Showers occur throughout the year but often pass quickly. Most of our students find Northern Ireland cool and damp.

Packing Tips

When packing, make luggage tags to identify all your luggage, including your carry-on. Put labels inside your luggage in case the outside labels fall off. If you put a lock on your bag, make sure it is approved by the Transportation Security Administration (see www.tsa.gov); otherwise, airline security may cut it off. Locks can be useful for traveling within Ireland, so you might want to purchase a few to take with you.

Do not pack your tickets, passport, travel documents, prescriptions, camera or valuables in your checked luggage. Keep them on your person at all times, in a money belt or in a bag worn across your chest. Do not put valuables in a backpack; backpacks are prone to theft.

Other suggestions and reminders from past students include the following:

- Airlines have stringent baggage and weight requirements. Do not exceed the baggage limit. If you do, the airline staff can make you purchase additional luggage and repack in the airport. They may also charge you an extra weight fee.
- You will have to carry your luggage everywhere, so make sure that you can manage it comfortably.
- Keep FAA regulations in mind when packing your carry-on. **Do not bring anything that could be considered a weapon onto the plane.**
- Pack your carry-on so that you can live out of it for a few days if your checked luggage gets lost. In addition to your essential paperwork, medicines, contact lenses or glasses and toiletries, pack a change of clothes.
- Carry-on luggage must fit under the seat in front of you or in the overhead bin. We recommend that you keep your carry-on weight to about 10 pounds because you'll have to carry it everywhere.

Packing 101

- If losing something would affect your happiness, leave it at home.
- Consider obtaining extra travel and personal property insurance before

you leave the United States.

- Leave room in your luggage to bring home the things you acquire while abroad.
- Laundry methods may be hard on your clothes, so pack clothes that can take some abuse. You might have to dry your clothes on a line.
- Break in your walking shoes before you go.
- Pack what you'll need first on the top of one bag.
- Pack shampoos, toothpaste and any other toiletries that may leak or ooze in plastic bags.

Suggested Packing List

U.S. students often overpack. In the excitement of preparing to study abroad, you may think you need to purchase an entirely new wardrobe, but you don't. Here is what we recommend packing:

Clothes

- A hooded rainproof coat with a zip- out lining
- A few sweaters (cotton, wool or fleece are best)
- Jeans and/or casual pants and/or skirts
- A few shirts
- Two pairs of comfortable, waterproof walking shoes
- At least one dressy outfit with the appropriate shoes
- Underclothes
- Workout clothes
- Pajamas
- A warm hat, scarf and gloves

Health and Safety

- Comb, brush, toothbrush and toothpaste, shampoo, shaving gear and washcloth. Bring enough toiletries and cosmetics to get you through the first week. You should **not** pack enough for your entire time abroad.
- Prescription medicine in labeled containers and a written copy of the prescription
- Contact lens solution, an extra pair of contacts or glasses and your prescription. Pack your sunglasses as well.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent
- Condoms
- A small first-aid kit

Linens

- Bath towel, hand towel and wash cloth (one or two sets) or plan to buy your towels abroad
- Plan to purchase inexpensive sheets abroad; beds in the U.K. are smaller than those in the United States.

Miscellaneous

- Portable alarm clock and batteries
- Umbrella and rain gear
- Addresses and phone numbers of family and friends
- Photos of your family and friends
- iPod or MP3 player
- Books, including a guidebook for Northern Ireland
- Money belt or pouch to wear around your neck to hold passport, money, etc.

Your Carry-On Bag

- Passport: Check your passport to ensure that it is valid for six months past the time you are scheduled to be abroad. Your passport should include any necessary visa.
- Your host university acceptance letter
- Your plane tickets or e-ticket confirmations
- This booklet
- Travel-size toiletries (liquids in containers no larger than 3.4 ounces, all sealed in a clear, quart-size plastic bag)
- Your medication, including a written copy of any prescriptions and the generic names of those prescriptions
- Credit cards, ATM card, traveler's checks and limited cash
- Something to read
- Your journal and a pen
- **A change of clothes in case your luggage is lost**
- A sweater or waterproof jacket
- Spare glasses or contact lenses and solution. The plane can be very dry, so you might want to wear your glasses instead of your contact lenses.
- Water. You should purchase water for the flight after passing through airport security.
- A snack
- Camera

You should also pack in your carry-on all your important **paperwork**:

- Name, address, and phone and fax numbers of your physician
- Name, phone and fax numbers and email of your home college advisor
- Name and email of your IFSA-Butler program resident director
- Details of your insurance coverage
- Documentation of disabilities and required accommodation for physical or learning disabilities
- Updated home university transcript. A student copy is fine; you might want it during registration.

Do Not Bring

- Expensive jewelry or jewelry with sentimental value
- Too much cash
- Illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia of any kind
- Electrical appliances (the U.K. uses different plugs and voltage)
- Too much luggage

Linens

Students in university-operated housing usually need to provide their own sheets and pillowcases. In some housing, students may rent or purchase duvets and pillows. You must provide your own towels, also.

If possible, you will be advised about what is provided when you receive your housing assignments. In some cases, we are not advised early enough by the university about housing to inform you of your address prior to departure. In those cases, you should plan to buy inexpensive linens when you arrive abroad.

Medication

Prescription medication should be properly labeled and left in the packaging in which it came from the pharmacist. Bring your regularly used over-the-counter preparations, vitamins and cosmetics from the United States. Have your family physician write out the generic (chemical) name of any prescription medication, as brand names vary from country to country. You may bring up to a three-month supply of prescription medications.

Contact Lenses

If you wear contacts, ask your eye doctor about what to do while you are abroad. Pack a spare set of lenses and your eyeglasses in case of emergency. Bring your lens or glasses prescription.

Your favorite contact care brands may be available abroad, but the cost of contact solution in Northern Ireland is high compared to the United States. You may want to take enough to last the entire period abroad.

Computers

The only type of computer you should consider taking abroad is a laptop computer. If you take a laptop, make sure it has a voltage switch; the electrical current in the U.K. is 220V. Laptops have been known to malfunction because of the voltage difference. You'll also need an adapter.

Computer labs are available, although hours of operation are not as long as to what you are probably accustomed. You will be assigned a university email account once you register at Stranmillis. In addition, Internet cafés are available in Belfast and other cities.



IFSA-Butler students in Northern Ireland. Photo by IFSA-Butler student Mary Cecilia Conte, Wake Forest University

Laptops are a prime target for thieves. IFSA-Butler is not responsible for your personal property. Please consult your insurance carrier for information on travel and personal property insurance.

Appliances

Don't take electrical appliances with you to Northern Ireland. You'll need both a converter and an adapter to make any electrical appliance work in Northern Ireland's three-pronged, 220V outlets. Converters are generally unreliable. Small appliances such as hair dryers and curling irons are easy to acquire abroad and are relatively inexpensive.

Musical Instruments

If you bring a musical instrument, pack it in a hard case and insure it. Instruments can be rented, but full-year students often bring their own. Instruments count as extra luggage on the flight and may incur an additional fee. If you bring a stringed instrument, loosen or remove the strings to reduce the tension on the neck during the flight. Endsleigh Insurance offers a special coverage package for musical instruments. For more information, visit its website at www.endsleigh.co.uk.

Items to Leave at Home

Please do not bring expensive jewelry, sentimental objects, designer luggage or trunks. If you can't decide whether or not to take something sentimental, ask yourself how you would feel if it were stolen.

We cannot emphasize enough that you should not overpack. **You will have to carry your own bags everywhere.** While you travel, you will have to store excess baggage or take it along. Trunks may have to be transported separately; if so, they must pass through U.S. Customs upon port of entry and may incur a high fee in addition to the shipping costs. IFSA-Butler staff do not carry luggage, so be sure you can handle yours on your own.

Living Abroad

Housing

The IFSA-Butler program fee includes housing while classes are in session. Housing during university breaks is not included in the program fee.

Students live in furnished housing provided by Stranmillis University College. Amenities vary by exact location, but all housing includes heat, Internet and plenty of social activities.

Telephones and Mail

Cell Phones

Cell phones are available for purchase in Northern Ireland with prices beginning at £20. The most popular with students is the pay-as-you-go phone. Customers are charged only for the purchase of the phone. There is no contract involved and no fee for incoming calls. Nearly all students in Ireland carry pay-as-you-go cell phones. Rates to call the United States vary.

Telephones

Telephones are available in some individual rooms at the host universities but not in all rooms. Pay phones are available throughout each campus and in most halls of residence.

Making Telephone Calls

When your friends and family call Northern Ireland, they'll need to use international codes. To call Northern Ireland from the United States, dial:

- 011 to have your call routed out of the United States
- 44 to route your call to the United Kingdom
- the area code (minus the 0)
- and the local phone number

To call the United States from Northern Ireland, dial:
00 to have your call routed out of the United Kingdom
1 to route your call to the United States
then the area code and local phone number

Northern Ireland is five hours ahead of Eastern time. Calls are least expensive on nights, weekends and bank holidays.

We recommend the use of a pay-as-you-go cell phone or an international telephone credit card, which is available through most long-distance phone companies. Contact your long-distance carrier to obtain one in your name. The benefit of using one of these cards is that charges are based on U.S. rates, making calls more economical for you and your family. The other benefit is that rates are itemized by the U.S. companies, allowing you to keep track of expenses. Keep in mind, however, that international telephone cards may not work in all student housing. In some residences, telephones are for incoming calls only, and outgoing calls can be made using local on-site cards only.

Before you leave for Northern Ireland, ask your operator for the access codes from Northern Ireland and any other country in which you intend to travel.

Skype

Many students use Skype to keep in touch with friends and family around the world. This will be your cheapest option for making telephone calls while in Northern Ireland; however, calls are made via computer and past students found that Skype quickly used up their download quota.

To use Skype, you will need to download a program over the Internet and purchase a headset. Calls made to a cell phone will be more expensive. To learn more, please visit www.skype.com.

Phone Home

We advise you to set up a schedule for calling your family before leaving for Northern Ireland. A schedule makes minimizing your overall costs easier. A schedule also helps minimize your family's worry about having you abroad because they know when to expect your calls.

If an emergency occurs, your parents can contact you through our Ireland office by calling the emergency number. The emergency number will be given to you during orientation. **This number is for emergency situations only.**

Mail

Mail generally takes five to 10 days to reach the East Coast of the United States. If someone in the United States needs to send you something important or urgent, have them send it via Federal Express, TNT or DHL. Remember that these services usually will not deliver to a box number, so the sender needs to provide a street address. Do not use UPS because you will have to pay customs charges to receive your package.

Shipping goods home is expensive and not very reliable. Send all your books home “book rate,” which means unsealed with tape but fastened with string and open-ended for examination by customs.

Packages sent to or from Northern Ireland via surface mail may take up to eight weeks for delivery. Air mail may take up to two weeks.

Shipping Parcels

When your parents or friends send packages, they should mark them honestly and appropriately (e.g., “confectionery—gift only”).

The United States Postal Service and international shipping companies such as TNT and FedEx all have their own rules regarding shipping fees, customs charges and invoices for packages. Your family or friends should ask detailed questions and understand the postal or shipping company’s guidelines before sending parcels to Northern Ireland.

Do not have your parents or friends send you clothes. Whether they are previously worn or new, you’ll pay huge customs charges and handling fees that often add up to more than the actual value of the clothing. Plan a little extra money in your budget to purchase anything you can’t bring in your luggage.

Legal Matters

Legal Status

While abroad, you are subject to local laws and customs that may vary considerably from U.S. practice. Ignorance of the law never serves as a defense for criminal activity. Wherever you are, be careful not to break the law.

If you are arrested abroad:

- A consular official attempts to visit you in jail, provides you with a list of attorneys and clarifies your legal rights.
- The consulate can help you contact your family for further assistance.
- The U.S. Department of State maintains contact with you, the attorney, and local authorities to determine how you are being treated and to ensure the process of making legal charges is not delayed unnecessarily.

IFSA-Butler does not provide legal advice or support to students arrested abroad. IFSA-Butler reserves the right to dismiss you from the program if you are charged with a crime.

Embassy and Consular Services

The U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad provide the following services:

- Replacement of passports
- Assistance in locating medical service and notifying family in case of emergency
- Assistance with finances if money is lost or stolen
- Attorney lists, transfer of money and notification of family for U.S. citizens in jail
- Disaster or emergency evacuation assistance

The U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad replace passports and assist U.S. citizens abroad. They do not serve as travel agencies, banks, law offices, police or job placement services.

You can reach the U.S. Consulate in Belfast at the following address:

U.S. Consulate General, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Danesfort House

223 Stranmillis Road

Belfast BT9 5GR

Phone: +44 (0)28 9038 6100; After hour emergencies: +44 7545 507738

Fax: +44 (0)28 9068 1301

www.usembassy.org.uk/nireland

Possession and Sale of Narcotics

The penalties for drug offenses vary from country to country. Fines are high, imprisonment common and deportation probable.

If accused of drug possession, dealing or trafficking, you will be subject to local legal standards and practices, and your U.S. citizenship will not provide any special protections. U.S. students convicted of drug offenses are subject to imprisonment and/or deportation.

Customs

U.K. Customs regulations allow students to bring in personal belongings for use in their studies without being liable to duty, as long as they take them out of the country when they leave.

When you re-enter the United States, customs will require you to declare all items purchased abroad. Keep an account of the costs of purchases, including sales slips. U.S. customs officials have the right to see them.

There are penalties for underestimating the value of declared articles or not reporting them at all. Customs regulations and charges are subject to change, so you may want to check the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website at www.customs.ustreas.gov for up-to-date information.

For U.K. and Ireland Customs regulations, contact Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (www.hmrc.gov.uk) or the Ireland Revenue Commission (www.revenue.ie).

Safety Abroad

Northern Ireland Safety Issues

Northern Ireland is now one of the safest places in Europe to study. Media coverage often sensationalizes occasional violence as sectarian but fails to mention that since the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, paramilitary violence has drastically decreased. The violent crime rate in Northern Ireland remains one of the lowest in the world.

The society of Northern Ireland is working to resolve a historic conflict that has existed for hundreds of years. Today, everyday life in Northern Ireland is not very different from life in the Republic of Ireland and the rest of the U.K. The universities are strictly nonsectarian, and the areas in which they are located reflect the same attitude.

The country is going through a time of economic development and reconciliation. This is an exciting time to observe Northern Ireland by studying there.

Crime

Petty theft is common in Northern Ireland. Don't travel with valuable personal property and avoid traveling alone late at night. During orientation, we provide tips on how to carry credit cards and cash, and how to find help in case of an emergency.

Students studying abroad have a tendency to let down their guard and trust people more than they would at home. During the IFSA-Butler orientation, our staff focus on personal safety, practical tips and common sense rules of living abroad. Contact your insurance agent to obtain additional personal property insurance if necessary.

There is no reason to be unduly concerned about the type of violent crime that is common in the United States. Incidents of rape and armed robbery are low, especially compared to U.S. statistics. Ownership of handguns is strictly regulated.

Security Measures (Evacuation Scenarios)

IFSA-Butler follows certain procedures if a specific threat is made against U.S. citizens abroad in a specific geographic location where we have programs. In some cases, political instability within that location might make it necessary to follow these procedures; likewise, threats made against the general population within that country would also trigger our security procedures.

Should any of these scenarios occur, IFSA-Butler immediately notifies students and their parents. During orientation, we collect students' passport numbers. Should an emergency arise, we send them to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate along with our students' addresses abroad.

Our U.S. office remains in contact with and relies on detailed reports from the resident director in Ireland regarding any developments. We recommend emergency travel or evacuation only as a last resort and only if required by the U.S. State Department or Embassy. Please refer to our website for more information.

Program Safety

The Institute for Study Abroad is committed to ensuring the safety of all students using our services. We ask you to read the descriptions of and sign waivers for certain activities that we organize during the semester. The activities offered during our events are completely optional. We use only licensed and bonded transportation companies for transporting students.

We have extensive support systems on site to help you with any personal or academic problems. Our Ireland office staff can be contacted 24 hours a day.

We will give you an emergency card with contact information during orientation. Keep it with you at all times.

We cannot emphasize enough how important it is to have adequate health coverage while abroad. **Review the medical insurance and assistance plan included in your program fee to determine whether you need additional coverage.**

Student Safety Precautions

We recommend that students on all our programs take the following basic precautions while studying and traveling abroad.

Register with the U.S. Consulate

We recommend that you register with the U.S. Consulate in Belfast, either in person or online, soon after you arrive. It is important that the U.S. authorities be able to contact you in case of an emergency. If an emergency occurs while you are traveling, contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

Read the State Department Travel Advisories

These are available for all countries, so be sure to read them for any place you plan to visit. The Ireland office routinely updates students on new State Department travel advisories, cautions and warnings.

Keep a Low Profile

Try to blend in with the host country's surroundings as much as possible. Avoid speaking loudly and wearing clothes that mark you as a U.S. citizen (e.g., university fraternity or sorority shirts). Don't hang out at tourist gathering places and do not travel with large groups of Americans.

Be Cautious When You Meet New People

Don't give out your address or telephone number. Be alert to your surroundings and the people with whom you have contact.

When Traveling, Leave a Daily Itinerary

When you leave your host city, leave a detailed itinerary with our Ireland office. You can send your itinerary via email to the office. Make sure you have sufficient funds (usually in cash or traveler's checks) with you. Please feel free to travel, but let the office know where you are and how to contact you in case of an emergency.

Do Not Leave Your Bags Unattended at Any Time

Do not agree to carry or look after packages or suitcases for anyone, and never leave your bags unattended.

Keep in Touch with Current Events

Know what's going on politically in the world by listening to the television or radio on a daily basis. In the event of an emergency, advisories may be made to the general public through the media.

Keep in Touch with Our Office

In case of an emergency, remain in contact with our Ireland office via phone and email. Should an emergency occur, check in immediately by phone or email with our Ireland office. You should also contact your parents to let them know you are fine.

Being an U. S. Citizen Abroad

While studying in Northern Ireland, you may encounter negative attitudes toward U.S. citizens and U.S. government, history or culture. This kind of anti-Americanism has existed since before the Cold War, but it often takes students by surprise.

Most anti-American opinions are just that: individual opinions about U.S. politics or culture. They may be based on current events, stereotypes, media or experiences with other U.S. citizens. These views are not intended to be a threat to you.

Occasionally, your classmates or strangers may deride all U.S. citizens or you personally, either to irritate you or out of prejudice or ignorance. As everywhere in the world, including the United States, Northern Ireland has a wide variety of people with a wide range of opinions, including some whose views are based on ignorance or on sweeping generalizations.

Regardless of the nature of the statements you hear, you must understand that anti-American attitudes are not by themselves a threat to your personal safety. Even a classroom debate or anti-American campus rally, both of which may be understandably intimidating to a U.S. citizen, are legitimate components of the educational experience.

Before you go abroad, brush up on U.S. history and politics, as well as the reasoning behind U.S. foreign policy. This knowledge will help you participate in conversations or debates without feeling helpless or attacked.

Study abroad is full of academic and cultural challenges, including the reality that a wide range of opinions about the United States exists. Remember that our staff in Ireland are happy to lend a sympathetic ear and offer further advice for dealing with these situations.

Emergencies Abroad

Please take reasonable precautions while abroad. Avoid risky behavior, walking alone at night and exploring on your own. Pay attention to warning signs. Carry a next-of-kin contact card in your wallet along with the emergency contact wallet card we give you during the orientation abroad.

Our Ireland office emergency number is for use after business hours or on weekends. Please don't contact staff during emergency hours unless you have a true emergency. The emergency number is for emergency purposes only; our staff can't stay on the line with you if your concern can be handled during regular business hours.

Specific Emergencies

If you have been the victim of a crime or if there is a fire, call the police number immediately.

If you require immediate medical assistance or cave, mountain or coastal rescue, call 112, the rescue number or emergency number (equivalent to 911).

If you are hospitalized abroad, call the IFSA-Butler Ireland office immediately. We can help you with insurance questions and make sure you are looked after once you have been discharged.

If you have been arrested abroad, call the IFSA-Butler Ireland office emergency number. We can't provide you with legal help, but we can offer support and contact family members for you.

If you have an emergency abroad, please contact your family once you are safe to assure them that all is well.

Locating You if an Emergency Occurs

Always inform the IFSA-Butler Ireland office of your travel itinerary by completing a travel notification form (available on the Ireland office website) if you are leaving your host university city on a non-IFSA-Butler trip. On vacations, use caution when participating in physical activities.

Most importantly, if you have an emergency abroad, please contact your family in the United States as soon as you can to assure them that all is well.

Local Area Emergency and Student Check-In

If a local emergency occurs while you are studying in Northern Ireland, we want to make sure you are safe. Please contact IFSA-Butler via email or phone according to the information provided on your IFSA-Butler emergency contact card.

Student Affairs

This section is designed to help you and your parents prepare for your time abroad and cope with issues once you are in Northern Ireland. Some of this information is also touched on in other sections of this guide.

Alcohol

The legal drinking age is 18 in Northern Ireland, and as a result pubs are a large part of the social scene for students. Alcohol is usually available on campus. Although IFSA-Butler never pays for alcohol at events we sponsor, university-sponsored events might provide alcohol. Think about how you'll deal with the easy access to alcohol before you go.

IFSA-Butler events are alcohol free. Students who are intoxicated or carrying alcohol at IFSA-Butler events may not be allowed to participate.

Many students choose to avoid alcohol and drink nonalcoholic beverages instead. Socializing with students in Northern Ireland doesn't mean you have to drink; ordering a soft drink at a pub is perfectly acceptable. We recommend that you drink moderately if you choose to drink. Remember, binge drinking is extremely dangerous.

IFSA-Butler students at Giants Causeway.



We cannot emphasize enough how many discipline and safety issues are caused by overindulgence with alcohol and how many study abroad experiences are soured because of it. Most complaints and police encounters that involve IFSA-Butler students stem from the abuse of alcohol.

If you are arrested for an alcohol-related crime, you are subject to all local laws. IFSA-Butler does not provide legal support to students who are arrested abroad.

Alcohol Abuse

If you are currently in a program to control your alcohol abuse, please inform us on the medical form that is included in your acceptance packet. Any information you relay to us will be kept confidential and will not affect your ability to enroll in our program. We can help you find continuing counseling and support abroad.

IFSA-Butler supports students who are actively working to control a substance abuse problem. However, we cannot permit any type of illegal behavior or behavior that may endanger you or others. IFSA-Butler reserves the right to remove from the program any student who behaves in a violent or self-destructive manner or who is charged with an alcohol-related crime.

Class Attendance

Students studying on an IFSA-Butler program are required to attend all regularly scheduled classes. Failure to attend classes can result in loss of credit.

Counseling

Students with pre-existing mental health conditions (including eating disorders, substance abuse problems and depression) are particularly susceptible to increased stress while studying abroad. We ask that you fully disclose to us any mental health condition before you depart so we can help arrange counseling support to continue immediately after you arrive at your new university. Any information of this sort will be completely confidential.

Counseling practices in Northern Ireland are very similar to those in the United States. If you have a pre-existing condition, you should link your mental health professional with the Northern Ireland professional to continue treatment strategies. Additional medical insurance may be necessary to cover counseling sessions abroad.

We cannot emphasize strongly enough that students who are on medication for a mental health condition should continue treatment unless advised by a physician to stop. Temporary changes in scene can make students feel over-

confident that they are fine and no longer need their medication. Ceasing medication can have disastrous effects. Please continue your regimen unless advised otherwise by a physician or mental health professional.

Diversity

IFSA-Butler works with some of the most prestigious universities in the U.K., and their excellent reputations attract students from around the globe. You are likely to live with and attend classes with a substantial number of students from Africa, Asia, the Middle East, India and elsewhere in Europe, as well as with U.K. citizens from a wide variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Our philosophy is to help our students achieve cultural immersion, which means we help you enroll directly into university courses and integrate into university life. We do not segregate our students from the university communities in which they work and live.

Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are common among U.S. college students. However, the stress of studying abroad sometimes causes these disorders to intensify.

Counselors and support groups at your host university can help with advice on eating disorders. You can also contact a community support group if you would rather seek help off campus. Our Ireland office can help you locate support.

Hitchhiking

Do not hitchhike. You may be tempted, especially when traveling around the countryside, but hitchhiking is no safer abroad than in the United States.

Housing Expectations

Housing options vary from university to university and from dorm to dorm. We offer comparable accommodation to every student, but minor differences in types of rooms occur. Please be flexible and give the new housing a few weeks before becoming too critical. Remember, housing is guaranteed, but your first choice of accommodation is not.

Illegal Drug Use

If you are found possessing, using or dealing illegal drugs, you can and will be prosecuted. All local laws apply, and your U.S. citizenship will not protect you. You may have to serve jail time or you may be deported.

If you are arrested, we reserve the right to dismiss you from the program. IFSA-Butler does not offer legal assistance to students arrested abroad.

Loneliness and Homesickness

Adjusting to a new way of life can be very stressful, and many students feel homesick during the initial settling-in period. We encourage you to share your feelings with someone. Counseling services are available on your campus, and our Ireland office is only a collect phone call away.

To combat homesickness, get involved in a sport or group. Keep a regular, healthy diet and exercise schedule, get enough sleep and continue your hobbies. Call our IFSA-Butler staff or your host university's counseling services for help if you feel overwhelmed.

Medication

If you are currently taking prescription medication for any reason, you should not alter your dosage without consulting a physician. Not taking prescribed medication could have harmful effects.

Sexual Harassment

IFSA-Butler does not tolerate sexual harassment among its employees or students. Any complaints will be treated with confidentiality and sensitivity.

Sexual harassment may be described generally as unwanted sexual advances or behavior, such as physical contact or verbal comments or suggestions that offend or intimidate and adversely affect a person. Examples of sexual harassment include:

- Leering, patting, pinching
- Displays of offensive pictures, posters or graffiti
- Dirty jokes, derogatory comments, offensive written messages and offensive phone calls
- Groups of people ridiculing, leering, wolf whistling, or making sexual comments at a person or group of people

Many victims of harassment do not report their experiences because they fear others may not believe them. Feel free to talk to our IFSA-Butler or university staff; they can give you the support you need to confront your harasser and stop the problem.

Sexual Health

Anyone who is sexually active can get or transmit a sexually transmitted infection. STDs are as large a health threat abroad as they are in the United States, and you must take the same precautions that you would at home.

Most student unions sell condoms, as do most pharmacies and some grocery stores. Some other forms of contraception can be bought off the shelf but require referral from a family planning association. Your student health cen-

ter can provide you with information regarding emergency contraception. Many of them, along with your local general practitioner, carry the morning-after pill.

Confidential pregnancy advice is available from the Family Planning Association, a U.K. organization providing care for pregnant women, but it's essential that you also contact your local general practitioner. Abortions are performed in Northern Ireland in exceptional cases but are more widely available in the rest of the U.K.

Reduce your risk of sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancy by behaving responsibly and protecting yourself.

Theft

The rate of petty crime in Northern Ireland is similar to that in the United States. Make sure that all doors and windows are locked at all times. We encourage you to leave anything of great value or of sentimental value at home.

Students studying abroad have a tendency to trust people and let down their guard more than they would at home. During the IFSA-Butler orientation abroad, we focus on personal safety and teach you practical tips and commonsense rules for living abroad. Remember, personal property insurance is not provided by IFSA-Butler, so contact your insurance agent to obtain it.

Culture Shock

The cultural differences between Northern Ireland and the United States are subtle and difficult to recognize. This section should help you understand some of what you might experience during culture shock.

The culture shock curve has three basic phases and a more complicated phase as you return to the United States. You may experience these phases in a different order and for different periods of time. Call the IFSA-Butler



Students on the Queen's University Belfast campus. Photo courtesy of Queen's University Belfast

Ireland office if you want advice.

Phase I: The Honeymoon

You may experience an initial euphoria about being in a new place. During this period, you cannot envision anything better than being abroad. The honeymoon can last for as little as a week or for as long as six weeks.

Phase II: End of the Honeymoon

The end of the honeymoon usually begins about the third week into the program and is characterized by an acute dislike for anything having to do with the location, the people, the new words or the customs of the host country. You might feel a general sense of distress and frustration. Luckily, this period of disillusionment tends to pass quickly.

Our Ireland staff and each university's international student office understand the problems of culture shock. They will do what they can to make the adjustment period easier. They recommend that you join the university's student union to meet local students and to participate in activities you enjoy at home.

If you experience culture shock or loneliness for an extended time, ask for help. Our staff have years of experience assisting American students in adjusting, and they will gladly take the time to speak with you about the challenges you are facing. We want to make sure that your study abroad is a success, both personally and academically.

Phase III: Adjustment

After the period of disillusionment, you begin to adjust to the new environment. Some students adjust by "going native" (adopting wholeheartedly the new culture) and end up with a new haircut, a new accent or a whole new style! Fortunately, as the semester or term progresses and you settle into a routine, your cultural adaptation usually becomes more natural. The third phase is the settled phase, characterized by seeing both positive and negative aspects of your host culture.

Phase IV: Re-entry

Returning home often exposes you to these same feelings of culture shock all over again. During a period of study abroad, you benefit by becoming self-sufficient and more independent. Returning to college for another year is a risk; the friends that you left behind might not have grown quite so dramatically and might not want to hear all about it or see the photographs. On one hand, you may be happy to be home and to see family and friends. On the other hand, you may miss the friends and the lifestyle you have left behind.

If you find that you're having difficulty readjusting to the United States, the study abroad advisor on your home campus can help. Volunteer as a peer advisor in your home campus study abroad office to help make the transition easier by sharing your positive experiences with others.

Causes of Culture Shock

Study abroad is not a vacation in a foreign country; rather, it is an acculturation exercise, and you are expected to blend in with and live like members of the new student population. In spite of the fact that you might already have visited Ireland, living there is different. You may become frustrated by the differences in day-to-day life—operating a phone, finding late shopping hours, getting around on the train or bus. The facilities available in Northern Ireland may be different from those in the United States.

In Northern Ireland, so much of what you see, hear and experience seems much like that at home. Language is not a problem; the student cultures are similar; and American brand names, TV shows, and even sports and logos are everywhere. But Northern Ireland is culturally different. When those differences (in work habits, attitudes, academic practices, etc.) become apparent, they can hit with considerable impact.

Adjustment is an opportunity to discover why most students find study abroad so rewarding; it forces you to learn about your personal limits and strengths.

Solving Problems Abroad

We've already discussed the issue of culture shock, but other issues may arise that make your study abroad experience more challenging. Our Ireland staff can help you solve any problems you experience throughout your semester or year.

If you experience a problem while abroad, please call our Ireland office first. They might be able to solve what seems like a big problem relatively quickly. Remember, they live in the same time zone you do, deal with the same officials you do and can be at your side in a short time if necessary.

Please don't call your parents until after you have contacted our Ireland office. Although your parents can lend a sympathetic ear, they can't help you solve the problem from the United States and knowing about it can cause them undue distress. Go to our Ireland office first. Then you can call your parents and let them know that steps are being taken to resolve the issue.

Our mission is to help you make your study abroad experience as rewarding as possible. We'll do all we can to help you succeed in Northern Ireland.

Summary

We are here to help you prepare for your study abroad experience and to provide academic and personal support once you arrive abroad. If you experience problems in Northern Ireland, please contact our Ireland office immediately. If we don't know about a problem we cannot begin to help. Call our Ireland office at 00-353-1639-4608; the office is usually open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

We hope this booklet has addressed most of your questions and that it continues to be a resource for you and your family throughout the study abroad period. Please consult the back of this book for phone numbers and addresses of our offices if you need further explanation of any of the points in this guide.



IFSA-Butler students.

Appendix I: Information Resources

Learn About Your Own Country

Before you go abroad, brush up on your understanding of U.S. government, history and foreign policy. You may be asked your opinion on such topics. Read newspapers and newsmagazines to keep current.

Travel Resources

Buy a good guidebook. We highly recommend both the *Lonely Planet Guide* and the *Rough Guide*. Other good guidebooks are available, but be sure to buy a guide that is geared to the budget traveler. We also recommend *Culture Shock: Ireland*. It's a highly entertaining guide to customs and etiquette in Ireland.

Two excellent books you might want to check out are *Northern Ireland: The Province of Ulster* by Catherine Day and *The Truth About the Irish* by Terry Eagleton. Edna O'Brien's *Mother Ireland* is a lovely autobiographical travel book.

For some historical perspective, consider picking up *A Concise History of Ireland* by Máire and Conor Cruise O'Brien. *The Oxford History of Ireland*, edited by R.F. Foster, is another good choice.

For more about "the Troubles," our staff recommend *Endgame in Ireland* by Eamonn Mallie and David McKittrick.

You should also check out the following websites:

- *Institute for Study Abroad, Butler University* www.ifsa-butler.org
It provides all the information you need about preparing to go abroad. We also link to the host universities' websites.
- *The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)* www.cdc.gov/travel
Check out current health recommendations both for Northern Ireland and for any other country you're considering visiting.
- *The Lonely Planet* www.lonelyplanet.com
- *Britain USA (British Embassy)* www.britainusa.com
- *Northern Ireland Tourist Board* www.discovernorthernireland.com

Current Events

The following sites are good places to start for news from Northern Ireland.

- *The Irish News* www.irishnews.com
- *The Belfast Telegraph* www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk

Films

Bloody Sunday
The Snapper
The Commitments
The Crying Game
The General
In the Name of the Father
The Play Boys
My Left Foot
Circle of Friends
Michael Collins
The Devil's Own
The Secret of Roan Inish
The Field
This Is the Sea
Some Mother's Son
The Butcher Boy
The Matchmaker
Nora
Dancing at Lughnasa
In America
The Wind that Shakes the Barley

Musicians

Mary Black	Snow Patrol
The Chieftains	Bell XI
The Cranberries	Two Door Cinema Club
The Corrs	Imelda May
Delorentos	The Script
Enya	The Villagers
John McCormack	Mundy
Sinead O'Connor	Duke Special
Sharon Shannon	Declan O'Rourke
U2	
Van Morrison	
The Saw Doctors	
Clannad	
Francis Black	
West Life	
Ronan Keating	
Brian Kennedy	
Damien Dempsey	
Paddy Casey	
Christy Moore	

Appendix II: Language

Only 8 percent of the population of Ireland speaks Irish or Gaelic (it is more prevalent in the Republic), but you will find some words used commonly wherever you live or travel in the Republic and in the North.

Éire (pronounced air-eh)	Ireland
Garda (gar-da)	policeman
Gardaí (gar-dee)	police
banc (bonc)	bank
nuacht (new-oct)	news
siopaí (shop-ee)	shops
slainte (slawn-te)	"cheers" or "to your health"
Conas ata tú? (cunn-us-at-aw too)	How are you? (the east)
Ce'n chaoi a bhfuil tu? (cane kwee a-will too)	How are you? (the west)
thar cion (har keyon)	great
beo eigin (byo ae-gan)	not well
go raibh maith agat (go rev mah-agut)	thank you
slán (slawn)	bye
oiche mhaith (ee-huh wah)	good night
craic	fun

Expressions commonly used in the North include the following:

ach	oh, ahh
aye	yes
bake; gub	mouth
bap	sandwich bun or roll
bog	bathroom
boke	vomit
bun, wee bun	sweet roll, danish
cheerio	goodbye
cheers	thanks
dead on	great, perfect
dear	expensive
faffin', faffin' about	messing around
giv'as (give us)	give me
lolly, ice lolly	popsicle
mingin'; manky	messy, horrible
naff	stupid, useless
poke	ice cream
slabber	liar
snog	kiss
soda	bread (not the drink)
sound	good, dependable (person)

steady, steady on
sweets
The State
thingy
talent
Ulster fry

wee
your man/woman
Is that you?
Are you away?
What about ya?
Catch yourself on!
wet the tea
away in the head
Away on!
I tell a lie.

Are you gettin’?
does my head in

behave, watch it
candies
Republic of Ireland
“what’s-his/her-name”
attractive people
a fried meal with eggs, bacon,
sausage, pancakes, soda bread,
potato bread, beans, tomatoes,
mushrooms, etc.
small
that man/woman
Are you finished?
Are you going out?
What’s up? How are you?
Wise up!
make some tea
lost his senses; stupid
You’re kidding!
Used when you realize you’ve just
said something wrong
Have you been helped/served?
drives me up the wall

queue
ring
shandy
stout
wrecked

line
phone
lemonade and beer mix
a type of beer
exhausted

It’s also common in the North to put the word “our” before the name of persons you’re familiar with. For example, a relative or close friend named Ann would be called “Our Ann.”

English terms you might hear include the following:

biscuits
bonnet/boot
chemist
consultant
current account
dual carriageway
first floor
flat
fortnight
greengrocer
ground floor
hire
jelly
jumper
lift
mac
pissed

cookies
hood/trunk of a car
drugstore
medical specialist
checking account
two-lane highway
second floor
apartment
two weeks
seller of vegetables
first floor
rent
Jello
sweater
elevator
raincoat
drunk

Appendix III: About Us

Institute for Study Abroad

The Institute for Study Abroad is a nonprofit organization founded at Butler University to provide high-quality overseas study opportunities, plus academic and personal support services, for qualified U.S. undergraduates seeking to earn academic credit through study abroad. While the Institute for Study Abroad is affiliated with Butler University, it is not part of the university.

IFSA-Butler is organized to assist our students from the time they apply until after they return. Staff at the IFSA-Butler office in Indianapolis and around the world are committed to our students. We help them develop realistic expectations and adjust easily to the very different student lifestyles and academic expectations of their host institutions.

In Australia, England, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, IFSA-Butler students are fully integrated into the student bodies of their host colleges and universities. Most are able to live in college or university housing. For a list of programs available in Argentina, Australia, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, England, India, Ireland, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Scotland, Spain, United Arab Emirates and Wales, please check our website at www.ifsa-butler.org.

Butler University

Butler University is a nationally recognized, comprehensive university encompassing six colleges: Arts, Business, Communication, Education, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Pharmacy and Health Sciences. Together, these colleges offer more than 60 undergraduate majors, eight pre-professional majors, one first professional and 18 master's degrees. Approximately 4,700 students are enrolled at Butler University, representing 45 states and 52 countries.

Approximately 77 percent of Butler University students will have participated in some form of internship, student teaching, clinical rotation, research or service learning by the time they graduate. In addition to this professional experience, Butler University students develop lifelong skills in critical thinking, effective communication, cooperative teamwork and ethical decision making. Butler University endeavors to prepare students not simply to make a living, but to live lives of purpose in which personal flourishing is intertwined with the welfare of others.

IFSA-Butler Directory

Ireland Office

46 Merrion Square
Dublin 2
Ireland

Telephone from U.S.	011-353-1639-4608
Fax from U.S.	011-353-1639-3995
From Northern Ireland	00-353-1639-4608

Website	ireland.ifsa-butler.org
Email	ireland@ifsa-butler.org

U.S. Office

Institute for Study Abroad
1100 W. 42nd Street, Suite 305
Indianapolis, IN 46208-3345

Telephone	317-940-9336 800-858-0229
Fax number	317-940-9704

Website	www.ifsa-butler.org
Email	studyabroad@ifsa-butler.org

Emergencies Abroad

Please take reasonable precautions while abroad. Avoid risky behavior, walking alone at night and exploring on your own. Pay attention to warning signs. Carry a next-of-kin contact card in your wallet along with the emergency contact wallet card we give you during the orientation abroad.

The Ireland office emergency number is for use after business hours or on weekends. Please don't contact staff during emergency hours unless you have a true emergency. The emergency number is for emergency purposes only; the staff can't stay on the line with you if your concern can be handled during regular business hours.

Specific Emergencies

If you have been the victim of a crime or if there is a fire, call the police number immediately.

If you require immediate medical assistance or cave, mountain or coastal rescue, call 112, the rescue number or emergency number (equivalent to 911).

If you are hospitalized abroad, call the IFSA-Butler Ireland office immediately. We can help you with insurance questions and make sure you are looked after once you have been discharged.

If you have been arrested abroad, call the IFSA-Butler Ireland office emergency number. We can't provide you with legal help, but we can offer support and contact family members for you.

If you have an emergency abroad, please contact your family once you are safe to assure them that all is well.