



ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 650, Washington, DC 20036
ph 202-457-0650 • fax 202-728-0977 • accu@accunet.org • www.accunet.org

Irish American Scholars Program Guidelines

Sponsored by

Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
United Methodist Church-Related Colleges and Universities

In cooperation with

Queens University Belfast
University of Ulster
St. Mary's University College
Stranmillis University College
Belfast Metropolitan College

In association with

STUDY USA of Northern Ireland

Participating Institutions

Queens University Belfast is one of the 20 top research-intensive institutions in the United Kingdom. While the university does not offer courses in all disciplines, most U.S. students will find appropriate subjects at Queens University. www.qub.ac.uk

The **University of Ulster** has a national and international reputation for excellence. With four distinct campuses across Northern Ireland, students are placed at a specific campus based on their field of study. www.ulster.ac.uk

St. Mary's University College specializes in liberal arts and teacher training, and is integrated into the larger Queen's University system. In 2011, St. Mary's was ranked third amongst all universities in the United Kingdom for student satisfaction with their overall university experience. www.stmarys-belfast.ac.uk

Stranmillis University College is highly recognized for its teacher training curriculum, but also offers courses in early childhood and health and leisure studies. Stranmillis is a college within the system of Queen's University Belfast. www.stran.ac.uk

Belfast Metropolitan College specializes in educating students with strong career goals in vocational areas such as business, marketing, computing, performing arts, communication and Irish studies. www.belfastmet.ac.uk

The programs and faculty at these institutions are of high quality and U.S. students can expect a fulfilling year in Northern Ireland through placement at any of these schools.

Who May Apply

Current sophomore and junior students at U.S. colleges that participate in Study USA (formerly the Business Education Initiative — BEI) may apply. (Note: Institutions that have agreed to host a Study USA student during the current academic year may submit student applications for the Irish American Scholars program even if there is no Study USA student currently on campus.) Students may not attend a school in Northern Ireland for their final semester of study. In order to obtain a Visa, students must show that they are required to return to the United States to complete their education. This means that juniors may apply only for the fall semester. Additionally, because they usually have not completed sufficient coursework in their major field of study, students who are currently freshmen will not be accepted as Irish American Scholars.

Limitations

Schools in Northern Ireland limit the number of students they accept as Irish American Scholars. Acceptance is generally determined by space availability and by a student's GPA. Students who apply for a full year may be offered only one semester because of space limitations. In addition, there are generally fewer opportunities to place students during the spring semester.

Grade Point Requirement

A minimum **cumulative** GPA of 3.200 on a 4.000 scale is required. **No exceptions!**

Application Process

Students must be nominated by their home institution and must submit **six** copies of the following documents:

- Completed application & nomination forms.
- An official academic transcript through the fall semester of the current academic year.
- A 500-word essay describing the applicant's educational objectives while studying in Northern Ireland. (Students should determine in advance that their intended course of study is offered at the institutions they select.)
- Two letters of recommendation – one from the student's academic adviser and one from another faculty member or administrator at the applicant's home institution.

Six copies of all student application materials should be sent to:

**Pamela Galligan-Stierle
Coordinator of Special Programs
Association of Catholic Colleges & Universities
One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 650
Washington, DC 20036**

Deadline

Applications must be postmarked by February 1, 2014. **No exceptions!**

Selection Process

Participating schools in Northern Ireland review all applications and make final selections and placements. Qualified applicants who are not accepted may be put on a reserve list and offered a placement if another student declines. Applicants who are accepted will be notified in March and must accept or decline by April 1. Students who accept generally receive information from their school in Northern Ireland in late April. **Placements are final and are not subject to negotiation.** Accepted students must complete all required paperwork from their assigned school in Northern Ireland, as requested.

Special Considerations

- Students planning to study art must submit a portfolio of their work on CD or via a website with their application materials. Art students should have completed significant coursework before applying.
- Students planning to study science or math should have completed significant coursework in their field prior to studying in Northern Ireland.
- Students attending the University of Ulster will take all their courses at one campus. It is not possible to take courses at more than one. Applicants should, therefore, be sure that all the courses they wish to take are available at a particular University of Ulster campus.
- The University of Ulster is the best choice for history majors who want to study Irish history.
- Education/Teaching is available only at Stranmillis and St. Mary's. Preference is given to students who have some in-classroom experience. The spring semester in Northern Ireland includes an in-school placement. Education students must, therefore, obtain a background check and bring the results with them to Northern Ireland.
- Students interested in studying a musical instrument at University of Ulster–McGee will be required to pay additional fees not included in the tuition/fee waiver from the university.
- At Belfast Metropolitan College, students can generally take classes in only one subject field. International students can take classes only in HND or FD tracks. Business/marketing students must attend for a full year. Dance and theatre students must attend for the fall semester or for a full year, but not for the spring semester only.
- Applicants should talk with their adviser or campus director of international study to determine how study abroad will affect their academic program, specifically whether credit for courses in Northern Ireland will transfer to their home college.

Finances

Irish American Scholars must register and pay any tuition and fees required at their home college or university. Tuition and fees at accepting institutions will be waived, but students will be responsible for housing, food, travel, books and other living expenses in Northern Ireland. Some of these costs may be covered by financial aid at a student's home college. Students should contact the financial aid office at their home institution for advice on how aid can be applied in their particular situation. U.S. students in Northern Ireland find living expenses high, especially for food, so appropriate financial commitment must be secured.

Orientation

International students must attend orientation programs, which are scheduled at the schools in Northern Ireland before the beginning of each semester.

Registration

Registration for specific classes happens after a student arrives in Northern Ireland. Students should be flexible in selecting courses and should not assume that a particular class will be offered during the time they are in Northern Ireland.

Housing

Housing can be arranged through the schools in Northern Ireland but this must be done in advance.

Traveling to Northern Ireland

Students should read immigration rules carefully as the rules have become stricter. When traveling to Northern Ireland, students must fly directly into Belfast or into another airport in the United Kingdom (e.g., London, Manchester or Glasgow). They must not fly via the Republic of Ireland (Dublin or Shannon), as they will not be cleared through immigration.

More information about the Irish American Scholars Program, as well as the nomination and application forms, can be found on ACCU's website:

<http://www.accunet.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=3771>

For further assistance, please contact:

Pamela Galligan-Stierle
Coordinator of Special Programs
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 650
Washington, DC 20036
[**pamelagalliganstierle@gmail.com**](mailto:pamelagalliganstierle@gmail.com)
202-236-6479