

HOSTING AGREEMENT SCHEME

Removing obstacles for non EU researchers coming to Ireland

Through major government-funded investments, Ireland now has world class research teams who attract students and researchers from around the world. An essential element of research is internationalisation; it is by its nature a global activity and Ireland cannot achieve national targets without recruiting overseas talent. Yet administrative barriers – notably immigration procedures – can pose serious obstacles to the movement of these students and researchers. Initiatives from the Departments of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment have helped remove some of these obstacles. Ireland has become significantly more attractive to researchers since the introduction of the Researcher Hosting Agreement Scheme in 2007.

RESEARCHER HOSTING AGREEMENT SCHEME

This scheme, which Ireland opted into voluntarily, implements a European Union Directive on the admission of third country nationals for the purpose of conducting research.

The scheme enables approved research active organisations to recruit researchers from outside the European Economic Area to carry out research in Ireland without the need for a Green Card or Work Permit. This mechanism facilitates researchers and their immediate family for the duration of their contract making Ireland much more attractive than many other European countries.

HOW IT WORKS

Research organisations, both public and private sector, apply to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment for accreditation. Once approved, the organisation is able to offer hosting agreements to third country researchers to carry out defined research.

Hosting agreements are submitted by the research organisations for processing and validation to the IUA Researcher Mobility Office. The office is the government appointed central processing house for hosting agreements and plays a key role in the official accreditation and immigration process. In addition to providing assistance on the scheme via a help desk, the office ensures the paperwork is accurately completed and relevant information is sent to the Government's Visa Policy Division.

The visa office approves the agreement and then circulates the details to immigration authorities and international embassies for visa application and registration purposes.

There is no fee for accreditation of organisations or administration of hosting agreements in Ireland.

FAMILIES OF RESEARCHERS

Spouses and dependants of a researcher coming within the scope of the Directive will be able to apply for work permits under the same conditions as apply to work permits for spouses and dependants of employment permit holders. Accredited research organisations must ensure that the researcher has sufficient monthly resources to meet his or her expenses, without having recourse to the national social assistance system. The researcher's spouse and children may accompany them subject to compliance with the same admission conditions which apply to the researcher.

A researcher coming within the scope of the Directive and his or her spouse and dependents will be eligible to apply for permanent residence in the State under the same conditions as apply to holders of Green Cards, i.e. 2 years after admission under a Hosting Agreement.

EXISTING RESEARCHERS

Existing researchers currently on work permits can avail of the agreement immediately or when their current work permit is due to terminate.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For detailed information and application procedures for the scheme, or if you have any queries relating to the services provided by the IUA Researcher Mobility Office, please email mobility@iua.ie or log on to www.researchcareersireland.com

Alternatively you can contact Jennifer Cleary or Magda Wislocka directly at + 353 1 676 4948

The IUA Researcher Mobility Office and portal, researchcareersireland.com, provides practical advice and assistance to researchers and their families wishing to move to Ireland or move abroad to continue a career in research.

Information on the accreditation process for organisations can be accessed at the Department Enterprise, Trade & Employment Website: www.entemp.ie/science/technology/accreditation

Thanks to the hosting agreement scheme, it took only ten days for my wife, my son and I to get our visas from the Irish Embassy in London. I am grateful for the effectiveness and efficiency of the process as the Hosting Agreement scheme guaranteed me taking up my post on time with the accompaniment of my family.

Xizhe Chen, Regenerative Medicine Institute, NUI Galway.

I originally moved to Ireland from Bosnia-Herzegovina under the work-permit scheme but after six months I switched to a hosting agreement. The process of getting a hosting agreement was significantly less stressful and less time consuming. It provided myself and my family with a feeling of stability, thus making our Irish experience much more enjoyable.

Tarik Hadzic, Computer Science, University College Cork

The hosting agreement was a major plus for our move to Ireland from the U.S. last year. The hosting agreement made it much simpler for us to work here by reducing paperwork and red tape. We are assured of a longer term to support our family, and to contribute our expertise to the health research enterprise in Ireland.

Prof Robert Lahue, Biochemistry, NUI Galway

University College Cork's experience of the Hosting Agreement scheme has been a very positive one. We have found that Hosting Agreements have greatly facilitated the admission of third country researchers to the University, and has allowed the University to employ researchers of the highest calibre without restrictions. As the Hosting Agreement is such a quick process and allows for visa applications to be fast tracked we also benefit in that researchers, once hired, can commence employment with the University very soon after. It is also of great benefit to us that a hosting agreement can be granted for the length of the researcher's contract so there is no longer a need for renewals.

Bríona Ryng, Dept of Human Resources, University College Cork

The introduction of the hosting agreement has benefited both NUI Galway as employer and the individual researchers. The hosting agreement process is much quicker and involves less administration and costs. Work permits often went missing in the various international postal systems which added to the delay in getting the researchers to Ireland. At recruitment stage, the hosting agreement is most beneficial to attracting international researchers to Ireland as there is a clear understanding of rules surrounding immediate family re-unification and eventual residency entitlements for people interested in moving to Ireland for the purpose of academic research.

Sinead Beacom, Dept of Human Resources, NUI Galway