



WORKERS RIGHTS ALLIANCE

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS *in* IRELAND

A Simple Guide for International Students



PAYSLIP

Know what you're owed



CONTRACT

Understand your employment terms



PPS NUMBER

Your key to working legally



WAGES

Paid fairly for your work



FAIRNESS

Respect. Dignity. Equal treatment.



Workers Rights Alliance

Know Your Rights.
Protect Your Future.





EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS IN IRELAND

A Simple Guide for International Students

Know Your Rights. Protect Your Future.

Plain-English guidance for international students working in Ireland.

Workers Rights Alliance (WRA) | 2026 Edition

Your rights travel with you

Starting work in a new country can be exciting, but employment rules may be different from what you are used to. This guide explains the main workplace rights that apply when you work in Ireland, including pay, payslips, tax, breaks, leave, fair treatment and what to do if a problem arises.

Important

Being an international student does not give an employer permission to pay you less, deny you breaks, withhold a payslip, discriminate against you, or ignore Irish employment law.

Inside this guide

1. Getting a PPS Number

What a PPS Number is, why you need one and how to apply.

2. Starting a job

Revenue, written terms and what records to keep.

3. Pay & payslips

Minimum wage, sample payslip and how to read it.

4. Hours & breaks

Working time, rest periods and legal breaks.

5. Leave

Annual leave, public holidays and statutory sick leave.

6. Fair treatment

Discrimination, bullying, harassment and dignity at work.

7. Problems at work

Evidence, raising concerns and making a complaint.

8. Help

Where to get independent information and representation.

Use this guide as a starting point

Employment rules and public-service procedures can change. Check the official sources listed at the end of this guide if you are unsure about a current entitlement or process.

Getting a PPS Number

A PPS Number is an important part of starting work and paying tax correctly in Ireland. The Department of Social Protection issues PPS Numbers.

What is a PPS Number?

- A Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) is a unique reference number used when you deal with certain Irish public services, including Revenue and the Department of Social Protection.
- If you are taking up employment, you will normally need a PPS Number so that your job and tax can be recorded correctly.
- You do not need a PPS Number simply because you are looking for a job. You must have a valid reason for applying, such as taking up employment.
- A PPS Number is not a bank account number. Keep it private and only give it to organisations or people who genuinely need it, such as your employer, Revenue or a public body.

How to apply

1. Create a basic MyGovID account.
2. Go to MyWelfare and choose the Personal Public Service (PPS) Number service.
3. Give the reason you need a PPS Number and upload the requested evidence.
4. Follow the online steps to arrange the required appointment.
5. Attend the appointment with the documents listed for you. If approved, your PPS Number will be issued after the checks are completed.

Where do I apply?

Start online at MyWelfare: services.mywelfare.ie. You will need a basic or verified MyGovID account. You can choose an appointment location during the application process. PPS Number Allocation Centres are also listed on gov.ie.

What documents should I prepare?

You must provide evidence of your identity, evidence of your address and evidence of why you need a PPS Number. For EU/EEA citizens, a current passport or national identity card can be used as identity evidence. For non-EU/EEA citizens, a current passport or 1951 travel document can be used. Proof of address must show your name and address and should not be more than 3 months old.

Useful evidence

For a work-related PPSN application, keep evidence showing why you need the number - for example, details of the job you are taking up. MyWelfare will tell you what documents are required for your appointment. Make sure uploaded copies are clear and easy to read.

SECTION 2

Starting a job: your first checklist

Before your first shift, make sure you know exactly who you are working for and what you have agreed to.

- ☐ Know the employer's legal/business name and workplace address.
- ☐ Give your employer your PPSN when available.
- ☐ If this is your first job in Ireland, register it with Revenue through myAccount.
- ☐ Keep a copy of your roster, offer message, contract and any emails or texts about pay and hours.
- ☐ Write down your actual start and finish times, especially if the roster changes.
- ☐ Make sure you understand your agreed hours, rate of pay and pay frequency.

Emergency Tax

If this is your first job in Ireland, register it with Revenue as soon as possible. If Revenue cannot issue the correct payroll information to your employer, Emergency Tax may be deducted from your wages.

Your written terms

Your employer must give you a written statement of core employment terms within 5 days of starting work. A fuller written statement of your terms must be provided within 1 month.

The written terms should cover important information such as your employer, place of work, job, start date, expected duration (if temporary), pay, normal hours, overtime conditions and other key terms.

Do not sign what you do not understand

Ask for time to read a contract. If something is unclear, ask for an explanation or independent advice before signing.

Getting paid correctly: minimum wage & payslips

National Minimum Wage - from 1 January 2026

Age	Minimum hourly rate
Under 18	€9.91
18 years	€11.32
19 years	€12.74
20 years and over	€14.15

Most full-time, part-time, temporary, casual and seasonal employees are covered by minimum wage law. Some sectors have higher legally binding rates.

Work trials must be paid

Minimum wage law applies to work trials, internships and other work arrangements where you are doing work or providing a service under a contract of employment. An employer cannot avoid minimum wage rules simply by calling the shift a “trial”.

Your payslip: how to read it

You must receive a written payslip with every payment of wages. It must show your gross wages and itemise the nature and amount of each deduction. Keep every payslip - it is an important record of your pay and tax.

Sample payslip

This is a simple example only. Real payslips look different and tax deductions vary from person to person.

PAYSLIP ITEM	DETAIL	SAMPLE
Employee	Alex Student	
Employer	Sample Cafe Ltd	
Pay period / pay date	Weekly / 7 Aug 2026	
Basic pay	25 hours x €14.15	€353.75
Gross pay	Pay before deductions	€353.75
PAYE (Income Tax)	Example deduction	€12.00
PRSI + USC	Example deductions	€13.75
Net pay	Amount paid after deductions	€328.00

How to read the sample

- 1. Employer details** - Check that the correct employer or business is named. Some payslips may also show the employer tax registration number.
- 2. Pay period and pay date** - This tells you the period you are being paid for and the date the payment is made.
- 3. Hours and rate** - Compare the hours and hourly rate with your roster and your own record of the time you actually worked.
- 4. Gross pay** - Gross pay is your pay before tax and other deductions. Check that all hours, premiums or other payments due to you are included.
- 5. PAYE** - PAYE is Income Tax deducted through payroll. Revenue tells the employer how to calculate your tax through the payroll system.
- 6. PRSI** - PRSI means Pay Related Social Insurance. The amount depends on your earnings and PRSI class.
- 7. USC** - USC means Universal Social Charge. It is separate from Income Tax and PRSI.
- 8. Other deductions** - Any other deduction should be clearly identified. Ask questions if you do not understand a deduction or did not expect it.
- 9. Net pay** - Net pay is the amount left after deductions. This is normally the amount paid into your bank account or given to you.
- 10. Year-to-date figures** - Many payslips show totals for the year so far. These can help you track your gross pay and tax deductions over time.

Payslip quick check

Before you accept your payslip as correct

Compare it with your roster, your own record of hours and the amount that reached your bank account. If the hours, rate, gross pay or deductions do not look right, raise the issue promptly and keep a copy of your query.

Tips are not a substitute for minimum wage

Tips or gratuities cannot simply be used to replace the national minimum wage owed to you.

Keep your payslips - Save each payslip together with your roster and bank payment record. If a dispute arises later, these records can be very important.

Check Revenue too - Revenue myAccount lets you view pay and tax details reported by your employer. If the figures reported to Revenue do not match what you were actually paid, get advice and raise the issue.

If something looks wrong - Ask for an explanation in writing. State the pay period, the hours or deduction you are questioning and what you believe should be corrected. Keep a copy of your message and the reply.

SECTION 4

Deductions from wages

An employer cannot simply take money from your wages because they want to. Deductions must have a lawful basis.

Deductions may include:

- Deductions required by law, such as PAYE, PRSI or USC.
- A deduction allowed by your contract, where the legal requirements are met.
- A deduction you agreed to in writing in advance.

There are extra legal restrictions for deductions connected with matters such as till shortages, breakages, poor workmanship, uniforms or goods/services supplied by the employer.

Ask for the reason in writing

If money disappears from your pay and you do not understand why, ask the employer to identify the deduction on your payslip and explain the legal or contractual basis for it.

Keep your own records

- ☐ Photograph or save every roster.
- ☐ Keep every payslip.
- ☐ Record actual start and finish times.
- ☐ Keep messages about extra shifts or changes.
- ☐ Keep bank records showing wages received.

Cash payment does not remove your rights

Even if you are paid in cash, you are still entitled to lawful pay and a payslip. Cash payment should not be used to hide hours or underpayment.

SECTION 5

Working hours, breaks and rest

Irish working-time law sets rules on working hours, breaks and rest. Your employer must organise work so that you receive the legal rest and break entitlements that apply to your employment.

Basic break entitlements

Time worked	Minimum break
More than 4.5 hours	15 minutes
More than 6 hours	30 minutes total (this may include the first 15-minute break)

Payment for ordinary breaks is not automatically required by law unless your contract, workplace arrangement or another rule provides for it.

Rest periods

- Normally, 11 consecutive hours of daily rest in each 24-hour period.
- Normally, 24 consecutive hours of weekly rest, following a daily rest period.

Example

If you work more than 6 hours, you are normally entitled to a total break of 30 minutes. This may include the first 15-minute break. Keep a record if you are regularly required to work through your breaks.

Holidays, public holidays and sick leave

Annual leave

All employees - including part-time, temporary and casual employees - build up paid annual leave. Most employees are entitled to up to 4 of their normal working weeks of paid annual leave in a leave year, depending on hours worked.

Part-time students build up holiday pay too

One method of calculating annual leave is 8% of hours worked in the leave year, subject to a maximum of 4 normal working weeks.

Public holidays

Ireland has 10 public holidays each year. Full-time employees have immediate public-holiday entitlement. Part-time employees may also qualify for a public-holiday benefit, subject to the statutory qualifying conditions.

Statutory sick leave - 2026

- 5 statutory sick leave days in a calendar year.
- You must generally have 13 weeks' continuous service with that employer.
- The absence must meet the certification requirements.
- Payment is 70% of usual daily earnings, capped at €110 per day.

Your employer may have a better scheme

Some workplaces provide more generous sick pay. Check your contract or staff handbook as well as the statutory minimum.

Equality, dignity and respect at work

Employment equality law protects workers and job applicants from discrimination in areas such as access to work, pay, training, promotion and other employment conditions.

Protected grounds include:

Gender

You should not be treated less favourably because of gender.

Age

Age discrimination is prohibited, subject to limited legal exceptions.

Race & nationality

Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin are protected.

Religion

Religious belief is a protected ground.

Disability

Disability is protected and reasonable accommodation may arise.

Other grounds

Civil status, family status, sexual orientation and Traveller community membership are also protected.

International student ≠ fewer rights

An employer cannot lawfully justify discrimination by saying you are “only a student”, “foreign”, dependent on work, or unfamiliar with Irish law.

Bullying and harassment

Workplaces should have procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment. If behaviour is serious or repeated, keep a written record of what happened, when it happened, who was present and how you reported it.

If you feel safe doing so, use the workplace grievance or dignity-at-work procedure. You can also seek independent advice before making a formal complaint.

Common warning signs

One problem does not always mean an employer is breaking the law, but these signs should make you stop and ask questions.

- You are told you will be paid below the legal minimum wage.
- You are asked to work a “free trial” where you actually perform work.
- You receive wages but no payslip.
- Your payslip shows fewer hours than you actually worked.
- Money is deducted for a till shortage, uniform, accommodation or damage without a proper explanation.
- You are repeatedly denied legal breaks.
- You are pressured to work excessive hours, work through breaks or regularly give up rest periods.
- You are threatened, intimidated or told not to ask questions about your pay or workplace rights.
- Your employer wants to keep your passport or IRP.
- You are treated differently because of nationality, race, language, religion or another protected ground.

A useful rule

If the employer tells you “this is how it works for international students”, check it. Irish employment rights normally apply to employees regardless of nationality or student status.

What to do when something goes wrong

Act early. Many workplace problems become harder to prove when rosters, messages and payslips are lost.

1	Write down what happened Record dates, times, hours, names, conversations and the amount of money involved.
2	Save your evidence Keep contracts, rosters, payslips, bank statements, texts, emails and screenshots.
3	Raise the issue clearly Where appropriate, ask your manager or employer to correct the problem. Put important concerns in writing.
4	Use the workplace procedure For grievances, bullying, harassment or disciplinary matters, check the employer's written procedure.
5	Get independent advice Contact a worker representative, the WRC information service or another suitable adviser.
6	Watch time limits Many WRC employment complaints must normally be made within 6 months. In some situations an extension up to 12 months may be possible where reasonable cause is shown.

If your job ends

If you leave or are dismissed, check your final pay carefully.

Do not resign in the heat of the moment

Leaving a job can affect the options available to you. If the situation is serious, consider getting advice before resigning or signing a settlement, warning, resignation letter or other document.

- ☐ Final wages for all hours worked.
- ☐ Any outstanding holiday pay due.
- ☐ Your final payslip and correct deductions.
- ☐ Your Revenue employment record after the job ends.
- ☐ Any notice or pay in lieu of notice that may be due under your contract or the law.

A standard unfair dismissal claim generally requires 12 months' continuous service, but important exceptions exist. Other claims - such as discrimination, unpaid wages or penalisation for exercising certain rights - may have different rules and do not always depend on 12 months' service.

Dismissed after raising a concern?

Get advice promptly. The legal issue may not be limited to "unfair dismissal"; other employment protections can apply depending on what happened and why.

Your personal workplace checklist

- ☐ I have applied for or received my PPS Number if I need one for my job.
- ☐ I have registered my first job with Revenue, where required.
- ☐ I know my hourly rate and it meets the legal minimum.
- ☐ I receive a payslip every payday.
- ☐ I keep a copy of my roster and actual hours.
- ☐ I know who to contact if something feels wrong.

Where to get help

Workers Rights Alliance (WRA)

WRA provides practical employment-rights information, support and workplace representation. We can help you understand what has happened, what evidence to keep and what options may be available.

Phone / WhatsApp

087 384 2157

Email

wra.maureen@gmail.com

Support

Employment rights advice, workplace issues and representation.

Approach

Early communication and practical resolution where possible, with legal support when needed.

Official information

Workplace Relations Commission (WRC): workplacerelations.ie

Department of Social Protection - PPS Number: gov.ie | MyWelfare: services.mywelfare.ie

Revenue - tax and myAccount: revenue.ie

If you are in immediate danger

Employment rights advice is not a substitute for emergency assistance. If you are being threatened, confined, assaulted or prevented from leaving, seek appropriate emergency or Garda assistance.

Sources & important note

This guide was prepared using official Irish sources and is designed as a simple introduction, not a full statement of the law.

Main sources checked for the 2026 edition

Department of Social Protection: Personal Public Service (PPS) Number application process, identity/address requirements and PPS Number Allocation Centres.

Workplace Relations Commission: National Minimum Wage; Terms of Employment; Payslips; Deductions from Pay; Working Hours & Breaks; Annual Leave; Public Holidays; Employment Equality; Unpaid Work; Dismissal.

Department of Social Protection / WRC: Statutory Sick Leave rules for 2026.

Revenue: Starting your first job, myAccount, PAYE, Revenue Payroll Notifications and Emergency Tax guidance.

Information correct as checked in August 2026

Rates, employment rules and public-service procedures can change. Always check the latest official information or seek advice for your individual circumstances.

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