

Non-EEA Student Immigration Permission FAQ for Employers

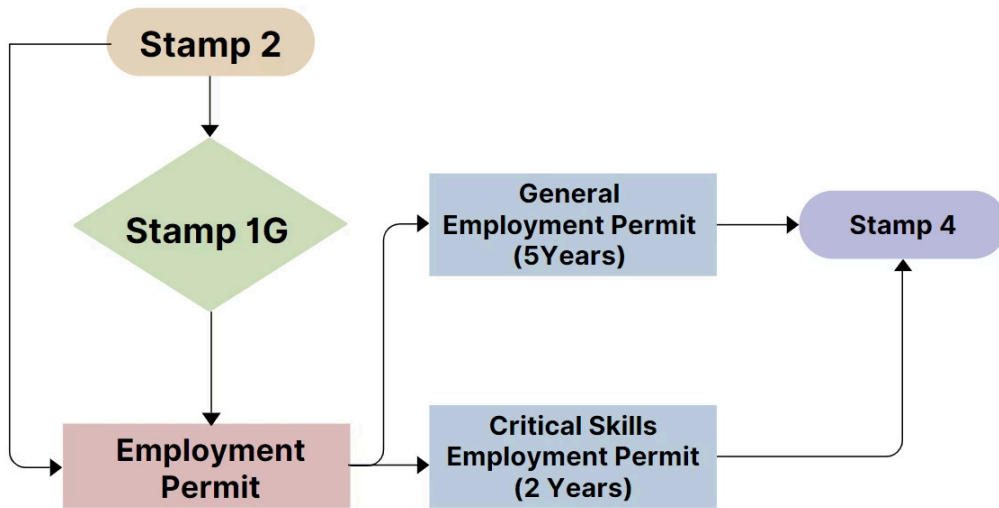
A comprehensive guide for employers hiring non-EEA students in Ireland



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UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



Non-EEA Immigration Permission Roadmap



Stamp 2 Immigration Permission

Stamp Scenario	Working rights
Term time on valid Stamp 2 permission	Part time working rights (up to 20 hours per week)
15th December to 15th January on Stamp 2 permission	Full time working rights (up to 40 hours per week)
1st June – 30th September on Stamp 2 permission	Full time working rights (up to 40 hours per week)
Release of Academic Transcript – Date TBC	Once the document is available, students can apply for Stamp 1G permission
1st October until Stamp 1G permission is approved and issued	Stamp 2 permission - part time working rights (up to 20 hours per week)
Valid Stamp 1G permission	Full time working rights (up to 40 hours per week)

****You will be considered on your student permission until you have your 1G permission and must follow the Stamp 2 working hours guidelines even if you are no longer studying***

Work Placements/Internships for Stamp 2 Holders

▼ If their course has an **accredited** full time paid work placement/internship module, can a Stamp 2 permission holder participate outside of standardised holiday periods for a Stamp 2?

Work placements/paid Internships are allowed when they are part of the academic programme, are accredited and contribute to the final award, subject to the following rules:

- The work placement/internship component of the course cannot exceed 50% of the duration of the course. E.G. A 4-year course would permit 2 years of work placement. In addition, the employment cannot be in a self-employed capacity.
- Work placements/internships as part of an academic programme must form an integral part of the programme which contributes to the final award.
- Educational facilities must also ensure that the placements are suited to the programme being pursued.

▼ If their course does **not** have an accredited paid full time work placement/internship module, can a Stamp 2 permission holder participate outside of standardised holiday periods for a Stamp 2?

Yes, they can still do a work placement/paid internship if it does not impact their attendance and studies, and they are following the working rules of their Stamp 2 permission. On the Stamp 2 student permission a student can work 20 hours per week except during 15 December- 15 January, and 1 June - 30 September when they can work 40 hours.

▼ Can a Stamp 2 permission holder do an unpaid work placement/internship?

Yes, they can do an unpaid work placement/internship, but it cannot impact their attendance or studies as that is the priority.

[Click here for more information on the Department of Justice website](#)

Third Level Graduate Programme (Stamp 1G)

Eligibility

Non-EEA national graduates who have completed their studies in Ireland and have been awarded a degree Level 8 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications by a recognized Irish awarding body while holding a valid Stamp 2 permission.

Working Rights

Graduates can work full time for any employer once they have been issued with a Stamp 1G permission.

Duration

Level 8 graduates are granted a twelve-month permission, while Level 9+ graduates may qualify for twenty-four months.

What is the Third Level Graduate Programme?

The [Third Level Graduate Programme](#) is a programme that allows non-EEA graduates holding an award from a recognised Irish awarding body to remain in Ireland after their studies. This is for the purpose of seeking graduate level employment and applying for either a general employment permit, a critical skills employment permit or a research hosting agreement.

What is the Stamp 1G permission?

Stamp 1G is the immigration permission given to a non-EEA student who is availing of the Third Level Graduate Programme.

Who can apply for the Third Level Graduate Programme?

Non-EEA national graduates who have **completed** their studies in Ireland and have been awarded a degree Level 8 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications by a recognised Irish awarding body while holding a valid Stamp 2 permission.

Can graduates work full time once they submit their application to avail of the Third Level Graduate Programme (Stamp 1G)?

It will depend on the time of year. While the application is being processed, they continue enjoying the rights and conditions of the Stamp 2 permission (provided that it remains valid), including its limited working rights.

Can graduates work for any employer once they have been issued with a Stamp 1G permission?

Yes, they can work full time for any employer, there is no limitation to the type of work and no further permissions are required once the person has a valid Stamp 1G. Employers do not need to sponsor Stamp 1G holders either but this type of Stamp 1G cannot be renewed indefinitely and a transition to an employment permit will be required if permanent employment is envisaged beyond the expiry date of the Stamp 1G. **Employers should ensure that they check expiry date of Stamp 1G in advance of hiring.**

[Click here for more information on the Department of Justice website](#)

Stamp 1G - Working Rights

How long can they avail of the Third Level Graduate Programme?

Undergraduate (Level 8)

- Graduates with an award at Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications will be granted a twelve-month permission to a **maximum of seven years' student permission overall**. This applies mostly to undergraduate students.

Postgraduate (Level 9+)

- Graduates with an award at Level 9 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications qualify for the Programme may be granted permission for up to twenty-four months to a maximum of eight years' student permission. This applies mostly to master's and PhD students.
 - Graduates will be granted permission for twelve months initially. This will be renewed for a further period of twelve months where the graduate satisfies the immigration authorities that they have taken appropriate steps to access suitable graduate level employment (e.g. attendance at job interviews, signing up with graduate employment agencies, etc.).

[Click here for QQI National Framework of Qualifications information](#)

Employment Permits

An Employment Permit in Ireland is a legal document that allows non-EEA nationals to work in the country. There are two main Employment Permits that international students typically apply for.

Employment Permits Minimum Annual Remuneration

Updated Salary Thresholds March 2026

Date	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	2026	Jan 2027
GEP & ICT Trainees	€34,000	€34,000	€36,605	TBD
HCA's, Home Carers and Care Workers	€27,000	€30,000	€32,691 89.3% of GEP	92.5% of GEP
Meat and Horticultural Operatives	€30,000	€30,000	€32,691 89.3% of GEP	92.5% of GEP
GEP Irish Graduate	N/A	N/A	€34,009	Index Only
CSEP W/ Relevant Degree	€38,000	€38,000	€40,904*	TBD*
CSEP W/O Relevant Degree	€64,000	€64,000	€68,911	TBD
Critical Skills Graduate	N/A	N/A	€36,848	Index Only
Intra-Company Transfer and Contract for Services	€46,000	€46,000	€49,523	TBD

**Note – salary alone does not confirm employment permit eligibility*

Special Graduate Thresholds (New for 2026)

The Department of Enterprise (DETE) has re-introduced lower thresholds to support early-career recruitment for non-EEA graduates.

Graduates may now qualify for reduced MAR thresholds where they:

- Have completed a Level 8 or higher qualification within the previous 12 months,
- Are being recruited into a suitable graduate-level role under the General Employment Permit (GEP) or Critical Skills Employment Permit (CSEP) pathways.

The Graduate Thresholds are:

- **General Employment Permit Graduate: €34,009** for graduates of Irish third-level institutions (Level 8+) within the last 12 months.
- **Critical Skills Employment Permit Graduate: €36,848** for graduates of any recognized institution (Level 8+) where the qualification is relevant to the role and completed within the previous 12 months.



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Ireland Employment Permits Update: 2026 Salary Threshold Changes for Gr...

Immigration Manager Alice Heron examines Ireland's updated employment permit salary thresholds taking effect in March 2026, including the reintroduction of graduate-specifi...

Critical Skills Employment Permit (CSEP)

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Critical Skills Employment Permits

The Critical Skills Employment Permit replaces the Green Card type employment permit. The Critical Skills Employment Permit is designed to attract highly skilled people into the labour market with the aim of encouraging them to take up permanent residence in the State.

- Minimum annual remuneration of €40,904 based on a 39 hour work week if you have a relevant degree.
- A relevant third-level degree is required if the salary is below €68,911.
- Must be on the critical skills occupation list to obtain a Critical Skills permit if the salary is below €68,911.

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Critical Skills Occupations List

Employments in respect of which there is a shortage in respect of qualifications, experience or skills which are required for the proper functioning of the economy

- All occupations are eligible for CSEP with a minimum annual remuneration of over €68,911, provided that they are **not on** the **Ineligible List of Occupations**. A non-EEA national who does not have a degree qualification or higher, must have the necessary level of experience.

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Ineligible List of Occupations for employment permits

Employments in respect of which an employment permit shall not be granted

- The prospective employee must have secured a permanent offer of employment (minimum two years duration) in respect of the eligible occupation from the prospective employer.
- 9-month rule – If you sponsor someone, they are expected to complete 9 months with your company before they can change employer. Exceptions may be possible in exceptional circumstances and where there is redundancy.
- Once CSEP holders have completed 21 months on their permit, they can apply to the Irish Naturalization and Immigration Service for permission to reside and work in Ireland without the requirement for an employment permit. (**Stamp 4**).

General Employment Permit (GEP)

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General Employment Permit

The General Employment Permit replaces the old Work Permit Employment Permit. General Employment Permits are the primary vehicle used by the State to attract 3rd country nationals for occupations which are experiencing a labour or skills shortage.

- Not determined by education.
- The prospective employee must have the relevant qualifications, skills or experience required for employment.
- Minimum annual remuneration - is generally €36,605 based on a 39 hour work week. [Click here](#) for link to exceptions.
- The employment named is **not** in an excluded job category under the Ineligible list.

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Ineligible List of Occupations for employment permits

Employments in respect of which an employment permit shall not be granted

- 9-month rule – If you sponsor someone, they are expected to complete 9 months with your company before they can change employer. Exceptions may be possible in exceptional circumstances and where there is redundancy.
- A labour market needs test is required unless an exemption is applicable.

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Labour Market Needs Test

From 1 January 2020, any employment permit application where a Labour Market Needs Test is required must have published a EURES ad for at least 28 days before a valid application can be submitted.

- Applications may be granted for a maximum period of up to 24 months in the first instance and may be extended upon application by a further 3 years after which it is envisaged that a holder would apply for a [Stamp 4 immigration permission](#) from the Department of Justice.

Other Key Information for Employers Considering Sponsorship

Secure Employment Permits in Advance

- It is recommended to secure an employment permit well in advance of the expiry of the Stamp 1G to ensure there are no gaps in employment.
- Employment permits can be obtained when college ends once there is a valid Stamp 2 or 1G permission and they meet the criteria for an employment permit. College does not necessarily have to end before a permit application can be filed. E.G. student already holds a primary degree that is relevant for the role.

ERN Number and CRO Registration

Employers must have an ERN number and CRO registration.

50:50 Rule

Company must have an employee base of 50% EEA employees before you can hire non-EEA employees.

Fees

Click link below for fees with respect to each permit.

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Fees for employment permits

The fee for an employment permit must be paid by the applicant, that is, the employer/employee/connected person ...

Processing Times

Click link below for information on processing times of permits.

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Current processing dates for employment permits

Applications for employment permits are processed in date order of receipt of the fully completed application form and...

Career Development Centre - University of Galway

We aim to provide students at the university with a quality career guidance and information service focused on facilitating and empowering you to manage your own career development and make effective career transitions.

 www.universityofgalway.ie



Career Development Centre – University of Galway

Career Development Centre, National University of Ireland, Galway

Job Board for Employers

You can advertise your current job vacancies on the University of Galway careers portal (Careers Connect). This **free** service is suitable for current job vacancies targeting students and/or graduates with less than 3 years' experience. Vacancies can include internships, graduate programmes, full-time and part-time positions, seasonal and contract positions.

To do so, simply [login](#) and create an employer profile and post your vacancies to this profile. Your advertisement(s) will be visible to our entire database of Undergraduate/ Postgraduate students and recent graduates. Full Terms & Conditions are available [here](#).

We actively encourage our students and graduates to view all current job opportunities posted to the Careers Connect portal. We will also share any adverts via our [LinkedIn](#) channel once tagged.

If you would like to learn more about how you can build talent pipeline on campus, please contact our Employer Engagement Manager, Donal Hackett, to arrange a consultation: Employers@universityofgalway.ie

Employer FAQ - Disclaimer

This Employer FAQ was prepared by the University of Galway Career Development Centre on the 25th of June 2024 and kindly reviewed by Fragomen on the 4th of September 2024. The information is provided on an "AS IS" and "AS AVAILABLE" basis and may be subject to change as per government immigration policy. Further, this document only contains general immigration guidance it is not intended to provide professional advice and should not be considered to be such or relied or acted upon in that regard. If you need immigration advice in relation to a specific matter, you should consult a suitably qualified person or organisation. **(Edited and Updated 24th April 2026)**



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