

DUBLIN PARLIAMENTARY INTERNSHIP – PROGRAMME IN IRISH SOCIETY & POLITICS

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Background

The internship is an officially authorised programme working within the Irish Houses of Parliament: the Dail and the Senate. It is governed by the Joint Administration Committee of the Houses of Parliament. Interns have the status of adjunct staff. Work in parliament is subject to conditions laid down by the Committee on Procedures and Privileges covering such matters as access to facilities, dress code, dealings with press and televised media etc.

Induction

The internship has been established with the support and active cooperation of all the political parties. A condition of the internship is that students must spend one week undergoing induction. The induction programme covers essential areas such as the Constitution, the legal system, political parties, parliamentary procedures, political issues, upcoming legislation and political culture. Many of these issues are developed further in the subject Irish Government & Politics which is studied throughout the semester. During induction, the programme director interviews each student and clarifies expectations about the internship. The student indicates work preferences, if any.

Work

Each intern is part of a small staff: Irish parliamentarians commonly have a staff complement of just one or two. Interns are expected to work two days per week. The nature of the work varies greatly but can be summarised as either administration or research. Research work includes information gathering for speeches, drafting of speeches, summarising documents, inputting to policy drafts etc. Administration tasks include communication with constituents, diary organisation, social media and file management. Typically, a student will undertake some combination of these research and administration tasks. Throughout the internship, students are required to give an account of progress to the programme director.

Internship Meetings

Individual student meetings are arranged as follows:

- Preparatory Meeting in Induction week with Programme Director
- Meeting in Houses of Oireachtas with host TD/Senator & Programme Director
- Review Meeting with Programme Director

There are scheduled opportunities each week for students to meet the Programme Director on Internship matters.

Assessment

The internship is assessed by:

- A research paper of 2,500 – 3,500 words written by students on a topic in Irish politics which relates to their work during the internship
- A student journal recording and reflecting on internship experiences
- An assessment by the host parliamentarian

Reading

Bunreacht na hEireann, Government Publications

Programme for a Partnership Government, Government Publications 2016

Fianna Fail/Fine Gael/Labour Party/Sinn Fein Policy Papers

Oireachtas Debates, Houses of the Oireachtas

Government Bills, Houses of the Oireachtas

MacCarthaigh, Muiris, Government in Modern Ireland, IPA, 2008

Chapter 3 (The Office of the President), Chapter 4 (Dail Eireann), Chapter 5 (Seanad Eireann),
Chapter 6 (Parliamentary Committees)

MacCarthaigh, Muiris and Manning, Maurice, The Houses of the Oireachtas, IPA, 2010

Chapter 4 (The Work of the Houses), Chapter 9 (Advising and Serving the Houses),
Chapter 11 (Staff of the Houses), Chapter 12 (Supporting Parliament: Research)
Chapter 16 (Public Scrutiny & Bills)