



DUBLIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2008



WELCOME INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

I'd like to begin by welcoming you back to your studies at DIT for the second semester of this academic year and to extend a very warm welcome on behalf of the International Student Office to those international students who are joining DIT for the first time this semester. Although our students will have started back to their classes last week after the semester break, it has certainly been a very busy period for most as they prepared for and have taken their semester exams and I wish you every success in your exams.

I am delighted to announce that DIT's community of international students continues to grow with students from 42 non-EU countries and 15 EU countries who enrich DIT in terms of the wealth of diversity our international students contribute culturally, socially, linguistically, and educationally. This is the first electronic International Student Newsletter produced this year and the intention is

for the International Student Office to continue to produce it on a regular basis throughout the academic year to provide as much information as possible for you and to support you during your time studying at DIT and living in Ireland. The newsletter will be emailed to you but it will also be published on WebCT. However, I would very much welcome your own contributions to the newsletter in terms of announcing upcoming events or writing about issues which would be of interest to our international students. Some features in this edition of the newsletter include an article about the recent International Student Forum organised by the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS), information about the Third Level Graduate Scheme, information about the International Students Weekly Seminars held every Wednesday in Aungier Street, and updated information on the private medical insurance scheme for our international students. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very enjoyable and successful second semester.

All the best, Ann Flynn, International Student Officer

STUDENT SOCIETIES AT DIT

As you will be aware the DIT Societies Office with the support of the DIT Cultural and Social Committee work together to provide an excellent variety of student societies and activities to ensure that you can enjoy a great student experience.

There are now over 80 active DIT Societies which are run by students for students and which are supported by the society's staff with advice, administration and finance. Examples of DIT Societies include the Chinese Student Scholar Association (CSSA), the Islamic Society, and the Student Volunteering Society. Students are encouraged to join societies of interest to them to enrich their college experience and to meet new like minded friends.

Unfortunately, there is not a DIT International Student Society but it would be great if some enthusiastic students could set up such a society if there would be an interest in doing so. A society can be set up with a minimum of 15 members. DIT is currently hosting international students from 42 non-EU countries including Angola, Australia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Korea, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Russia, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Switzerland, Syria, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, UAE, Ukraine, USA, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Information on all the student societies at DIT can be found at www.socs.dit.ie where there is also information on how to start up a society. If there are students who would be interested in setting up a DIT International Student Society they can contact the DIT Societies Office.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FORUM, NOVEMBER 2007

The Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) held an International Student Forum at University College Cork on Saturday, November 17th and ten of DIT's International students attended this event. The student representatives from DIT were: *Mr. Yupeng Liu, Mr. Liuyun Zhao, Mr. Tong Li, Ms. Qi Wang, Ms. Qianling Zhou, Ms. Yiling Liu, Mr. Ye Tian, Ms. Qiaohuan Cheng, Mr. Mohammad Mahmud, and Mr. George Labbad.*

This event provided a wonderful opportunity for our international students to meet other international students from throughout Ireland to share and discuss their experiences and to make new friends. The title of this year's forum was 'Diverse Voices: International Students in Irish Education'. The Forum examined the integration of International Students in Ireland focusing on:

- Irish Higher Education from the international student's perspective and highlighting continuing barriers to their fuller integration and participation into campus and general Irish life.
- The contribution of international students to the growing diversity within the Irish educational system and in the wider society.

- Identification of ways which international student organisations can work together with ICOS and other agencies, including Government to address concerns and contribute to policy development.

Mr. Neo Zhang, Northern Ireland's International Student of the Year 2007 and Ms. Diane-Sabenacio, Metro Eireann Journalist and PhD Candidate UCD presented on the issue of integration and participation from the international student's perspective and DIT Graduate Mr. Hamidreza Khodabakhshi, USI President presented on the issue of the diversity of students on Irish Third Level campuses from the Student Union's perspective. These presentations were followed that afternoon by a series of short workshops on the following topics:

- Becoming Involved-Opportunities and Challenges for International Students.
- Exploring Home Students' Attitudes Towards International Students
- Being an International Student in Ireland; Irish Government Policies.

The day ended with a multicultural reception. There was very positive feedback from the group of DIT students who attended and I have included some photos of the day. The photos above were taken by Ms. Yiling Liu at the event and they help to capture the atmosphere of the day's events.

ICOS

ICOS, the **Irish Council for International Students**, is an organisation which was established in Ireland in 1970 to promote the welfare of international students and it provides a wonderful resource for all international students in Ireland in terms of the information it provides.

I would encourage you to visit ICOS' website at: www.icosirl.ie/eng/student_information where you will find information on Immigration, Cost of Living, English Language Schools, Student Healthcare, Travel in Ireland, Working in Ireland, and the Third Level Graduate Scheme. ICOS also publishes a monthly electronic newsletter on their website which provides excellent up to date and relevant information for international students. The contact details for ICOS are:

ICOS – Irish Council for International Students
41 Morehampton Road
Dublin 4.

t: 01 660 5233
e: office@icosirl.ie
w: www.icosirl.ie



CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

The International Student Office would like to extend our best wishes to all our Chinese students for the Chinese New Year which will take place this week. There continues to be a range of events taking place throughout this week to celebrate this event including a New Year Party which was held last Saturday and a very entertaining Charity Gala Event which was held on Tuesday night at the RDS and DITSU will host a lunch in Kevin Street today to celebrate the event also.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WEEKLY SEMINAR

I would like to remind you that International Students Weekly Seminars will continue to take place this semester with Mr. Damien Cassells at DIT Aungier Street in Room 2-025 at 6.00 p.m.

These seminars are specifically designed for our international student community and are free of charge. Some topics addressed last semester were 'Living and Working in Irish Culture', 'Presentations and Public Speaking', and 'Christmas Festival in Ireland'.

These seminars are a great opportunity for our international students to get support towards settling into life in Ireland and to develop some useful skills for their future. The seminars also of course provide a wonderful opportunity for our international students to meet up with fellow students and potential friends who may be studying different programmes within DIT. The article 'A Welcome for the International Pioneer' was written by Damien Cassells as an introduction to the International Weekly Seminars.

A Welcome for the International Pioneer

Damien Cassells

For centuries the Irish have travelled the world in hope of finding, work, education and respect. The wheel has now turned economically here and no longer do Irish people need to leave to have a successful career; Irish people now travel as explorers, not as economic migrants. It is with that background as a country of nomad wanderers that we welcome you, the International Student, with open arms and a warm heart to our country. The experience of our forefathers' dispersion across the globe has taught us several important lessons.

Firstly, to be happy (and less importantly successful) we had to learn to integrate into communities and work environments at odds with our own, but not at the loss of our own culture and identity.

Secondly, with good work ethic from ourselves and support mechanisms from the host community, everything was possible. Finally, our own lives and culture was enriched by those who travelled and learned new things about new places. It is my opinion, that these three lessons are still relevant today for any international traveller or indeed scholars like you. As an educator, one of my first goals is to make everyone in the lecture theatre feel

comfortable, valued and welcome regardless of their gender or nationality. To achieve this everyday is a task in itself due to the exciting range of internationalities sitting in front of me every day. I am constantly questioning what is it that I can do to help people to integrate as well as they can in their new environment.

At the end of last academic year I met with my Chinese friends (they were my students then, but through helping me to understand some of the difficulties they faced in studying here through the medium of cups of tea and talking we have now become great friends!) to discuss what could I possibly do to help them, the pioneers of Chinese students in the Irish education system (and those International students following them), to feel more comfortable within their new environment.

I know from working with International students that your work rate and commitment is something that I myself have learned from. My aforementioned Chinese friends proved that anything was possible for International Students in Ireland, by securing contracts with two of the biggest Accounting firms in the world and having their postgraduate study here in Dublin funded by them. You are the pioneers of International students in Ireland, the links and friendships that you forge here will not only enrich your own experiences here, but sets the path for your brothers, sisters, sons and daughters to follow.

I see only great opportunities in the business community, with Irish/European firms constantly looking to invest in as many different economies as possible who better to turn to for support than someone who knows both cultures and peoples.



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With their help, advice and support I have commenced workshops for International students that are aimed at helping you to settle into your new study environment, while at the same time offers you a chance to meet up with other students who may be studying different disciplines in different centres, but who just might be your best friend.

It is in this light that the seminars are run and I would welcome each and every one of you to come along and to discover what it's like to be an international pioneer!

Damien Cassells, School of Accounting & Finance Seminars are held each Wednesday at 6-00pm in room 2-025 in DIT Aungier Street.

USEFUL WEBSITES

www.indublin.ie
www.eventguide.ie
www.inis.ie
www.irishrail.ie
www.buseireann.ie
www.dit.ie

WEBCT > INTERNATIONAL STUDENT OFFICE LINK

The International WebCT site is a very useful information resource for our international students. In order to access the International WebCT site you must now go to the DIT homepage at www.dit.ie. Log onto www.webcourses.dit.ie link which is at the bottom of the homepage.

Click on the **WebCT icon** on the top left hand corner of the page. Then log into **my WebCT**.

WebCT ID: information
WebCT Password: information
Then click on: International Student Office

You will then see all the relevant information for DIT's international student community on the home page which is organized by the International Student's Office. There is specific information for international students on life in Ireland, immigration information, information on upcoming events, and an important folder called **'Letters and Forms'** which all registered full-time non-EU students can use to apply online for letters they require from the International Student Office.

DIT CHAPLAINCY SERVICE — INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GATHERINGS FEBRUARY 2008 — MAY 2008

DATE	VENUE	ROOM	TIME
12.02.08	DIT Aungier St	Rm 4027, Function Space	1.30-2.30pm
04.03.08	DIT Bolton St	Rm 381	6.00-8.00pm
11.03.08	DIT Aungier St	Rm 4027, Function Space	1.30-2.30pm
08.04.08	DIT Bolton St	Rm 381	6.00-8.00pm
15.04.08	DIT Aungier St	Rm 4027, Function Space	1.30-2.30pm
08.05.08	DIT Bolton St	Rm 381	6.00-8.00pm

CHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

It is very important to notify the International Student Office if you have changed address at any stage so that your contact details in Dublin are up to date. Please notify the office of this through WebCT or through email at: international@dit.ie stating your DIT student number.

MEDICAL INSURANCE COVER FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2007/2008

A reminder to all international students that the International Student Office has arranged your Medical Insurance for this academic year with MEdI Cover ACE RESCUE and that your medical insurance card and the details of your medical insurance benefits have been mailed to your Dublin home address in early December. Your medical Insurance policy is valid from September 1st 2007 until August 31st 2008. Only registered non-EU international students who have paid their fees for 2007/08 are entitled to these medical insurance benefits. The policy number for this medical insurance policy is the same for all registered non-EU international students and this should be noted.

Master Policy Number: IAS 85038

Please write your name on your Medical Insurance Card and carry it with you at all times. Please also inform the International Student Office for advice on completing your insurance claim form. The email address is international@dit.ie and the telephone number is **01 402 3435**. If you have any further questions on any aspect of the Medical Insurance Cover please contact the International Student Office. Please come into the International Student Office to collect your medical insurance card if you have not received it in the mail as you may have changed address. Details of the Medical Insurance Policy benefits are available on WebCT.

GARDA NATIONAL IMMIGRATION BUREAU (GNIB) INFORMATION

The Irish Council for International Students (ICOS), the International Student Officers from several Higher Irish Higher Education Institutions and Mr. Hamidreza Khodabakhshi, President USI, had a meeting last month with senior Garda Officers from the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) to discuss issues regarding the process of registration of non-EEA students with the GNIB towards our united efforts to ensure that our international students are provided a better service in their dealings with GNIB and that their general experience is more positive than it has been for some students in the past.

Some important information and issues arose at this meeting which I would like to share with you.

GNIB is responsible for all immigration related to Garda operations in the Republic of Ireland.

The Garda National Immigration Bureau is located at **13/14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2** in the same building as the **Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS)**.

The regulations regarding student visas for non-EEA students and the application procedures are available to view online at the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service website at www.inis.gov.ie

The **GNIB Card** or the **Certificate of Registration** confirms permission for a non-EEA student to reside in the state for a given period which is usually one academic year. The student will usually receive a Stamp 2 or 2A upon registration.

The cost of registration with the GNIB is €100 and each registration renewal also costs €100.

A Re-Entry Visa gives permission to those with valid GNIB cards to re-enter the State. The application process for a Re-Entry Visa is through the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) which is located at the same address as the Garda National Immigration Bureau.

The cost of a Single Entry Re-Entry Visa is €60. The cost of a Multiple Re-Entry Visa is €100.

The processing time for visas at the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service is approximately four days.

International Non-EEA Students will generally require verification letters for the GNIB from the International Student Office. This letters are requested through the electronic letter request facility available on the International Student Office section of WebCT. Letters which are requested from the International Student Office through WebCT will generally be issued to the student within 3 working days.

Students are obliged to attend the GNIB or INIS within a maximum of 10 days from the date of issue of their letter from the International Student Office.

There is now a **Checking Desk** at the reception area of the GNIB Offices where all students must attend before queuing. This is for the student's documentation to be checked to ensure it is in order before the student joins the queue.

Students who graduate and wish to apply for the **Third Level Graduate Scheme** must present a letter from the Examinations Office of their Faculties to the GNIB.

THIRD LEVEL GRADUATE SCHEME

The Third Level Graduate Scheme commenced in April 2007. This scheme which was implemented by the Irish Government allows legally resident non-EEA third level graduates to remain in Ireland for the purpose of seeking employment and applying for a Green Card or Work Permit for a period of six months from the date the student receives his/her final examination results. All students who wish to participate in this scheme must apply through the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB). As part of the GNIB's application process, however,

all graduates are required to provide a letter to the GNIB from the Examinations Office in the Faculty the graduate studied confirming the award and the date the exam results were issued. Please note that the International Student Office does not provide this letter. Further information is available from the International Student Office or from visiting the following website:

www.entemp.ie/labour/workpermits/graduatescheme.htm

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