Our mission is to develop more self-aware, independent, confident and resilient young people. We achieve this transformative experience through the values of community integration, immersion in nature, experiential education, exploration of the arts and creativity, meaningful travel, volunteering and cultural exchange.

In Ireland, we are fortunate to have a landscape and culture that lend themselves to reflection and exploration, but the Irish Gap Year experience is just the beginning of our students’ journey of self-discovery.

Ultimately, we aim to provide young people with a thoughtfulness and self-awareness that they can carry forward throughout their lives.

We invite you to come on the journey of a lifetime with us.

From Ryan & The Irish Gap Year Team
Gap Year Programs — At a Glance

**ADVENTURE & LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**
- **Dates**: Fall — September to November
  Spring — February to May
- **Cohort Size**: 16 Students / 3 Program Leaders
- **Length**: 82 Days
- **Location**: Ireland
- **Themes**: Outdoor Adventure, Leadership Skills, Community Volunteering and Cultural Immersion

**IRISH ARTS & CULTURE PROGRAM**
- **Dates**: Fall — September to November
  Spring — February to May
- **Cohort Size**: 16 Students / 3 Program Leaders
- **Length**: 77 Days
- **Location**: Ireland
- **Themes**: Cultural Immersion, Artistic Exploration, Self-Expression and Independence Building

**EUROPEAN EXPEDITION PROGRAM**
- **Dates**: September to November
- **Cohort Size**: 12 Students / 3 Leaders
- **Length**: 77 Days
- **Location**: Norway, Denmark, The Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy
- **Themes**: Immersive Travel, Cultural Exchange, Experiential Learning and Outdoor Adventure

**EUROPEAN EXPLORER PROGRAM**
- **Dates**: May to June
- **Cohort Size**: 12 Students / 3 Leaders
- **Length**: 28 Days
- **Location**: The Netherlands, Germany, Czech Republic, Austria and Italy
- **Themes**: Immersive Travel, Cultural Exploration, Cultivating Independence

**INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS**
- **Dates**: February to May
- **Cohort Size**: 15 interns
- **Length**: 10 weeks
- **Location**: Dublin City
- **Themes**: Professional Work Experience, Cultural Immersion, Travel in Ireland
Adventures & Leadership Program
Irish Gap Year’s Adventure & Leadership Program will take you far off the beaten track, deep into Irish culture and nature where you will learn much about yourself.

Adventure & Leadership Program

| Dates                     | Fall — September to November  
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<th>Spring — February to May</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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What’s it all about?

The rugged natural beauty of Ireland and warm heartedness of the people offer a unique setting for your journey of self-discovery. Our goal is to create an environment that nurtures this process. This program is not a test that is graded, it is a progression of continuous learning and reflection, struggling and failure are as much a part of the process as achievement and success. The Program focuses on personal development through our Four Cornerstones:

- Outdoor Adventure
- Community Volunteering
- Leadership Skills
- Cultural Immersion

Highlights

- Enjoy living with your peers in our Student Houses on the Atlantic Coast and being part of the local community.
- Develop leadership and inter-personal skills.
- Participate in our experiential leadership skills workshops, full of team challenges, student led projects and be a student leader.
- Experience Ireland’s epic landscapes through outdoor adventure sports such as surfing, stand-up paddle boarding, hiking and sea-kayaking.
- Do up to 80 hours of Community Volunteering.
- Visit the top cultural and historical attractions in Ireland.
- Volunteer with youth groups and on local farms, animal shelters and beach clean ups in a friendly local community in the west of Ireland.
- Immerse yourself in the culture and everyday life of rural Ireland.
- Work as a team through group project work and experiential learning.
We are passionate about outdoor adventure and believe that time spent immersed in nature is good for the body, mind and spirit.

Outdoor Adventure

At Irish Gap Year we believe that time spent in nature is good for the body, mind and soul.

Here in the sun, rain, hail, snow and under rainbows you’ll explore and connect with Ireland’s natural wonders while challenging yourself to push past your perceived limitations in a safe and inclusive way.

We will make full use of the superb natural resources that we have on our doorstep and enjoy daily, instructed adventures in:

- Hiking
- Surfing
- Kayaking
- Cliff Jumping
- Camping
- Climbing
- Bushcraft Skills
Community Volunteering

Community Volunteering on the Adventure & Leadership Program sees students work with young people, community groups, local farms and animal rescues. In return for their time and energy students reap huge benefits. They gain a sense of achievement, feel part of a community, discover new skills, meet a diverse group of people who will help widen their world view and most of all make new friends.

Examples of our Community Volunteering Projects:

- Volunteer with award-winning Irish charity ‘Liquid Therapy’ as a mentor to children with additional needs in an after school, therapeutic surf programme.
- Volunteer at ‘Hungry Horse Outside’ animal rescue farm with rescue horses, sheep, goats and many more animals in need.
- Work with ‘Clean Coasts Ireland’ removing marine debris like ‘ghost nets’ from remote islands and beaches around the northwest coast.
- Help build and maintain ‘Bundrowes Eco Park’, our own self-sustaining garden and community space.

Volunteering has a meaningful and positive impact on both the community and the volunteer.
Leadership Skills

Leadership is about enhancing one’s awareness, emotional intelligence and personal strengths. We teach our gappers to work effectively within a team and develop the leadership skills best suited to their personality type.

To achieve these goals we interweave a combination of leadership workshops, group projects, team-building games, student leaders, role modelling and reflective practices.

Experiential Leadership Workshops

Our weekly Leadership Workshops are taught in our scenic outdoor classroom. They are conversation and experience-based workshops that are broken up with light-hearted games, challenges and journaling designed to get students thinking about new concepts and examine themselves on a deeper level. Topics include creating a personal mission statement, Ikigai, developing emotional intelligence in a team and more.

Student Leaders

Time as a student leader allows you to play an active role in the development of your own education. When an experience is earned, it is more meaningful and beneficial. This process is known as self-governance and is a valuable life skill that you’ll take away from the Adventure & Leadership Program.

“We focus on developing strong ‘personal leadership’ in our gappers. Direction, purpose, values... the things that will serve them as adults leading their own lives.”

Ryan Allen, IGY Director
While living in Donegal you'll become deeply involved in our community and get a deep understanding of Irish culture.

Cultural Immersion

Students participating in the Adventure & Leadership Program have the opportunity to delve deeply into Irish culture. Not only will they be living and volunteering within the community of a vibrant small Irish town, they will also visit some of Ireland’s world famous cultural and heritage sites.

Irish Expeditions

Students will go on expeditions throughout the island of Ireland approximately every second week during their program. Group-led work will be used to help students explore various aspects of Irish culture. This type of project led work culminates on week 11 with the big student led trip. This trip is decided solely by the students and they have to plan and budget the trip, gather the relevant information, decide why it is culturally significant and be the guides for the entire time away.

Trips Around Ireland — The Highlights

- **GALWAY CITY** Exploring Ireland’s hippest city and the ancient mysteries of its surrounding islands
- **THE DONEGAL EXPEDITION** Sea cliffs, mountain tops, national parks and castles
- **DERRY THE CITY OF WALLS** Locals will take us on a tour of the city walls, which tell the story of ‘the troubles’ in graffiti and symbols
- **THE CONNEMARA EXPEDITION** No tech in the wilderness of Ireland’s largest national park
- **DUBLIN CITY** Where the ancient and modern meet
- **DINGLE PENINSULA** Where traditional meets alternative at the edge of Europe
- **BACKWOODS EXPEDITION** This three day camping challenge in the deep forests of Northern Ireland is the culmination of your bushcraft skills workshops
The Irish Arts & Culture Program is designed to give you an opportunity to explore and cultivate your creative side, build independence and develop an appreciation of Irish arts and culture.

Irish Arts & Culture

| Dates             | Fall — September to November  
|                   | Spring — February to May      |
| Length            | 11 weeks                      |
| Location          | Ireland                       |
| Themes            | Cultural immersion, Artistic Exploration, Independence Building, Experiential Learning |

What's it all about?

Throughout the program you will try your hand at many artistic disciplines as you work with local artists, photographers, writers, performers and musicians in personalized, small-group workshops. You’ll explore the rich tapestry of Ireland’s cultural and artistic heritage while travelling to some of the country’s most unique and celebrated locations. This program is all about exploring and developing your creative side and no prior artistic experience is needed — Only enthusiasm! The Program focuses on personal development through our Four Cornerstones:

- Artistic Exploration
- Cultivating Independence
- Experiential Learning
- Cultural Immersion

Highlights

- Explore your artistic side by taking part in small group workshops ranging from photography to traditional wood carving to performance, creative writing, drawing and painting and even ‘zine making!
- Have in depth instruction working with our expert art tutors as you prepare to exhibit your work at Le Chéile Art Expo.
- Take the road less travelled as you explore Ireland’s hidden gems.
- Live and work with your peers while managing your own house.
- Local living is a community based experience that brings you deep into Irish culture.
- Travel the country on our expeditions to Ireland’s coolest cities, towns, villages and regions.
- Rediscover the joy of learning and intellectual curiosity in a low stress environment designed to give you broad exposure to the liberal arts.
Artistic exploration is about filling your creative well, finding inspiration and nurturing your creative side in a supportive environment. It is about thinking of art in new ways and experiencing your Irish journey through the lens of art.

This is accomplished through a combination of working with professional artists and daily creative connection exercises with your program leaders.

Daily Art Workshops:

- **CHARCOAL** Work with professional Sligo artist Michael Wann on landscape and portraiture
- **PAINTING** Paint using Watercolour, oil and gouache with award-winning Shetland Island artist Anna Leask
- **MIXED MEDIA & UPCYCLING** Have fun with disused items and let your creativity run wild with Sligo artist Ken Gunning
- **FILM & ACTING** Write, film, direct, act in our student short films with professional Irish actor and director Edwin Mullane
- **PHOTOGRAPHY** Explore and capture the Irish landscape with photography tutor Pascal O’Shea
- **IRISH CRAFTS** Work with local artisans in wood carving, jewellery making and leather-crafting

You don't need to be experienced to participate, all we ask is that you are open and excited about exploring your creativity.
Le Cheille Art Expo

Le Chéile means ‘together’ in Irish, and this expo is all about bringing the local community together for an evening of sharing art, stories, music, food and laughs. Students will receive mentoring and support in creating a body of work for the exhibition from their art tutors. Equally our program leaders will encourage them to work as a team in organising and producing the event.

The Le Chéile Art Expo is a wonderful community event where professional and amateur artists along with our students exhibit side by side. There is music, 3D and 2D artwork, poetry and more in a friendly and inclusive environment.

At the end of the program gappers will co-host with local artists, their own art exhibition, ‘Le Chéile Art Expo’.
Cultivating Independence

This may be your first time away from home in a different country or you might have already experienced life away from family and friends. Either way during this program we will help you gain independence and build resilience.

By managing your own home (yes, you’ll have to do laundry, cook, clean and co-exists with your peers) you’ll gain practical independent living skills, learn to live with others and most importantly learn to be responsible for your own day to day living.

Don’t worry though we won’t be throwing you in at the deep end. You’ll have our team’s full support in this process. Program leaders will help you to manage your household, create delicious student led meals, shop and navigate your new town.

Students will be asked to step out of their comfort zone and not look to program leaders for all the leadership. There is a student leader designated every 3 days. This person is in charge of delegating tasks to their peers, ensuring house-keeping responsibilities are in order and arranging the group to be ready for the day’s activities.

As the weeks go by students’ leadership and teamwork skills develop and improve.

You won’t even realize that you are expanding your comfort zone and becoming more independent. We call this organic personal growth.

We believe that a great Gap Year Program acts as a stepping stone to college, work and life as a young adult.
Students participating in the Irish Arts & Culture Gap Year Program are going to have the opportunity to really delve into Irish culture. Not only will they be living within the community of an everyday small Irish town, they will also visit some of Ireland’s world famous cultural and heritage sites.

Students will have an opportunity to interact with and be part of a modern-day community in rural Ireland while reflecting on Irish history current and ancient.

You will also get to explore the best of Ireland on our overnight expeditions around the country and on our day trips throughout the Northwest.

Cultural Immersion

Becoming deeply involved in another culture challenges students to expand their world view, while developing empathy for other cultures and people.

Some of our Trips Around Ireland:

- **DUBLIN** A capital city built on art and culture
- **BOYNE VALLEY** Pagan Ireland, sacred sites and folklore
- **GALWAY** Modernity & tradition in a vibrant village city
- **DINGLE, COUNTY KERRY** An artistic enclave on the edge of Europe
- **WEST DONEGAL** An artistic retreat set among the rugged beauty of Donegal
European Expedition Program
European Expedition Program

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<th>September to November</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Immersive Travel, Cultural Exchange, Experiential Learning and Outdoor Adventure</td>
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**What’s it all about?**

The European Expedition Program brings students on an epic journey across Europe, broadening their horizons through exposure to the continent’s deep cultural and historical roots infused with an exhilarating mix of outdoor adventure in some of the world’s most iconic locations. From the Arctic Circle to the Adriatic Sea. This will be the journey of a lifetime! The Program focuses on personal development through our Four Cornerstones:

- Experiential Learning
- Cultural Exchange
- Outdoor Adventure
- Immersive Travel

**Highlights**

- Back-pack through Europe’s favourite cities Amsterdam, Berlin, Munich, Prague, Dubrovnik, Copenhagen, Oslo, Florence and Venice – A classic rite of passage for any young traveller to Europe.
- Spend a full week sailing on the azure waters of the Adriatic Sea as your island hop Croatia’s Dalmatian Islands from the coastal city of Split to Dubrovnik.
- Kayak and camp your way through Norwegian Fjords, sleeping under the Northern Lights and exploring glaciers.
- Spend a week learning to sail in the Adriatic Sea on our own chartered yachts which will island hop from Split to Dubrovnik along the Croatian Dalmatian coast.
- Take in snow-capped mountains and along icy-blue fjords on one of the world’s most scenic train journeys along Norway’s fjords from Oslo to Bergen.
- The food! Enjoy the freshest and finest European cuisine in each country we visit, the group meals each night will keep your belly full and your palate pleased!
The European Expedition Program is divided into four distinct stages, each with its own theme and goals.

| Part 1: Nordic Explorer | Kayak and Camp under the northern lights in Norwegian Fjords, explore the culture and history of Oslo and Copenhagen. Norway & Denmark. |
| Part 2: The Grand Tour | Explore Europe’s culture capitals by train while building your travel IQ. Amsterdam, Berlin, Prague, Salzburg, Lake Bled, Ljubljana and Venice. |
| Part 3: Southern Europe by Sail & Rail | A week of living on a boat while island hopping on the Adriatic Sea. Hike on the Mediterranean coast of southern Italy. Dubrovnik, Bari, Salerno and the Amalfi Coast. |
| Part 4: Culture Capitals & National Parks | Strike the perfect balance between nature and culture as we unwind and explore the epic landscapes of Lake Bled and The Austrian Alps. Enjoy the vibrant urban cultures of Berlin, Munich and Amsterdam. |

### Part I: Nordic Explorer

**Journey the Fjords Under the Northern Lights**

Our European Expedition Program begins in Norway, the country of the midnight sun. This is a country of breath-taking beauty, uniquely Scandinavian culture and pristine wilderness.

Our gappers will explore Oslo, Norway’s vibrant capital city before embarking on one of the world’s most scenic train journeys to the dramatic fjords of north-western Norway. Here we will spend a week exploring by kayak and camping under the northern lights.

From the fjords of Norway we will travel south by train to the ferry that will bring us to Copenhagen, Denmark’s capital city and bastion of Scandinavian culture.

Our time in Norway and Denmark aims to strike a balance of time in nature, inspiring train travel and cultural exchange will give our gappers a wonderful introduction to Scandinavia and set the pace for the European Expedition Program.

### Highlights

- Learn the history of Norway from marauding Vikings to a modern and tolerant society of today.
- Kayak the awe-inspiring fjords of northern Norway.
- View the dancing Northern Lights from a wilderness campsite.
- Walk along the water’s edge of Oslo Harbor to the King of Norway’s Castle and grounds, where you’ll visit the Norwegian Folk museum.
- Travel by train to Bergen, one of Europe’s most scenic rail journeys.
- Explore the colourful wooden houses of the old wharf in the downtown Bergen and learn how the Hanseatic League influenced modern European commerce and culture.
- Experience Scandinavia’s unique culture and sleek architecture in Oslo and Copenhagen.
Part II: The Grand Tour

The Grand Tour of Europe started as a rite of passage for young people in the 17th century and continues to this day. Our fashion and music may have changed since those first Grand Tour travellers but the purpose of this journey through mainland Europe remains. Exploration, enlightenment and the search for knowledge of culture, history and the arts.

Survey the grandeur of Europe’s iconic cities, discover their interlocking histories, diverse cultures and learn about the past and current events which have shaped them in the modern era.

The inter-railing part of our program gives you the opportunity to experience the joys of slow-travel and backpacking through Europe, experiencing its multiplicity of cultures, food, scenery and people.

Norway will be a journey of tranquillity and serenity, of immersion in immense natural beauty and of personal growth.
European Expedition Program

Highlights

- Experience Copenhagen’s sleek Scandinavian architecture, design sense and thriving café scene.
- Learn about Berlin’s painful past and how it has reconciled these traumas to be one of the edgiest and creative cities in Europe.
- Learn first-hand about Medieval Europe while touring Prague Castle before heading to one of Prague’s world famous beer halls for a tasty dish of Vepo’o knedlo zelo (roasted pork).
- Live music gigs in Berlin!
- Take in Croatian culture as you stroll Zagreb’s cobble stone streets under iconic terracotta rooftops, where church spires reach to the heavens.
- Boost your travel IQ as you learn to navigate the inter-rail train system from Scandinavian Copenhagen all the way south to Croatia.
Part III: Southern Europe by Sail and Rail

During your time in Croatia and southern Italy you will explore some of Europe’s most dramatic coastlines, seaside villages and natural landscapes.

Our gappers will live on their own boat for 8 days island hopping Croatia’s Dalmatian Islands which are famous for their pristine white sand beaches, beautiful forests and exotic medieval towns. As we steam through the azure waters of the Adriatic sea we will make our way to Dubrovnik, the city described by George Bernard Shaw as ‘the pearl of the Adriatic’, a city sure to leave a lasting impression.

In Southern Italy we will spend a week hiking along the Mediterranean coast in the Amalfi region, famous for its vibrant, colourful towns, vineyards, olive groves and dramatic coastal mountains. Our days will be spent hiking and taking in the vast vistas of the region before arriving to small, family-run hotels in the evening where we will rest and enjoy the best of southern Italian cuisine.

From living on a boat, to hiking the Amalfi coast, to spending a week living in Dubrovnik’s old town centre, this part of the European Expedition is about outdoor adventure and culture exploration.
Highlights

- Live on our own boat and explore the Dalmatian Islands as we sail the azure waters of the Adriatic Sea from Split to Dubrovnik.
- Stay in the heart of Dubrovnik’s old town centre, stepping out your door and back a thousand years as we explore the winding streets and sea walls of the ancient Croatian city.
- Stretch your legs on day hikes along Italy’s famously beautiful and vibrant Amalfi Coast and enjoy fresh, southern Italian cuisine in the evenings.
- Hike on the world-famous ‘Footpath of the Gods’ along the Amalfi mountains.
- Stay in beautiful family-run hotels in picturesque Italian hamlets and live La Dolce Vita!
Part IV: Culture Capitals and National Parks

The final leg of our European Expedition balances time immersed in some of Europe’s most spectacular nature in Bled and the Austrian Alps and city time in culture capitals like Venice, Munich and Amsterdam.

In Venice we will stay on the water’s edge in a converted 15th Century Warehouse, the perfect launching point for exploring one of Europe’s most iconic cities.

In Slovenia we will spend a week in Lake Bled taking in the unrivalled scenery, adventuring and enjoying the buzz of the winter sport culture before making our way to the Austrian Alps for a week of alpine walks, castles, snow-capped mountains and cable car rides.

Our European Expedition comes to a close in two of Europe’s most vibrant and youthful cities Munich and Amsterdam. Though we’ll have to say our goodbyes, the memories and friendships made on this journey will certainly last a lifetime.

Highlights

1. Stay in the heart of Venice, right on the grand canal and explore the cities lesser known nooks and crannies on our ‘Venice Challenge’.
2. Hike amongst the autumn foliage and spectacular natural beauty of Triglav National Park, one of Slovenia’s national treasures.
3. Explore glacial caves in the Austrian Alps and stay in one of Europe’s best preserved UNESCO Heritage cities, Salzburg.
4. Enjoy the rhythmic clatter of the train and window-gazing as we make our way through some of Europe’s most dramatic alpine scenery.
5. Embrace the heart and soul of southern German culture in suddy and raucous Bavarian Beer halls!
6. Explore Amsterdam’s vintage shops and take part in a ‘fishing for plastic’ tour of the city, where we will discuss the impact of plastics in the world’s oceans and learn about the Dutch people’s progressive environmental initiatives.
7. Celebrate the completion of the journey of a lifetime as we wrap up in Amsterdam!
European Explorer Short Program
**European Explorer Short Program**

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<tr>
<td>Group Size</td>
<td>12 Gappers / 3 Program Leaders</td>
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**What’s it all about?**

The European Explorer Program resembles the classic European back-packing expedition of old, mixed with a hands-on study of European history, culture and current events. Students will be traveling for four weeks in a small group on the Inter-Rail train system from Amsterdam to Berlin to Salzburg to the Austrian Alps to Venice and the plains of Northern Italy. This four-week, structured, group program focuses on the Three Cornerstones listed below with each city we visit having its own experiential learning outcome and theme.

- Cultivating Independence
- Cultural Exchange
- Immersive Travel

**Combining Short Gap Year Programs**

The European Explorer Program can be combined with our Adventure & Leadership Program, Irish Arts & Culture Program or our Internship Program. The European Explorer Program begins the day after our spring programs in Ireland conclude and allows students to add further structured travel to their time in Europe.
Highlights

- Travel the Dutch way in Amsterdam – by canal boat and bike – marvelling at the tall and slender buildings in the old town.
- Explore Berlin’s hip cafes, shops and street art bears. The bear is the symbol of Berlin and they pop up everywhere in the city!
- In Prague visit one of the world’s oldest astronomical clocks and find out what time it is in Babylon. Keep an eye out for the dancing skeleton too.
- Looking out over the fortified walls of Salzburg’s Hohensalzburg Castle and imagining life as a medieval soldier.
- Hike the impossibly beautiful and pristine Austrian Alps of Zell am See and cycle around Lake Zell and marvel at the sapphire blue waters.
- Enjoy floating along the city “streets” of Venice in a gondola. Your gondolier might even serenade you.
- You’ll have the 24/7 support of Irish Gap Year’s team of experienced (and extremely fun) program leaders.
- Build your independence and confidence while making new friends.
- Build your travel IQ though train travel while taking in the amazing vistas of the European countryside in the spring.
- Explore Austria’s alpine ridges on historical cable cars.
Amsterdam — Canals, Culture and Cycling

Amsterdam is known for its rich artistic heritage, progressive culture, narrow and ornate houses and elaborate canal system. We will be visiting the cities most famous galleries, the Rijks Museum and the Van Gogh Museum, home to some of the world’s most famous paintings by artists such as Vermeer, Rembrandt and of course Van Gogh.

We will also tour the city’s canal system by boat while fishing for plastic rubbish, a unique and environmentally conscious way of exploring the heart of Amsterdam.

While in Amsterdam we’ll be staying in the city centre in a former Victorian library that has been lovingly converted into a modern, safe and clean hostel.

Berlin – Iron Curtain to Cultural Wonderland

Divided by the Berlin wall in 1961, Berlin has had a tumultuous history. The fall of the wall and the city’s reunification in 1989 heralded the start of a creative and cultural regeneration which continues today. After 40 years behind the ‘Iron Curtain’ Berlin reclaimed its status as capital of Germany in 1990 and has not looked back.

Berlin is now a hub of creativity, industry and youth culture. The city expertly melds its difficult history with a new modern outlook. It’s easy to understand why Berlin is one of Europe’s most popular travel destinations.

While in Berlin, you will have the opportunity to tour out the city’s most iconic historical locations and museums like the Brandenburg Gate, The Topography of Terror, Checkpoint Charlie and the Reichstag Building.

It isn’t all about history in Berlin though, we will also visit an outdoor heated, ‘Steampunk’ swimming pool and the city’s urban beach club, drink craft coffee at the Urban Café Garden and enjoy great people watching in the city centre.
**Prague — Medieval Europe at its Finest**

The capital city of the Czech Republic, Prague offers a thousand shades of terracotta, hundreds of spires, colourful baroque palaces, medieval town squares and the sound of church bells ringing out as they’ve done for hundreds of years.

Prague is famous for its cultural and scientific life. The philosopher Franz Kafka spent his days dwelling on the dilemmas of life here while, Mozart first performed his Prague Symphony and Don Giovanni in the city.

Of course, no time in Prague is complete without a visit to a beer hall for a tasty dish of Vepo knedlo zelo (roasted pork) washed down with a refreshing glass of beer!

**Salzburg — Castles in the Sky**

Located in the northern Alps Salzburg is a perfect mix of outstanding natural and man-made beauty. Situated on the banks of the Salzach River the city is flanked by the snow-capped peaks of the Alps.

We will stroll around the city and take in the sites, stopping for coffee and some Salzburger nockerl (Salzburg soufflé type dessert) perhaps.

In the city we will visit the Hohensalzburg Castle and Fortress which, is one of Europe’s largest medieval castles.

During our time in Salzburg each student will choose one area of Salzburg’s rich history, architecture or culture to research and present on-site to the group.
Zell am See — Alpine Adventures

It won’t all be city life on this program. We will take time to venture out into the northern Alps and take a few days hiking and recharging our batteries. Zell am See is a small Austrian town located on Lake Zell, in the heart of the Alps.

Surrounded on all sides by towering, forested and snow-capped mountains, Zell am See is a place of great natural beauty and a mecca for outdoor adventure.

Here you’ll be staying in a traditional, Austrian chalet close to the town centre and the start of many mountain trails. You’ll cycle around the lake, stopping in the nearby villages to explore castles and learn about the local history. We will also take the ski-lifts up the mountains to spend the day hiking and taking in the epic views over Europe’s highest mountain range.
Venice — The Floating City

Built on over 100 small islands, Venice is home to marble palaces, ornate basilicas and beautiful piazzas all linked by a winding network of canals instead of streets. It is a city like no other.

Venice has been described as sublime or the most serene city. It is architecturally, environmentally and historically unique.

We’ll tour the city on gondolas, take a photography tour of the coloured houses of Burano, and explore the Piazza San Marco which contains St. Mark’s Basilica and the Campanile bell tower overlooking the city’s famous red roofs.

While in Venice we will meet with environmentalists to find out more about how the city has been affected by climate change and rising sea levels. We will find out more about what the city authorities are doing to try and stop the city’s famous buildings and its residents from sinking.
We have a large variety of Internships placements available across many sectors. From marketing to creative writing to medical, with access to over 100 host companies we bet that we’ve got a placement match for you.

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**TOP 5 WORK PLACEMENTS**

**EARLY EDUCATION:** Childcare in a busy crèche and taking part in the activities relating to pre-school and after school.

**GRAPHIC DESIGN:** working with senior creative staff on a range of ambitious and innovative projects. From creative direction of campaigns, to typography, layout, animation and art direction.

**LAW:** Paralegal work preparing booklets for hearings, liaising with clients in relation to documents to be filed in courts and more.

**CREATIVE WRITING:** Working at the Irish ‘Rolling Stone Magazine’ equivalent writing album and film reviews.

**MARKETING:** Helping drive growth in a business to business environment, working in event management and publishing. Developing and executing inbound marketing strategies.

**Who is this program for?**

Our Internship Program is suitable for students aged 18–25 who are looking for a culturally immersive, professional work experience that balances independence with structure and travel with community immersion.
What makes an Irish Gap Year Internship different?

**SUPPORT NETWORK**
We know that living and working abroad requires a real leap of faith and therefore offer interns the full support of the Irish Gap Year team throughout their internship program.

Interns avail of their own internship coordinator, available 24/7, as well as social outings with other interns from all over the world. The Irish Gap Year team will be there to support you from your first point of contact all the way through your internship program.

You’ll receive a thorough orientation to your new workplace, the area where you are living and your host family (or shared housing) upon arrival as well as regular check ins from our team.

**PROFESSIONAL WORK PLACEMENT AND HOST FAMILY GUARANTEED**
Regardless of your level of experience, we can guarantee an internship placement in most areas of interest. Our host companies are all small to medium sized (5 – 50 employees) businesses with whom we have longstanding relationships.

Irish Gap Year host families have vast experience hosting interns from all over the world. They are carefully vetted by our team and we have every confidence that you will have a comfortable, personal and culturally immersive stay during your time in Ireland.

**CULTURAL EXPLORATION**
We’re passionate about Ireland and want our interns to experience the beauty of our country for themselves. There are several overnight internship trips to some of our favourite places in Ireland such as Galway City, Belfast City, Connemara National Park and county Donegal on the Wild Atlantic Way.
About Irish Gap Year
Why choose Irish Gap Year?

EUROPE’S FIRST ACCREDITED GAP YEAR PROGRAM
We are the first gap year program provider in Europe to achieve this accreditation and we are honoured to be a full accredited member of the GYA family. GYA Accreditation means that all Irish Gap Year programs operate at the highest industry standards.

COLLEGE CREDIT OPTION & USE YOUR 529 FUND TO PAY FOR ANY OF OUR PROGRAMS
Irish Gap Year’s Gap Year Association accreditation allows us to issue up to 12 credits via Portland State University on any of our programs. It also allows families to pay for our entire program fees using their 529 funds.

INTERNATIONALLY AWARD WINNING PROGRAM
Irish Gap Year has won Irish and internationally recognized awards over the years including the Gap Year Association ‘Award for Innovation in Gap Year Programming’ in 2020 and Go Overseas ‘Best Overall Gap Year Provider’ in 2021.

CLIMATE ACTIVE PROGRAMMING
Since 2021 Irish Gap Year has removed twice the carbon that our company produces (including all student flights to and from Ireland) through ecological projects and investment in green energy in Ireland.

A HIGHLY EXPERIENCED TEAM
Our leadership team brings many decades of combined experience in experiential education. Irish Gap Year program leaders are employed full-time and tend to stay with the company for several years.

ORGANISED, FRIENDLY AND PROFESSIONAL
We’re a friendly bunch and want our students and their families to have the best possible experience of Ireland. You can always reach us by phone, email or even letter at our US or Irish offices. A key priority in all our programs is ensuring all participants feel safe, included and supported in all of their program activities and endeavours.
About Irish Gap Year

At Irish Gap Year, the focus is very much on working as a team. We foster this principle in all our programs and it is no different in our own working lives within the company.

Please let us introduce some of the main members of our team.

**LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**RYAN ALLEN, Founding Director**
Ryan is the Founder and Director of Irish Gap Year and has been working in the field of experiential education for over 15 years. A colourful outdoor enthusiast, seasoned global adventurer and father of two, Ryan feels incredibly lucky to truly love what he does for a living! Ryan holds a BA in Literature from the University of Canterbury.

**SARAH BERKERY, Operations Manager**
Sarah holds a BA in Outdoor Education from GMIT Ireland and had many years of experience as an Irish Gap Year Adventure & Leadership Program Leader before effortlessly moving into her role as operations manager. She is passionate about everything outdoors and is a qualified surf Instructor. In her free time, she loves nothing more than surfing her favourite spots in Bundoran.

**ONÓRA GILL-FITCH, Accounts Manager**
Onóra has worked with Irish Gap Year since 2016 and manages our Irish office. She studied Art Education and Ceramics and worked in the UK as a ceramicist and a college Art Technician. As a busy Mum of four Onóra doesn’t get a lot of free time, but when she does she loves nothing more than dusting off the paintbrushes and getting creative in watercolour or acrylic.

**MARGIE O’REILLY, Academic Advisor**
Margie is a board member, academic advisor and head of our US offices at Irish Gap Year. Margie holds a Ph.D. from Drexel University in Philadelphia and is a professor and program director at Rider University in Lawrenceville, New Jersey.
FRAN DUFFY, Program Leader
Fran is originally from Belfast where she studied business and accounts, but that all changed when she married a Donegal man and discovered the ocean! Fran loves her job and really enjoys being part of a young person's development.

SARAH CALLINAN, Program Leader
Sarah has a great love of The Arts, the outdoors and travel. Her father is from county Clare and her mother is from Washington, which led to many adventurous holidays. She has a BA in Marketing and is also studying tourism.

CAROLINE HARVEY, Program Leader
Caroline is a Dublin native, but has fallen in love with the sea and spends most of her time surfing and sea swimming. She trained as an actor in Performing Arts & Theatre Training and also Acting for Screen and has starred in a number of national TV shows.

FRAN DUFFY, Program Leader
Fran is originally from Belfast where she studied business and accounts, but that all changed when she married a Donegal man and discovered the ocean! Fran loves her job and really enjoys being part of a young person's development.

SARAH CALLINAN, Program Leader
Sarah has a great love of The Arts, the outdoors and travel. Her father is from county Clare and her mother is from Washington, which led to many adventurous holidays. She has a BA in Marketing and is also studying tourism.

PHIL CORRIGAN, Program Leader
IRISH ARTS & CULTURE AND EUROPEAN EXPEDITION PROGRAMS
Phillip was born and raised in Dublin City. He has a Bachelor degree in Multimedia from Dublin City University and is a videographer and photographer by trade. His passions are hiking, cycling, ocean swimming and being creative outside program time he can be found writing and performing music and busking in cities throughout Ireland.

LAUREN MCCOLGAN, Program Leader
ADVENTURE & LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
Before coming to Irish Gap Year, Lauren trained and worked in Arboriculture – the maintenance and care of trees. She has climbed 90th high 200 year old Oak tree! Lauren has a love of the environment and nature and this serves her well as a program leader. In her spare time, Lauren can be found climbing trees for fun, surfing and getting blown about the local mountains with her dog Koba. Lauren is also a Climate Ambassador for An Taisce, an Irish environmental charity.

NIALL COOMBES, Program Leader
Niall hails from one of the most northerly towns in Ireland - Buncrana, Co Donegal. Niall is typical of north Donegal folk, hardy and free-spirited. He has a degree in outdoor education and has worked in the US and the UAE. He is an experienced instructor in surfing, kayaking and rock climbing.

KATE MULLINS, PROGRAM LEADER
IRISH ARTS & CULTURE PROGRAM
Kate is an accomplished artist from Wexford, she started out studying Fine Art, moving onto Visual Communication, and Design in Interactive Multimedia in IADT. However these days much prefers being creative in a low tech manner. Kate has also worked as a youth worker for the youth development organisation Foroige. Kate’s passions are surfing, art and sea swimming and starts every morning with a dip in the Atlantic Ocean.

ODHRÁN O’REILLY, Program Leader
ADVENTURE & LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS
Odhran hails from our neighbouring county Cavan. He is an experienced surf instructor and loves all things outdoors! He is also a keen photographer, so if he’s not in the water you will find him snapping photographs. Odhran has travelled around America, New Zealand, Indonesia and Europe in the past few years. Currently in his spare time you will find him exploring Ireland in his campervan searching for waves.

PHIL CORRIGAN, Program Leader
IRISH ARTS & CULTURE AND EUROPEAN EXPEDITION PROGRAMS
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RYAN HARKIN, Program Leader
ADVENTURE & LEADERSHIP PROGRAM / SUSTAINABILITY TUTOR
Ryan wants to empower our students with the foundational skills and knowledge to complete their own DIY, grow their own food and live a life with a low environmental impact, in harmony with their environment. Ryan has volunteered in some of the most forward-thinking schools and permaculture farms in New Zealand, Australia and Indonesia. Ryan has a passion to inspire and educate the youth about sustainable living and practical ways to live a healthy and meaningful life.

LAUREN MCCOLGAN, Program Leader
ADVENTURE & LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
Before coming to Irish Gap Year, Lauren trained and worked in Arboriculture – the maintenance and care of trees. She has climbed 90th high 200 year old Oak tree! Lauren has a love of the environment and nature and this serves her well as a program leader. In her spare time, Lauren can be found climbing trees for fun, surfing and getting blown about the local mountains with her dog Koba. Lauren is also a Climate Ambassador for An Taisce, an Irish environmental charity.

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How to Apply

The first step in applying for any Irish Gap Year Program is to make sure that we are the right fit for you. We encourage all potential applicants to visit our website and carefully read the program descriptions.

1. First create your account with Irish Gap Year. It’s an easy process and can be done through our website in 5 minutes.
   www.irishgapyear.com

2. We will reach out to you via email once you’ve created your account and help you to begin your application.

3. You will have a phone interview with our admissions team to discuss your gap year goals and make sure we’re the right match for you.

4. You will complete our medical history form and then formally be offered a place on the program of your choice.

Upon acceptance, a 10% deposit is required to secure a place on this program. The balance of the program fee is then due 90 days prior to the start of the program.

Please note that while we have no formal deadline for applications our programs typically fill three months prior to the start date.

www.irishgapyear.com/register