**Stage 2 – Before your Departure**

**1. International Student Identity Card (ISIC)**

The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) is your passport to fantastic discounts and services at home and around the world. The ISIC card is the only internationally-recognised student ID and ISIC card holders are members of a truly global club. Every year more than 4.5 million students from 124 countries use their student card to take advantage of offers on travel, shopping, museums and more, worldwide.

Your ISIC card will save you money in Ireland and abroad. There are tens of thousands of student discounts on offer, so check what’s available at your local restaurants, cinemas and shops. The ISIC card is a real student lifestyle card. Keep it in your pocket wherever you go – it’ll come in handy time and time again.

You can apply for the ISIC Card on <http://www.isiccard.ie/>

**2. Making Travel arrangements**

Consider all travel options and shop around for the best fares. Check with USIT, local travel agents and airlines for the best deals. Booking in advance sometimes gives financial advantage.

Make sure that your “International Student Identity Card” (ISIC) is valid for the duration of your stay as it can enable you to gain significant discounts on both travel and leisure activities as well as on shopping.

**Tips:**

* Get your dates right! Your host company/organisation will inform you when your Traineeship starts or will advise you when to arrive.

* Do not arrive on public/bank holidays or during the weekend unless you have made arrangements with your host company/organisation in advance; otherwise there may not be anybody to greet you or show you to your accommodation. It is generally best to arrive a few days before the start of your Traineeship and during office hours on a weekday.
* Notify your host company/organisation in advance of your arrival date, place and time of arrival and notify your contact person if any changes occur. Occasionally, a representative will meet you upon arrival. It is more likely, however, that you will be finding your own way.
* Find out in advance where you should go first in your host company/organisation. Seek directions from them in advance, so that you will have at your disposal the best advice on travelling from the airport/ferry/train terminal. A map is always useful. Most airports and train stations have an information desk, where you will find somebody to advise you. Take note that on the continent it is often necessary to validate your travel ticket by punching it in a machine, e.g. before you board a train or on a bus. Failure to do so can result in heavy fines.

**3. Essential documents**

In most cases, you will need the following items while abroad. Take a few copies as you will probably have to present them on various different occasions:

* Copies of your birth certificate
* A supply of passport photographs
* Your passport and some copies
* A confirmation of your acceptance at the host company/organisation, if applicable
* Health Insurance Proof: Private Health Insurance or EHIC

**4. Banking**

In general, it is important to have/bring sufficient funds to tide you over for the early part of your stay abroad. It is advisable to open a local bank account when you get there. The use of Internet banking is also a convenient way for you to access your Irish bank account details while abroad. You should speak to your local branch about this.

**5. Erasmus Paperwork**

The IADT Erasmus Co-ordinator, Sonya Hogan, will be in contact with you in the weeks prior to your departure in order to prepare together all the relevant Erasmus paperwork and to organise your 1st grant payment.