



IPRT Volunteer Programme Guidelines

Summer Programme: July / August 2022

Autumn/Winter Programme: September 2022 – January 2023

Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT) is Ireland's leading non-governmental organisation campaigning for the rights of everyone in the penal system and the progressive reform of Irish penal policy. For over 25 years, IPRT has a well-established role as an independent voice in public debate on the nature of imprisonment in Ireland. In our work, we focus on the use of imprisonment; the use of alternatives to detention and diversion; and the treatment of those in detention. IPRT is committed to reducing imprisonment, respecting the rights of everyone in the penal system and progressive reform of the penal system based on evidence-led policies. IPRT works towards these goals through research, raising awareness, building alliances, and growing our organisation.

IPRT is committed to offering volunteering opportunities to students and practitioners interested in learning about penal reform and the work of IPRT. It is an opportunity to contribute and develop skills, and learn about the criminal justice system from another perspective. IPRT does not follow a service provision model, and therefore our volunteering opportunities are in the areas of **policy, research and advocacy**.

We make sure it is a meaningful experience for our volunteers, who we welcome as part of the team. Volunteers are mentored directly by our Senior Policy & Research Officer, but also engage with the whole team, including the Legal & Public Affairs Manager and the Communications Officer. Volunteers have opportunities to attend events and conferences and network within the sector.

Summer Policy & Advocacy volunteer programme generally operates for one month (between July and August 2022) on a 4-day basis, and our **Autumn/Winter Policy & Advocacy volunteer programme** operates September 2022 – January 2023, on a part-time basis of 14-19 hours per week.

Volunteer placements are unpaid. Therefore, IPRT aims to facilitate flexibility in volunteer hours to support the work and study needs of our volunteers. **Please note that the IPRT volunteer programme is currently operating on a remote basis.** Below you will find detailed information about the programmes.

IPRT welcomes anyone with an interest in penal reform to the programme, regardless of their background. **We actively encourage people with convictions histories to apply.**

Volunteer programme:

1. IPRT offers a Policy and Advocacy Summer Placement and an Autumn/Winter Placement, working across our policy, research, advocacy and communications activities.
2. The volunteer programme is managed by IPRT's Senior Policy and Research Officer, who is responsible for the induction and guidance of the volunteers.
3. **Policy:** This aspect of the role involves supporting the development of IPRT's policy papers and briefings on current issues pertaining to penal reform in Ireland. Tasks during the placement may include: conducting research to assist in the preparation of submissions, information materials, position papers, and research papers; collating and reviewing available literature for research projects; attending and reporting on relevant events such as conferences and seminars.
4. **Advocacy:** This aspect of the role involves assisting in current campaigns and other advocacy and awareness-raising activities around issues relating to Irish penal policy and to the work of IPRT. Tasks during the placement may include: monitoring of media and parliamentary debates; social media campaigning; assisting with website content management; assisting in organisation of events; and networking with other organisations.
5. Volunteers will be given ample opportunity to engage in both policy and advocacy activities during their placement. Where a candidate shows a particular strength or interest in an area of work, this will be facilitated as far as possible within the needs of the organisation.
6. Summer volunteers normally contribute **28 hours per week, usually over 4 days**. Other arrangements will be considered, particularly to avoid any impact on obligations in relation to any studies or paid work.

Volunteer programme – dates:

1. Calls for applications are typically issued three times a year. Due to a high volume of applications, late applications will not be considered.
2. Decisions on volunteering applications will generally be made at least a month before the start of the programme.

Essential criteria for volunteers:

1. An undergraduate or postgraduate degree /or substantial experience (voluntary or otherwise) in an area relevant to IPRT's work and/or the aims of the volunteer programme (i.e. law, criminology, sociology, social policy, human rights, media studies, communications studies);
2. Some experience of work in a professional environment (paid or unpaid);
3. Demonstrated interest in penal policy or other areas relevant to IPRT's work;
4. Demonstrated ability to work as part of a small team, as well as on own initiative;
5. Good grounding in essential office IT skills;
6. Respect for the values and mission of IPRT.

Desirable criteria for volunteers:

1. On-going or completed postgraduate studies in an area relevant to IPRT's work and/or the aims of the volunteer programme (i.e. law, criminology, sociology, social policy, human rights, media studies, communications studies);
2. Experience of conducting research in areas relevant to IPRT's work and/or experience in campaigning in areas relevant to IPRT's work;
3. Knowledge of international human rights standards.

Application procedure:

1. IPRT will advertise volunteer placement opportunities on its website and social media, as well as other media such as our [newsletter](#) and the newsletters of other organisations.
2. To apply for a volunteer placement with IPRT, please submit the **completed application form** (this can be downloaded from our website), **together with your CV** to info@iprt.ie

Please note that documents submitted in other formats will not normally be considered. If for reasons of, for example, a disability you require the application form in another format, please contact info@iprt.ie or phone +353 (0) 1 874 1400 to arrange.

3. Please make sure that you indicate your availability on the form.
4. Following the receipt of fully completed application and CV, applicants will be assessed, based on the above outlined criteria, and shortlisted for interview. While interviews normally take place in person; virtual interviews will take place this year as staff have not fully returned to working in the office.

Important information

1. IPRT is a small organisation and therefore normally requires assistance from volunteers who can be available for the whole period of the placement.
2. IPRT's Volunteer Placement programmes are unpaid. IPRT will cover necessary expenses incurred in the course of duties undertaken on behalf of the IPRT (such as costs of transport to meetings, conference fees, etc.) These will be paid for directly by IPRT.
3. Applicants must be legally entitled to be resident in Ireland for the duration of any volunteer placement.
4. Successful applicants will be required to agree adhere to IPRT's volunteer policy.
5. **For the duration of COVID-19 restrictions, IPRT is only in a position to offer remote placements. Unfortunately, as a small organisation, we will not be able to provide you with a laptop. You will also need to have access to the internet.**
6. This policy does not constitute a binding contract.

Contact IPRT:

If you would like to express your interest in applying for any of the above programmes or placements, or should you have any questions, please contact info@iprt.ie or call +353 (1) 874 1400.