

*Christine Tsai* discovers why Ireland has long been a popular English immersion destination

## English in the Emerald Isle

### Ireland

#### Ireland is an increasingly popular

destination for students from all over the world. From its bustling urban centers to its striking scenery of unspoiled green countryside, clean beaches, and magnificent coastline, visitors are often surprised by the contrasts of Ireland's landscape. Made up of four provinces, Connacht, Leinster, Munster, and Ulster, students have a variety of opportunities to learn English at quality schools throughout the country.

For a comparatively small island, Ireland has made a disproportionate contribution to English literature led by such famed writers as James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, and Ireland's four winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature; William Butler Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, Samuel Beckett and, more recently, Seamus Heaney. Ireland is proud of its literary tradition and students can expect to hear poetic English on a daily basis.

To guarantee that students are receiving quality English language instruction, students can check schools with Marketing English in Ireland, which is the association of quality-assured schools in Ireland. For schools to be a member of the association, they must be recognized by the Advisory Council for English Language Schools (ACELS), which is the sec-

tion of the Irish Ministry of Education and Science responsible for setting and monitoring standards in English language schools in Ireland. ACELS conducts inspections of the schools on a yearly basis and schools must apply for recognition each year, providing evidence that the required standards are being maintained.

More recently, the Minister of Education and Science, Deputy Batt O'Keefe, announced that a new body, Education Ireland, will be established in 2009. Education Ireland, which will build upon ACELS and the International Education Board Ireland, will be responsible for promoting the development of Ireland as a centre of excellence for international education. The goal of Education Ireland is to further ensure that international students are receiving quality education from certified institutions.

### Cork

As Ireland's second largest city, Cork is fondly referred to as "The Real Capital" by its locals. Located in southwest Ireland, this ancient city, with a rich and colorful heritage, is a fascinating mix of the modern and the traditional. From the bustling port and centuries old buildings on the River Lee to the busy commercial center and the vibrant market, Cork was crowned the European Capital of Culture in 2005 and is famous for its music, sporting

tradition, and cultural heritage.

With two locations in Cork's city center, **Cork English College** offers group English language courses, private lessons, business English courses, and a teacher refresher course. By special arrangement, the school also offers technical English language training programs for government departments and commercial organizations, such as English for Aviation, English for Military Purposes, and English for Industry and Commerce. At Cork English College, students of all ages can learn English, including high school students, adults and adults over the age of 50. In addition to courses, all programs have optional social activities that students can participate in. City tours, pub nights, excursions and movie afternoons are just a sample of some of the activities that are provided.

**The Language Centre at the University College Cork** is a professional English language training organization which helps to develop students' language fluency skills and provide students with the benefits of being able to focus and achieve their goals. The





Language Centre, which was established in 1994 as part of the School of Language and Literature offers courses in many foreign languages, but specializes in teaching English as a Foreign Language. Students can choose to participate in intensive English courses or summer programs. Prospective teachers can also study for the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) or the Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA).

## Dublin

**Dublin, Ireland's capital is a vibrant and**

modern city with a prestigious literary, musical, and cultural tradition. The city center is very easy to navigate on foot and there are numerous attractions, such as museums, art galleries, castles, and historic churches. Some of these popular Dublin attractions include the National Gallery, the Guinness Storehouse, Christchurch Cathedral, and St. Stephen's Green. Students will also be impressed with the lively nightlife of Dublin, where students can enjoy themselves in the city's Temple Bar quarter.

**Active Language Learning**, which is situated in Dun Laoghaire of Dublin, was founded in 1989 and is family-owned. Adult courses consist of general English, intensive English,

examination courses, an executive business course, as well as a work and study program. The school also provides various Cambridge Examination courses.

There is a junior language program aimed at students between the age of 12 and 18, which consists of three hours of instruction in the morning, three hours of sports and activities in the afternoon, evening activities three nights a week, and a full day excursion during the weekend.

Located just 20 minutes on foot from the city center, **Aisling Ireland** is unique in being the only language school in Dublin which focuses exclusively on providing short-term intensive courses in business English during the day. A small training center, with each class limited to a maximum of four participants, Aisling Ireland provides an ideal environment where professionals can work with their peers to hone their business English skills in a structured and friendly environment.

During the morning, clients study the language required for key business functions such as telephoning, meetings and negotiations. At lunch, clients and staff eat together in a local restaurant or pub and in the afternoons, one-to-one instruction provides each client with an ideal opportunity to work on any specific areas of interest or weakness, while

enhancing their overall fluency.

Established in 1989, **Alpha College** has consistently sought to provide English Language Training of a consistently high standard. At Alpha College, there is a well-structured curriculum, syllabus, weekly class plan, and progress test. Furthermore, there is a structured program of observations, coaching, and on-going training for their teaching staff. Students are also provided with opportunities to extend the learning experience through extra-curricular activities such as a book and video club, poetry competitions, and other on-going social programs.

**Dublin City University Language Services** has provided professional and friendly language training since 1992. In addition to the center's core fluency and examination classes for adults, the center specializes in courses for groups of professionals who want to learn English for vocational purposes. Courses offered include General English, Business English, IELTS exam preparation, TOEFL exam preparation, refresher courses for teachers, English for Academic Purposes, and Language Plus.

Programs at the Dublin School of English include a full activity program to ensure that students get the maximum benefit from their time in Ireland. Students are able to take tours