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**IPRT Volunteer Programme Guidelines**

**June 2019**

The 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. Now in existence for 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, and wanting to contribute to, the work of IPRT. IPRT does not follow a service provision model, and therefore our volunteering opportunities primarily support our **policy and advocacy** activities.

Volunteer placements with IPRT are generally offered for **5 months, on a part-time basis** (17-21 hours per week): February to June and September to January. We also have capacity to host one volunteer for two months for up to 28 hours per week in July/August.

Volunteer placements are unpaid. Therefore, IPRT aims to facilitate flexibility in volunteer hours to support the work and study needs of our volunteers. Due to the limitations on staff time and office facilities, we are only able to offer 2 placements at any given time. Below you will find detailed information about the programmes.

**Volunteer programme:**

1. IPRT offers two *Policy and Advocacy* volunteer placements, working across our policy, research, advocacy and communications activities.
2. The volunteer programme is managed by IPRT’s Senior Research and Policy Manager, who is responsible for the induction and the day-to-day 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 and policy papers; 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 and engagement; assisting with website content management; assisting in organisation of events; and networking with other organisations.
5. 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. Volunteers normally contribute **17-21 hours a week, usually over 2-3 days**. Other arrangements will be considered, particularly to avoid any impact on obligations in relation to any studies or paid work.

**Summer placements:**

1. Summer placements essentially mirror the volunteer placement programme in relation to tasks, etc. but are offered on a short-term basis. Usually there is only one summer placement offered.
2. Summer volunteers are asked to contribute up to **28 hours a week, over 4 days for a two month period**. Other arrangements will be considered, particularly to avoid any impact on obligations in relation to any studies or paid work.
3. Summer placements are advertised in May of each year.

**Volunteer programme – dates:**

1. Calls for applications are typically issued twice a year. **Deadlines will usually be end May and end November.** Please note that we will not consider any applications for volunteering applications received outside those dates. 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. Third-level studies and/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 toIPRT’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 e-Bulletin and 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.**

1. Please make sure that you indicate your availability on the form;
2. Decisions about volunteer placements will be made on the basis of assessment of the application and short interview. Following receipt by IPRT of the completed application and all of the documents referred to in point 2, applications will be assessed as to whether they meet the essential criteria and any additional criteria as outlined above. IPRT will contact shortlisted applicants to arrange an interview. Interviews will normally be in person; phone interviews may be arranged if required (for instance, if the applicant does not live in Ireland).
3. Where no suitable candidate is identified, positions may not be filled.

**Important information**

1. IPRT is a small organisation and therefore normally requires assistance from volunteers who can be available for not less than 3 months (unless on the summer placement which is of 2 months’ duration). Suitable applicants available for the full 5 months will be given preference.
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 to abide by IPRT’s volunteer policy.
5. 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