



Organic Growers of Ireland Internship in Organic Horticulture 2026 Application Guide

The OGI Internship is a work-based placement on active commercial organic farms. Learning takes place primarily through daily work participation rather than formal training or mentoring arrangements. Finding the best intern-host farm match will ensure a rewarding experience for both you and your host farm.

Use this document as a guide **before you begin the application process**, to reflect on your skills, experience and goals, help complete your application form, and find the best host farm match for you. You do not need to submit this form as part of your application.

Part 1: Applicant Host Farm Matching & Programme Commitment Reflection

Part 2: FAQs

PART 1: APPLICANT/HOST FARM MATCH & PROGRAMME COMMITMENT REFLECTION SHEET

This reflection sheet is designed to help you consider whether the OGI Internship is the right fit for you and to guide you in choosing the most suitable host farms when selecting your Top 3 preferences. This is not a test, but a tool to support a better intern/host farm match.

1. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Accommodation

Will you require accommodation?	Yes / No / Unsure
Are you willing and able to arrange your own accommodation if none is provided?	Yes / No / Unsure

Transport

Do you have access to a car?	Yes / No
Do you hold a full Irish or EU driving licence?	Yes / No
Are you willing and able to commute to rural farm locations?	Yes / No

2. WORKSHOPS & OFF-FARM TRAINING DAYS

Attendance at all OGI workshops is mandatory. Training days usually take place once per month from April to September. Interns are responsible for arranging their own transport.

Can you attend all required workshops?	Yes / No
Can you arrange transport to and from workshops?	Yes / No

3. PHYSICAL & WORKING CONDITIONS

I am comfortable carrying out physically demanding work.	Yes / No
I am willing to work outdoors in varying weather conditions.	Yes / No
I understand this is manual work, not observational training	Yes / No

4. COMMERCIAL FARM WORK ENVIRONMENTS

I am comfortable working as part of a staff team	Yes / No
I am comfortable in commercial production environments	Yes / No
Which environment suits you best? Smaller teams / Larger commercial teams / Open to both	

5. SKILLS, BACKGROUND & EXPERIENCE

QQI Level 5 horticulture or farming	Yes / No
Other relevant qualification	Yes / No
6-12 months farm experience	Yes / No
1+ years' farm experience	Yes / No
Limited experience but high motivation and readiness for physical work	Yes / No
Relevant skills:	

6. LEARNING GOALS

What are your learning goals for the programme?

Organic production systems	Sales & marketing
Polytunnel / greenhouse work	Machinery skills
Soil health & composting	Propagation & seed work
Crop planning	Open to learning my host farm's priorities
Farm business operations	Other:

7. AVAILABILITY & COMMITMENT

Are you available for the full internship period?	Yes / No
Why are you committed to completing the programme?	

8. FARM MATCHING REFLECTION

Why have you selected your Top 3 host farms?

Farm 1:	
Farm 2:	
Farm 3:	

PART 2: FAQs

How long is the OGI Internship programme?

The programme starts at the end of March and ends in early October. The exact start and end dates of your work placement will be agreed with your host farm. You must complete a minimum of 720 hours of paid work on your host farm. The OGI training programme runs from the start of April until the end of September.

What kind of work will I do as an intern?

Daily tasks vary from farm to farm and change with the season, weather and workload. Your day might include a mix of the following:

- opening tunnels and watering early in the morning
- harvesting, washing, packing, and preparing deliveries
- bed preparation, including applying compost or farmyard manure
- marking out and planting beds (both indoors and outdoors)
- tunnel work such as weeding, removing old crops, and preparing for new plantings (e.g., tomatoes)
- outdoor tasks like planting brassicas, broccoli, or salad crops, either by hand or with tools
- direct sowing crops and preparing seed beds
- propagation work, such as watering and caring for seedlings
- general crop maintenance and lots of weeding

Days can be busy and physically demanding, and the pace may increase during peak harvest periods. The exact routine will depend on the type of farm you are placed on and the time of year.

Can I work part-time?

Your working days and hours will be agreed directly with your host farm at interview stage. You must work **at least 30 hours per week** over a period of 6 to 9 months to complete the internship programme.

Do you provide a work contract?

You will be recruited and employed directly by your host farm, who will provide a contract of employment for the period of your internship. Your work hours and rate of pay will be agreed at interview/job offer stage.

Do I have to take part in the OGI training programme?

Full participation in the training programme **is compulsory**. Your host farm will allow you time out to attend the training days. Please provide your host farm with

the details of the training schedule in good time so that you can book your required time off.

Will I have to submit coursework and do exams?

To gain your QQI Level 5 Organic Principles & Standards qualification, you'll need to prepare two pieces of course work, usually submitted in June and August, and sit a short final exam in September. Assessment is based on the final exam (40%), a market research assignment (20%) and a conversion plan assignment (40%).

How much does the training programme cost?

The training programme is fully funded by the Dept of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, including all workshops, training days, farm walks, QQI Level 5 classes, materials and final exam, and Health & Safety and Manual Handling certificates. It is provided free of charge to all interns.

Do I need my own transport?

This depends on the location of your host farm. If you live off-site, you are responsible for your day-to-day transport to and from the farm. Some farms are accessible by public transport, but many are rural, so please check this carefully before you apply and during the interview stage.

You will also need to travel to OGI workshops and training days, which are compulsory. These events take place monthly and may be held in different regions (for example, one workshop in Munster, one in Connacht, one in Leinster). We do our best to choose central or rotating locations, but you should consider this travel requirement before committing to the programme.

Why are there no host farms available near me?

The availability of host farms varies from year to year. While we will always do our best to have a range of host farms across the country, availability of work placements depends on the needs of individual farms, which is subject to change.

Do you provide accommodation?

Accommodation is **not** provided as part of the programme. Some host farms will have accommodation options available on site, while others will be able to help you to find accommodation in the local area.

Is there a trial period?

There is a two-week trial period at the start of every placement. If you realise during this time that the placement is not a good fit, OGI will do its best to support you in finding another host farm. However, we cannot guarantee that another placement will be available, as some farms will have already filled their intern positions for the season.

Can I change host farms if it's not a good fit?

We encourage you to research your host farm as much as possible before committing to the internship. Use the interview to ask questions that matter to you and to make sure the placement suits your needs. Please also check your own criteria carefully for example:

- accommodation options
- access to public transport
- travel time
- other personal or family commitments

The more preparation you do in advance, the better the chance of a strong match.

How many days off will I get?

Your days off are agreed directly between you and your host farm, as the host farm is your employer for the duration of the internship. Arrangements around holidays, weekly days off, and any additional time off should be discussed and confirmed during the interview or at the start of your placement.

What happens if I'm sick or injured?

If you are sick or injured, you must inform your host farm as soon as possible, as they are your employer for the duration of the internship. Each farm will have its own policy on sick leave, but in general you should:

- contact your host farmer promptly if you cannot attend work
- follow any procedures they outline (e.g., medical certs for longer absences)

If an injury or illness affects your ability to continue with the internship, please also let the OGI Internship Coordinator know. We will support you and your host farm to explore options, in some cases, pausing or ending the placement may be needed.

What happens at the end of the programme?

When you finish the internship, you will have completed a full growing season and gained strong practical skills. Interns who successfully complete the required assessments receive a QQI Level 5 Component Award in Organic Horticulture, along with an OGI Certificate of Completion.

Past interns have gone on to part-time or full-time work in the organic horticulture sector, started their own market gardens, continued to further horticulture training, or have stayed working on their host farms.

You will also remain part of the OGI grower network, with access to events, learning opportunities, and support after the programme ends.

I live outside Ireland, can I apply?

Yes. You can apply if you already have a **valid work visa** for Ireland and meet the programme **application criteria**.

Is there an age limit?

You'll need to be over 18 and in good physical health to take part, as this is a hands-on programme involving manual, outdoor work on your host farm. There is no upper age limit. Previous participants have come from all walks and stages of life.

Do you provide work visas?

We do not provide work visas for this programme. You must have a valid visa to work in Ireland **before you apply**. We are not able to assist in the visa application process.

I don't have a previous relevant qualification or 6 month's experience. Can I still apply?

To meet our application criteria, you must have at least 6 months of farming or horticulture experience AND/OR hold a previous qualification in horticulture (QQI Level 5 or above). As this is a paid work placement, this ensures that interns are aware of the nature of the work and are not starting from scratch.

You can build practical experience before you apply through short-term opportunities such as:

- WWOOF (Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms) www.woof.ie
- Volunteer placements on community farms or gardens
- Short unpaid farm stays (some farms offer trial weeks or 1–2-week beginner placements)

Many host farms prefer applicants who have already spent some time on their farm in the previous season or who have already completed a successful short trial stay (where possible). It shows commitment, helps you understand farm life

and gives hosts confidence in your suitability for a full internship. Even a few weeks of practical experience can make a big difference to your application.

Horticulture QQI Level 5 (& above) courses are available at colleges and universities around the country.

Do you run any shorter programmes?

We don't currently run any shorter internship programmes. The OGI Internship programme is designed to provide participants with hands-on experience of working through a full season. Visit our events section, sign up to our mailing list and follow our social media for information on organic horticulture events and training opportunities around the country.

For further information contact the Internship Coordinator:

placement@organicgrowersireland.ie

Find out more & apply

www.organicgrowersireland.ie/internships/