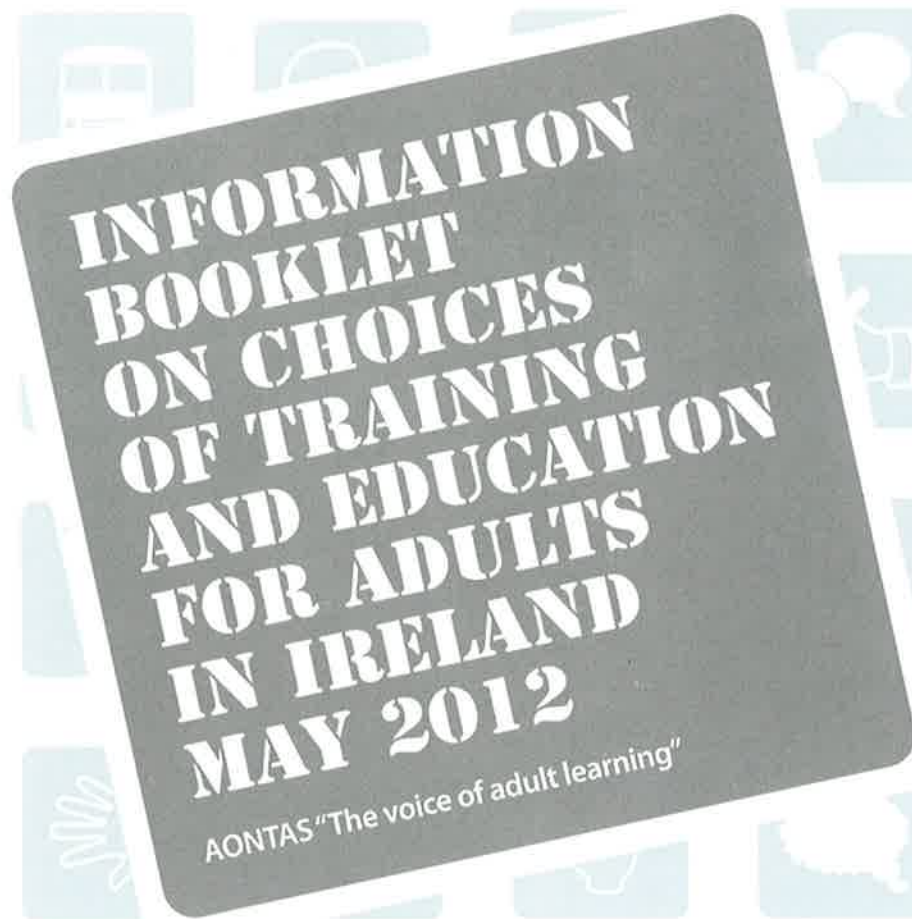


What Next?



aontas

Table of Contents

Foreword	1
Learners' Stories	2
How to get involved in adult education	
Adult education in Ireland.....	4
What is an adult learner?	4
Where do I start?	5
How has the government responded to the challenges posed by the economy?	5
New opportunities	6
Accreditation	6
Qualifications	7
NQAI.....	7
HETAC	7
FETAC.....	7
National Framework of Qualifications.....	7
How does the National Framework of Qualifications work?.....	8
Europass	9
Where can I find information about my learning options?	
Adult Education Guidance Initiative (AEGI).....	9
AONTAS.....	10
ActiveLink	10
Career Directions.....	10
Citizens Information	11
City & Guilds.....	11
DARE.....	11
Department of Social Protection.....	12
Fáilte Ireland.....	12
FÁS.....	13
HEAR.....	13
INOUE.....	13
Local Employment Services network – OBAIR.....	13
Local library	14
NALA	14
Qualifax, the National Learner Database.....	15
Teagasc.....	15

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI).....	15
Vocational Education Committees (VECs)	15

Adult Basic Education

What is Adult Basic Education and what supports can adult learners get?.....	16
What are the benefits of taking a course like this?	16
Where do you find Adult Basic Education courses?	17

Second Chance & Further Education

What is Second Chance & Further Education?	17
Evening courses / Day courses.....	18
Post Leaving Certificate/College of Further Education courses (PLCs)	18
Senior Traveller Training Centres	19
Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)	19
Back to Education Initiative (BTEI).....	21
What is the Back to Education Initiative?	21

Community Education

What is community education?	22
Where can I find a community education course?	22

Foundation and Access Courses

What third level institutions offer Foundation/Access courses?	23
--	----

Higher/Third Level Education

How to make an application through the CAO?.....	24
How to make an application through Bluebrick?.....	25

Distance, On-Line, Flexible and Blended learning

Why choose distance education?.....	26
What are the entry requirements?.....	27
How are distance courses assessed?	27
Can you get exemptions for previous qualifications?.....	27
Who offers distance courses?.....	27
Atlantic University Alliance	28
FÁS e-learning at the library	28
FÁS e-learning portal	28
NALA – National Adult Literacy Agency	29
EPIC (Employment for People from Immigrant Communities).....	29
Open Learning Centres.....	29

Apprenticeships & Training

Community Employment Schemes	29
FÁS Apprenticeship	30
Fáilte Ireland	30
Female bursary-financial supports for women apprentices.....	31
JobBridge	31
The Work Placement Programme	32
Tús – Community Work Placement Initiative	32

Workplace learning

Workplace learning	32
--------------------------	----

Financial supports

General education and training allowances	33
Student grant scheme	34
Free fees initiative.....	35
The Student Contribution Fee (formerly the Student Registration Fee)	36
The Back to Education Allowance	36
The Student Grant appeals board.....	38

Additional supports and scholarships

The Student Assistance Fund	39
The Education Finance Fund (formerly NOVA)	39
St Vincent de Paul	39
SIPTU	40
IMPACT	40
North/South Scholarship Scheme	40
SPIDAS	40
NUI Galway Scholarship.....	41

Financial and other supports for students with disabilities

Fund for students with disabilities.....	41
CRC Ciaran Barry Graduate Scholarship.....	41
The NUI Award Scheme for students with disabilities	41
DCU Scholarship	42
How to access disability supports when applying to third level?	42
Higher Education Authority Initiative- DARE.....	44
USI.....	44

Area-based Scholarship/Grants

Credit Union Member Scholarships/Bursaries.....	45
Dublin Port Company Scholarships 2012	45
Dublin Docklands Development Authority	45

Annie Kelly Education Bursary	46
-------------------------------------	----

General Scholarships/Grants

Bursaries	46
All Ireland Scholarship Scheme	46
The Walton Bursaries	46
Irish Taxation Institute Third Level Scholarship Programme.....	47

Scholarships for Postgraduate study

Fáilte Ireland Tourism Research Scholarship Scheme	47
Trinity College Dublin postgraduate awards and prizes.....	47
UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School scholarships	47
Bord Bia Marketing Fellowship.....	48
Burren College of Art scholarships.....	48
Research funding for PhD students in telecommunications.....	48
Queen's University Belfast studentships	48
University of Ulster scholarships and awards.....	48
Government of Ireland Research Scholarships in the Humanities and Social Sciences	49
Government of Ireland Research Scholarships in Science, Engineering and Technology.....	49
Tax Relief	49
Graduate Skills Conversion Programme.....	49

How To

How to become a Counsellor	50
How to repeat your Leaving Certificate	50
How to become an adult education tutor	51
How to become a Teacher's Assistant	52
How to become a TEFL tutor	52

Contacts Section

Contacts by section.....	54
Access officers.....	59
Adult education officers.....	62
Adult literacy organisers.....	64
Adult education guidance initiative.....	77
Community education facilitators.....	80
Partnership Education coordinators.....	83

Glossary of terms

85

Foreword

Welcome to 'What Next?', the AONTAS Information Booklet.

This is the fourth edition of an Information Booklet produced by AONTAS which aimed to provide adults in Ireland with information about their learning options. Whether you are unemployed and considering your next move, thinking about a career change, pursuing a new interest or want to develop new friendships and networks, having access to accurate and up to date information is vital to helping you make the decision that is right for you.

It's easy to be overwhelmed by the amount of information that you have to trawl through if you are contemplating returning to education. This booklet brings together all of the current information about adult learning and presents it in a way that is accessible and easy to understand. The addresses and contact details of other useful organisations and websites are included should you wish to follow up with them individually or online.

Although finding information can be a difficult task, this booklet is testament to the high quality and value of information provided by those working within the sector. Information for this booklet has been gathered and collated from sources such as www.studentfinance.ie, from the VECs, the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Social Protection, FETAC, the Citizens Information Service and Qualifax (The National Learners' Database). Special thanks are due to the Adult Education Guidance Association of Ireland (AEGAI) for their assistance in ensuring the accuracy and quality of the information provided in this booklet.

'What Next?' is dedicated to the memory of Jennifer Gunning, our much loved and missed former colleague who sadly passed away in April 2010. In her role as Information and Research Officer with AONTAS, Jennifer helped thousands of adults in Ireland to embark on their learning journey. We hope that this resource can in some way continue some of the work initiated by Jennifer in answering the questions that most often occur to adults as they face up to the brave challenge of returning to education.

Finally, thanks to the adult learners, whose stories, challenges, dreams and achievements you will read throughout this booklet. We hope that their experiences of learning will encourage you to decide 'What Next'.

We have endeavoured to ensure that all information is correct and up to date. Nevertheless, course information, funding options and contact details change over time. AONTAS advises you to keep an eye on www.aontas.com/information or to check regularly with information providers or the Adult Education Guidance Initiative in the extensive contacts section of this booklet.

Learners' Stories

Read about people just like you who want to change their lives, their employment prospects or to continue learning for pure enjoyment:

Owen Ward

Coming from a disadvantaged background, it wasn't expected of me to stay on at school. When I was 15 years old, I finally did leave in the hope of getting some work. Having worked in a lot of various low paid jobs, I always wondered what it would have been like to have finished my education. At this stage I was married with three young children and I decided to look into it further.

A friend of mine told me about a course that was running at NUI Galway. This was the first time I heard of an Access course and I applied for a place. The Access course is a preparatory course for people from disadvantaged backgrounds and with successful completion of the course, it would give direct entry into University. After successfully getting a place on the course, I threw myself into my studies. I knew that getting a University degree was the key to a better future for myself and my young family.

Going to university is one of the best decisions that I ever made, it has opened up a door of opportunities and has made me more aware of the world we live in today. It has brought me out of my shell and made me stand up and be heard.

I am doing a degree in Human Rights with Arts and also a Diploma in Irish. I am the first in my family ever to attend University and my family is very proud of me. With recent cuts to the Maintenance grants and more applications than ever for the student assistance fund, it makes it more difficult to attend University. I do hope that the next government will review these budget policies and make more funding available to mature students whether in university or for those who are doing a PLC course.

Rachel Lynch

I spent many years working as a graphic designer. However, at the age of 33 I was diagnosed with arthritis. I had to give up my career and the future wasn't looking very bright. Most people aren't sure what they want to do. I wasn't sure what I would be able to do, given my illness. Going back to education played a big part in helping me get back on my feet.

The local community centre, TARGET Adult Education, was very helpful and supportive. They gave me the opportunity to learn how to manage the arthritis in a working environment and also provided funding for training courses. I now work as an adult literacy tutor and trainee counsellor.

I was concerned about going back to education and so did short courses to build up my confidence. Once I got these under my belt I felt able for more and I went on to study adult literacy with Waterford Institute of Technology and counselling with Northside Counselling Service.

Sometimes with crisis comes opportunity. Although it has been difficult balancing finances and going back to study I've discovered a potential that I never knew I had. My future could have been very bleak if funding and support had not been in place to give me this opportunity. Thanks to my new career, I now feel hopeful for my future and have more purpose in life.

Christy Flanagan

In the last few years through ill health I had to give up work. To get me out of the house my wife persuaded me to attend a class in our local adult education centre. The first class I took was a local history class, this was followed by other classes both accredited and non-accredited. I then went on to take law lectures on the Irish constitution and European law.

Arising from this I became a member of Limerick City Adult Learners Forum, which gives a voice to all adult learners in Limerick. I am also now on the steering group for a National Learner Network with Aontas.

Many people like me who left school at an early age are now looking for the same opportunity that I got for second-chance education unfortunately due to cutbacks this is not available to them in some circumstances.

Attending classes has been a social outlet to me that has taken me on a journey that I would never have believed I would do.

Are you inspired? Then read on and see how you too can become one of the thousands of adults who return to learning every year!

How to get involved in Adult Learning

Adult education in Ireland

AONTAS-*the voice of adult learning*- is a membership organisation that believes in the right of every adult to continue their learning throughout their lives. **The mission of AONTAS is to advocate for the right of every adult in Ireland to quality learning.**

What is an adult learner? *We are all adult learners.*

AONTAS believes that people learn continuously throughout their lives in formal or informal settings; at home, in the workplace, in the community or in learning centres and institutions. Returning to any form of education can be daunting but is without a doubt beneficial. You may discover skills and talents that you never thought you had, you can meet new people and widen your social circle, and ultimately develop skills to help you find employment in the future. If you are over 23, you are generally regarded as a mature student. Entry requirements (you may not need your Leaving Certificate) vary from course to course and from institution to institution, so it is important for you to research the course and the institution you would like to attend.

“My senior learning journey started when I took a creative writing programme” Mary Mason, Adult Learner

No matter when or at what level you finished your initial education, you have learned something new since. Learning can take place on a daily basis in many settings...

Examples of adult learners are people who:

- Decided to do a part-time course in a local community centre or group
- Left school at an early age but returned to learning to gain a formal qualification
- Are improving their reading and writing skills through one-to-one classes
- Learn on the job in a training course
- Never had the chance to go to college after school so enrolled as a mature student
- Have updated their skills to improve their career or employment prospects
- Learn a new language or undertake a hobby course
- Participate in social or leisure courses, or in active retirement activities

Have you done any of the above? If so, you are an adult learner! And you're in the company of hundreds of thousands of adults throughout Ireland because..... *We are all adult learners.*

“Attending classes has been a social outlet to me that has taken me on a journey that I would never have believed I would do!” Christy Flanagan – Adult Learner

Where do I start?

The current economic climate and the rapid increase in unemployment have resulted in a greater demand for education and training. Due to increased demand, you may have to wait to see an Adult Guidance Counsellor, or you may have to put your name on a waiting list for a course, but be patient, it will be worth the wait.

How has the government responded to the challenges posed by the economy?

In May 2011 the Government announced a **Jobs Initiative** - which includes measures to inject growth into the economy. Education and training options for people who are unemployed are included within the new Jobs Initiative. The Jobs Initiative commits to providing the following education and training:

- 6,000 places on specific skills training courses for people formerly employed in areas experiencing 'structural unemployment' e.g. construction
- 3,000 additional places through the Back to Education Initiative - targeting adults with less than a Leaving Certificate Qualification, (please refer to page 20 of this booklet)
- 1,000 additional PLC places
- 5,900 places under the third level 'Springboard' initiative, targeting people employed in areas now experiencing significant structural unemployment (this round closes September 2011 but new rounds may be announced). Springboard courses are ideally suited to people who have substantial work experience but need a third level qualification to upskill or retrain in growth areas. Applications must be made through the Bluebrick portal – www.bluebrick.ie, which also allows learners to compare different courses and search by area.
- Information on new courses will be available on: www.aontas.com/information, www.education.ie and www.qualifax.ie .
- The new ICT plan launched on Monday 30th February 2012 involves a number of higher education providers now offering various Level 8 Conversion Programmes which will provide graduates from other skills areas with the opportunity to up-skill or re-skill through a one year full time HDip Conversion Programme in core computing/programming skills. The 17 programmes on offer will be for NFQ Level 8 jobseekers with cognate/numerical skills and underlying aptitude for programming and there will be 768 places offered countrywide. All courses are supported by the HEA and Department of Education and Skills which means the tuition fees normally associated with such programmes are waived. Visit www.bluebrick.ie for more information.

New opportunities

Even in the current economic climate, there are shortages in certain areas of the workforce that, with appropriate training could lead you to employment. According to the report produced by the 'Expert Group on Future Skills Needs' in August 2011, specific growth areas were identified to assist in the economic recovery. They may be areas that you already have some experience in or an interest in. These include the following:

- ICT (eg cloud computing)
- Green Economy (eg renewable energy, water and waste treatment/management)
- Chemistry and biological sciences
- The food and beverage sector (eg innovation/ supply chain management)
- Financial services (eg quantitative financial analysis)
- Medical devices sector (engineers, technicians and trade)
- Wholesale and retail (business leadership and retail operators).

To download the report in full, or for more details refer to contacts section or visit www.egfsn.ie.

Accreditation

Accreditation is important – as this could mean the difference between getting that job or not! Accreditation also provides a route to progress to further training and education in the future and can build on your existing skills and qualifications. Your course should lead to some form of progression - whether that is taking your education to the next level, or leading to employment and work experience opportunities. Make sure that the course you are interested in is accredited by a recognised body. Refer to the National Framework of Qualification in this booklet for information or visit www.nfq.ie.

Try and pursue your own skills and interests. Use the services and providers (listed in this booklet) who can help you make the decision that is right for you. Spend time researching the course you would like to attend, the provider and accreditation of that course, AND think of the skills, abilities and interests that you already have that can be utilised to bring you one step closer to getting THAT job and fulfilling your dreams!

“As a body of students, we mature students demonstrate ability and commitment while still experiencing the wonder of discovery and of learning something new for the first time” Gregori Meakin- Adult Learner

Information on Qualifications

Qualifications

Before choosing a course to study adult learners should do a bit of research;

- Find out what, if any, qualification will be awarded upon completion of the course
- Know the institutions awarding body
- Learners should always fully research the qualification before commencement.

“Healthy minds help to make healthy bodies and keeping our older citizens mentally active on learning courseswill pay dividends well above their cost”. Mary Mason – Adult Learner

In July 2011, legislation for a new single national qualification agency was announced. The Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland (QQAAI) will amalgamate the existing national qualifications and quality assurances bodies for learners into a new agency with responsibility for a wide range of functions. It will replace FETAC, HETAC, NQAI, and IUQB and is anticipated to be established fully in 2012. The interim website is available on www.qualificationsandquality.ie.

NQAI (The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland) is an agency of the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation and was set up in February 2001. It is responsible for developing and maintaining the National Framework of Qualifications. www.nqai.ie or refer to the contacts section at the end of the booklet.

HETAC - (The Higher Education and Training Awards Council) is the qualifications awarding body for third-level education and training institutions outside the University sector other than the Dublin Institute of Technology. It is the legal successor to the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA). Visit www.hetac.ie or refer to the contacts section at the end of the booklet.

FETAC - (The Further Education and Training Awards Council) is the national awarding body for all further education and training in Ireland. For further information: www.fetac.ie or refer to the contacts section at the end of the booklet.

National Framework of Qualifications

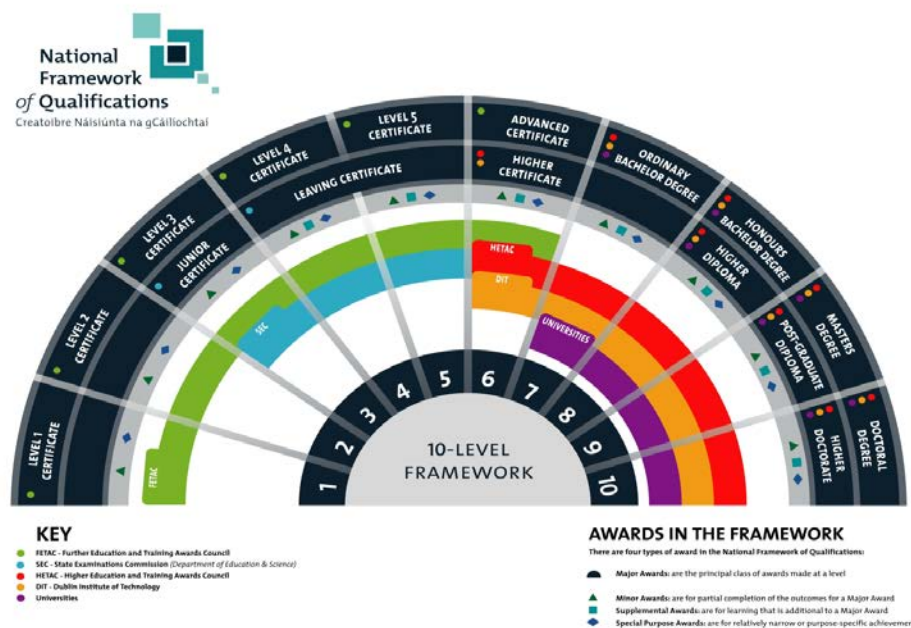
The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is a ten level system that incorporates awards made for all kinds of learning, large and small, whether it is gained in schools, the workplace, the community, training centres, colleges or universities. For each level of the NFQ, standards of knowledge, skill and competence have been set out, defining the outcomes to be achieved by a

learner seeking to gain a qualification. Visit www.nfq.ie or refer to contacts section at the end of the booklet.

How does the National Framework of Qualifications work?

The National Framework of Qualifications has been built around an agreed structure, as a result of an extended consultation period with a range of stakeholders. The following points illustrate the central features of how it works:

- The Framework is comprised of levels, award-types and named-awards
- It has ten levels covering the very initial stages of learning to the most advanced
- Four classes of award-type have been determined for the Framework - major, minor, special-purpose and supplemental. This is to ensure that the Framework can capture all types and sizes of learning undertaken by a learner.
- The international dimension of the introduction of the NFQ is important. The introduction of the NFQ has aided the recognition of qualifications not only for holders of NFQ awards travelling abroad but also for those travelling to this country with awards gained outside the state. Similar developments are taking place in many countries, across Europe and worldwide. Qualifications in the NFQ are recognised in Ireland and abroad. There are two qualification frameworks at European level. Both of them provide additional information to help understand countries' education systems. These frameworks support individuals moving to different countries, whether for further study or for employment.



Example: A learner who has completed the Junior Certificate is at Level 3 on the framework.

- There are two qualification frameworks at European level. The two frameworks are:
 - ~ **The European Qualifications Framework (EQF)**, which deals with all levels of the NFQ including schools, further education and training, and higher education and training
 - ~ **The 'Bologna framework'**, which deals with higher education (NFQ Levels 6 to 10)

To read more about the international frameworks please visit: www.nfq.ie or refer to the contacts section at the end of the booklet.

“Though I am gaining from the lectures I receive I am getting as much from my peers’ wealth of experience, and contributions.” Gregori Meakin – Adult Learner

Europass

What is Europass?

Europass is an initiative aimed at helping people make their skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Europe, thus facilitating the mobility of both learners and workers. The Europass documents have been designed to create a coherent chronicle of peoples skills and competencies. Europass consists of a portfolio of five documents as follows:

Two documents which individuals can complete independently

- **Europass Curriculum Vitae (CV)**
- **Europass Language Passport**

Three documents which are completed by the competent organisation on behalf of the individual

- **Europass Mobility**
- **Europass Certificate Supplement**
- **Europass Diploma Supplement**

The Irish National Europass Centre (NEC) is located within the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. It is the national agency for Europass in Ireland and represents Ireland in the European network for Europass. Visit www.europass.ie or www.nqai.ie or refer to the contacts section at the end of the booklet.

“Education is not a privilege, it is a right!” Michelle Mitchell – Adult Learner

Where can I find information about my learning options?

Adult Education Guidance Initiative (AEGI)

The Adult Education Guidance Initiative was established with the aim of providing a quality guidance service for adults. It consists of 40 guidance projects throughout the country which provide a quality adult educational guidance service to the returning adult, qualification levels, student funding, qualification recognition and the stepping stones of progression within courses and towards a career.

The AEGI is aimed at those adults who are considering or participating in:

- adult literacy
- Vocational Training Opportunities Schemes (VTOS)
- community education, including the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI).

Former residents of designated institutions are also eligible to receive guidance from the AEGI. Guidance Counsellors meet with adults on a one to one basis and also facilitate group guidance to identify, and combine competencies and advise on opportunities available. This service is free and is funded by the Department of Education and Skills. People who don't fall in the target categories can still call a centre and get information.

The Guidance Initiative is available through your local VEC. An Information Officer or Guidance Counsellor can assist you with your decision. To read more about Adult Guidance or to find a Guidance Counsellor in your area visit www.aontas.com/information or refer to the contacts section at the end of the booklet.

More guidance options are also available on www.aontas.com .

"It was great to be able to explore my thoughts and dreams with somebody who wasn't going to tell me that I wasn't able to do that or to get real." (Reflections of an adult student's experience of guidance)

AONTAS

Every year the AONTAS Information Referral Service provides both direct and referral information on adult education issues to individuals and groups. Please visit www.aontas.com/information or call 01-4068220.

"Why should adult learners not be given a voice and not be heard? AONTAS is this voice and we need to stand together and make ourselves heard" – Michelle Mitchell – Adult Learner

ActiveLink

Activelink is the premier online network for non-profit organisations. They provide information on jobs, tenders, volunteering, events, fundraising, training, publications and funding in the non-profit sector. The website is updated daily and filtered into 2 weekly newsletter bulletins – Activelink (jobs and volunteering) and Community Exchange (training and events). Visit www.activelink.ie.

Career Directions

Career Directions is a FÁS web based guidance programme and can suggest suitable careers for you, taking into account your likes and dislikes for different aspects of work, your qualifications and your health. You should have a minimum of 30 minutes available to do the basic matching and look at suitable careers suggested for you. Remember, you can save your

session at any time and retrieve your information at a later date. Visit www.careerdirections.ie or refer to the contacts section at the end of the booklet. *Please note that FÁS and the local VEC are being merged and will be replaced by the Local Education and Training Board. Existing services will continue to be available until Legislation is in place under the newly formed further education and training authority SOLAS (Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanunaigh agus Scileanna) during the course of 2012.*

Citizens Information

Citizens Information is an Irish eGovernment website provided by the Citizens Information Board. The site provides a wide range of public service information, from Government services to information on moving abroad and much more. In particular their education section gives clear and up to date information on courses and financial supports. The Citizens Information Board also produces a number of publications about your rights and entitlements. The Citizens Information Phone service and Citizens Information Centres are funded and supported by the Citizens Information Board. They provide free, confidential, independent and impartial information to all.

You can access information from the citizen information as follows:

- By phone through the Citizens Information Phone Service. Lo-Call 1890 777 121, Monday to Friday, 9am - 9pm
- In person by calling to a Citizens Information Centre near you, visit www.citizensinformation.ie and click on **find a centre**.

City & Guilds

City & Guilds is committed to developing the skills of people and organisations to secure their personal and economic growth and prosperity. The Ireland branch office was established in Dublin in 2002 and since then have had a dedicated team in place to support local centres, agencies, employers and learners. Their qualifications were formally aligned to the National Framework of Qualifications in September 2008. This is an important milestone in benefiting learners in Ireland seeking to progress seamlessly onto the next level of their training and career progression. For further information on courses available visit www.cityandguilds.com/ireland and refer to the contacts section in this booklet.

DARE

In 2009, The Irish Universities Association, Dublin Institute of Technology and partners, on a national basis, launched an access route for students who wish to progress to higher education. The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is for students with a disability. Further information and details are available on the website www.accesscollege.ie.

Department of Social Protection

Local Social Welfare offices provide jobseekers with one-to-one assistance through its jobs facilitator service. The role of the job facilitator is to help inform and assist people in using their employment options to move from welfare to work. Facilitators will regularly co-operate with mediators, FÁS, Jobs Club and Partnership companies in helping unemployed people to progress to employment. As FÁS is currently the main activation avenue available to jobseekers, everyone who is approaching 3 months on the live register is identified by the Department of Social Protection and referred to FÁS (www.fas.ie) for an interview with a view to assisting them to enter or re-enter the labour market. This will include information on the latest training and education options available to you. Visit www.welfare.ie or refer to the contacts section. *Please note that FÁS and the local VEC are being merged and will be replaced by the Local Education and Training Board. Existing services will continue to be available until Legislation is in place under the newly formed further education and training authority SOLAS (Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) during the course of 2012.*

Fáilte Ireland

Fáilte Ireland was formed in 2003 under the National Tourism Development Authority Act to guide and promote tourism as a significant driver of the Irish economy. There are a number of training options to choose from when pursuing a career in the hospitality and tourism industry. They also run an apprentice scheme “Earn & Learn” (see apprenticeships & training section in this booklet).

- The Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) is a scheme to recognise people who have worked in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry for a number of years, but who do not have a formal qualification. Contact Fáilte Ireland Dublin on 01 8847 836 to get an application form, or alternatively download the application form for Accreditation of Prior Learning
- If you are interested in becoming a tour guide, Fáilte Ireland have courses that may interest you. With these courses you have the opportunity to attain a HETAC or FETAC qualification and register as a Fáilte Ireland tourist guide,

For third level options you can apply through: CAO; Fáilte Ireland Programmes or Further Education Colleges. For further information on all education and training options available please visit www.failteireland.ie/education or refer to contacts section in this booklet.

For information on Research funding available please see Scholarships for Post graduate study section in this booklet. Fáilte Ireland also have offices in, Cork, Galway, Mullingar, Sligo, Waterford and Northern Ireland.

FÁS

FÁS currently co-ordinates a number of training measures which respond to the learning needs of people who are unemployed. Courses available include anything from short courses, to blended learning options which include an online element, to specific skills training relevant to particular industries or sectors. Courses are run at different times in the day and may also lead to FETAC accreditation. Some of the courses provide a training allowance, as well as a contribution towards travel, meals and accommodation. Employment Service Officers (ESOs) are based in FÁS offices (www.fas.ie), they are available to advise on employment opportunities, training courses and other options which may lead to employment. In addition they may refer you to your Local Employment Service (LES) www.localemploymentservices.ie or local Jobs Club for further support. In July 2011 the Department of Education and Skills announced the reconfiguration of further education and training. Further education and training will be co-ordinated by a single entity, SOLAS. For updates, keep an eye on www.aontas.com/information.

HEAR

In 2009, The Irish Universities Association, Dublin Institute of Technology and partners, on a national basis, launched an access route for students who wish to progress to higher education. The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is targeted at students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Further information and details are available on the website www.accesscollege.ie.

INOUE

The INOU is the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed. The INOU is a federation of unemployed people, unemployed centres, unemployed groups, community organisations and Trade Unions. The INOU represents and defends the rights and interests of those who want decent employment and cannot obtain it. They provide information on training and resources available to the unemployed to help them get back to work. You can speak in complete confidence to an Information Officer in the INOU Welfare to Work section, directly on 01 856 0088, Monday to Friday 9.30 am to 5.00 pm.

For contact details please refer to the contacts section or visit www.inou.ie

Local Employment Services network – OBAIR

The Local Employment Services network provides a range of services to the local community focusing on the provision of practical support, advice, guidance and information relating to employment, training, return to work and welfare rights options. The Local Employment Service is a community-based organisation set up under the Area Partnerships and funded through FÁS. If you are interested in any of the services or programmes they have on offer, call into any of the

twenty six offices around Ireland for more information. To find the nearest office to you, visit: www.localemploymentservices.ie.

The following are a full range of LES confidential and free services:

- The **Gateway service**, is for those who are short-term unemployed, it can provide information on current employment vacancies, both from LES/employer contacts and the FÁS Jobs Bank and other internet based job sites.
- You may have the opportunity to meet with a qualified **Guidance Counsellor** through the LES. They can provide you with information on training, further education and second chance educational programmes that may be of benefit to you.
- **Mediation service** is a specialist one to one service which will provide you with the practical support, guidance and resources needed to re-enter the work-place after unemployment.
- The **Disability Support Service** is responsible for training, placement and support of clients with disabilities into the open labour market.
- **Literacy support** is a specialist service which aims to provide individuals with practical support and assistance with literacy skills.
- **Jobs Club** is your opportunity to learn and develop the skills that you need to successfully get a job.

For all of the above visit www.localemploymentservices.ie and then click on **Services**. For contact details, please refer to the contacts section.

Local library

Local libraries usually provide a number of courses on a regular basis. Many public libraries, particularly the larger ones, provide resources to enable users learn or follow a course of study themselves. These include language learning booths and computer based training materials. Ask for details at your local branch. To check what's available at your local library, visit www.library.ie or refer to the contacts section at the end of this booklet.

NALA

The National Adult Literacy Agency is an independent charity committed to making sure people with literacy and numeracy difficulties can fully take part in society and have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs. The National Adult Literacy Agency provides telephone support, online courses and referral information on where to go for help. Visit www.nala.ie, call the **NALA freephone 1800 20 20 65** or refer to the contacts section at the end of the booklet.

Qualifax, the National Learner Database

If you are looking for a particular course, Qualifax is an excellent place to start. The site allows you to search courses by area or subject. It is a comprehensive database of courses available in a variety of education settings, including VTOS, distance learning etc throughout the country. See the distance learning section (page 26) for a step by step guide on accessing Qualifax. www.qualifax.ie

Teagasc

Teagasc – the Agriculture and Food Development Authority – is the national body providing integrated research, advisory and training services to the agriculture and food industry and rural communities. Agricultural/Horticultural courses are delivered through their eight colleges and some Institute of Technology and UCD. They also have e-learning available through www.teagasc.ie/ecollege. For further information contact www.teagasc.ie and refer to contacts section in this booklet.

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI)

The USI is the sole national representative body for students in Ireland. Founded in 1959, USI now represents more than 250,000 students in over forty colleges across Ireland. For further information, refer to the contacts section at the end of this booklet or visit www.usi.ie.

Vocational Education Committees (VECs)

VECs are statutory education bodies that administer secondary and adult education in Ireland and provide a wide range of services. VECs offer many educational services to adults, including adult basic education, community education, the Back to Education Initiative and adult guidance. Many of these services are relevant to the labour market. There are 33 VECs located around the country, shortly to be reduced to 16 Local Education Training Boards (LETB).

The newly established LETB will come under the remit of SOLAS and will include staff and services previously available from FÁS and the VECs. The staffing structure of each LETB has yet to be agreed. Currently each VEC has an Adult Education Officer who is available to guide you through education and training opportunities. The VECs offer a wide range of services, including education provision, grants, community education facilitators, guidance officer and much more. Please refer to contacts section for details of your local VEC or visit the websites: www.vec.ie. *Please note that FÁS and the local VEC are being merged and will be replaced by the Local Education and Training Board. Existing services will continue to be available*

until Legislation is in place under the newly formed further education and training authority SOLAS (Seirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) during the course of 2012.

“What I was unaware of was that throughout my life I had been learning all along even though it was not in a traditional classroom environment, but rather the great big classroom of life”. Anna Delaney – Adult Learner

Adult Basic Education

What is Adult Basic Education and what supports can adult learners get?

“I’m 35- I left school at 14 and became a mechanic. Recently the garage closed, and even though I knew everything about how to fix cars, I couldn’t get my full mechanics qualification because I couldn’t read or write”. James McCann – Adult Learner

All over Ireland, lots of people are returning to learning to improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills. Courses organised by the Adult Literacy Service in each county are offered to adults and can be on a one-to-one basis or as part of a small group. These courses are provided free of charge and the service is confidential. The National Adult Literacy Agency provides telephone support and information on where to go for help. Visit www.nala.ie, call the **NALA freephone 1800 20 20 65** or refer to the contacts section at the end of the booklet.

ABE support:

- is free and confidential;
- is offered one-to-one or in groups and has a non-school atmosphere
- is focused on the needs of the learner
- allows learners to get advice on their educational needs
- has a relaxed and informal atmosphere.

What are the benefits of taking a course like this?

People who return to adult basic education are people who want to catch up on what they missed at school, parents who want to help children with their homework and those who would simply like to write a letter home. Whatever the reason for going back to learning, the benefits are always the same. Not only do people improve their skills, but they also gain the confidence to go on to learn new ones.

“I decided to call the National Adult Literacy Agency and did an intensive six week literacy course. Since then I haven’t looked back. In only a few months I have changed job, am running a garage and have applied to do a full mechanic and management course in Dublin Institute of Technology”. James McCann – Adult Learner

Where do you find Adult Basic Education courses?

If you are interested, or know someone else who could benefit from a course, contact your local Adult Literacy Organiser (ALO) in your nearest Vocational Education Committee (www.vec.ie) or refer to the contacts section. If you need help:

- Phone the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) at their **freephone helpline 1800 20 20 65**.
- Local Employment Services provide a specialist service which aims to provide individuals with the practical support and assistance with literacy skills. Visit www.localemploymentservices.ie.
- In addition, there are web-based options for those who want to practice in the comfort of their own homes. The website www.writeon.ie can be used by people in their own homes. Writeon.ie was launched by the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) in 2008. This site allows adults to assess their skills and then work on areas that need some improvements. Learners can then use this site to apply for a national award at Level 2 or 3.

“I feel proud of myself. Those are the very words I’m using. I’m proud of myself!” James McCann – Adult Learner

Second Chance & Further Education

What is Second Chance & Further Education?

Over the past few years a range of programmes have been developed to facilitate adults who want to return to education. Adults decide to return to learning for a number of reasons including:

- Perhaps you left school early
- Maybe you never had a chance to do your Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate
- You may decide that you want to take up a new hobby or learn a new skill
- Fed up with your current situation, you might decide that you want to retrain or upskill
- You were recently made unemployed and want to develop your skills
- You are employed in a sector which is declining (e.g. construction).

All you need to do is pick up the phone and call your local VEC. Visit www.vec.ie or refer to the contacts section. *Please note that FÁS and the local VEC are being merged and will be replaced by the Local Education and Training Board. Existing services will continue to be available until Legislation is in place under the newly formed further education and training authority SOLAS (Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) during the course of 2012.*

“Many people like me who left school at an early age are now looking for the same opportunity that I got from second-chance education.” Christy Flanagan – Adult Learner

Where do I find Second chance / Further education courses?

Schools, colleges and community education groups offer a wide variety of daytime, evening, full-time and part-time courses for adult learners. The programmes offer a range of courses helping you to develop a hobby or interest, right through to courses from which a Post Leaving Certificate qualification can be gained.

For further information, contact the Adult Education Officer in your local VEC. You can also browse Qualifax (www.qualifax.ie), the National Learners Database, for details of a course in your area. Please refer to the contacts section at the end of this booklet for contact details.

Evening courses / Day courses

Evening courses and day courses are available in a wide range of subjects. There are many different providers of these courses; from your local library to the nearby secondary school. Learning a new skill, furthering your career opportunities, meeting new people and satisfying your creative urges are all reasons to take part in an evening/day course.

You can look up courses on:

- Qualifax www.qualifax.ie
- Learning Ireland www.learningireland.ie
- Careers portal www.careersportal.ie

“I was concerned about going back to education and so did short courses to build up my confidence.” Rachel Lynch – Adult Learner

Post Leaving Certificate/College of Further Education courses (PLCs)

Post Leaving Certificate courses are full-time one/two year programmes of integrated education, training and work experience provided in schools and colleges outside the third level sector. The courses are offered to school leavers and adults who wish to return to education. The courses are designed to prepare students for work by giving them specific skills and training and also act as a stepping-stone to other third level qualifications. Courses are accredited through the National Qualifications Framework (NFQ). Use the National Learners' Database, www.qualifax.ie, to find the course in which you are most interested. Then apply directly to the school or college offering that course.

Who are PLC Courses for?

They are for:

- People who have completed senior cycle education, and require further vocational education and training
- Adults returning to education that may not have completed the senior cycle but have the necessary competencies and capacity to undertake their chosen programme

- Adults who were unable to enter third level education after leaving school.

When offered a place you may be required to attend an interview.

How much does a PLC course cost?

With effect from the academic year 2011/2012, a new participant contribution of €200 per year is being introduced.

You do not have to pay the contribution if:

- You hold a full medical card in your own right
- You are the dependent child of a full medical card holder
- You are eligible for exemption under the Maintenance Grants Scheme for Students attending Post Leaving Certificate Courses
- You are getting Back to Education Allowance or a VTOS allowance

Colleges offering PLC courses usually also have a 'course charge' to cover such expenses as books, uniforms, and exam fees. The amount varies from college to college. Students who are exempted from the participant contribution will still have to pay the course charge.

Senior Traveller Training Centres

Throughout the country there are a number of Traveller Training centres (www.sttc.ie) that cater for the educational, training and personal development needs of the Traveller community. Budget 2011 recommended that Senior Traveller Training centres be phased out by June 2012, and no new enrolments will take place from January 1st 2011. Alternative education for adult Travellers will be prioritised within the Back to Education Initiative. For further information see page 21.

Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)

VTOS is a social welfare funding scheme which includes a range of full-time courses designed to meet the education, training and qualifications needs of people in receipt of a range of social welfare payments. Depending on the location and size, each VTOS centre will provide a different combination of learning opportunities. In all cases the learning centre or college will be under the management of the local VEC (Vocational Education Committee). To get information on learning opportunities under VTOS contact the VTOS co-ordinator in your local VTOS centre. You can also browse courses available through VTOS centres on Qualifax (www.qualifax.ie), the National Learners Database. Please note that courses listed on Qualifax are permanent courses but your local VEC and local VTOS centre will have information on additional courses available so don't forget to check with them too.

Who fits the criteria for a VTOS course?

- people aged 21 or over and
- people in receipt of a Job Seekers' Allowance or a Job Seekers' Benefit or signing for credits for at least six months or
- people in receipt of a One Parent Family Payment, Disability Allowance, Illness Benefit, Blind pension or Invalidity Pension for at least six months or
- a dependent spouse of an eligible person for at least six months or
- people in receipt of Deserted Wife's Benefit/Allowance, Widow's/Widower's Contributory/Non Contributory Pension/Prisoner's Wife's Allowance or Blind Person's Pension for at least six months. Conditions may apply in the case of Blind Person's Pension/Deserted Wife's Benefit/Allowance/Widower's Contributory/Non Contributory Pension or Prisoner's Wife's Allowance. Periods spent on FÁS training courses, Community Employment Schemes, Job Initiative, Youthreach programmes and time in prison can count towards the qualifying period.
- Your individual circumstances may affect your eligibility. Check with your Social Welfare office.

How much does it cost to do a VTOS course?

All VTOS courses are **free**.

- If you are currently getting a Job Seekers' Allowance or a Job Seekers' Benefit, you will instead get a training allowance at a rate equivalent to the maximum rate of your payment.
- If you are in receipt of One Parent Family Payment, Disability Allowance, Illness Benefit, Blind Pension, Invalidity Pension, Deserted Wife's Benefit/Allowance, Widow's/Widower's Contributory/Non Contributory Pension and Prisoner's Wife's Allowance you will continue to draw your payment in the normal way from the Department of Social Protection.
- If you are signing for credits only you may qualify to participate in a VTOS course. You will not receive a training allowance.
- If you are the spouse/partner of a person in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit which includes an increase for the spouse/partner you may also qualify to join a VTOS course. However the spouse/partner will not qualify for payment in his/her own right while on VTOS.
- You may receive a small lunch allowance and, depending on the distance between your home and the VTOS centre, you may be entitled to a travel allowance. You may be given books and materials free of charge. Childcare support may be available. A bonus

payment of €31.80 is payable if you have been in receipt of certain eligible social welfare payments for at least one year directly before you join VTOS. Conditions may apply.

Where can I get further information about VTOS in my local area?

- Your local VTOS centre www.vtos.ie/main/map.htm
- Your local Adult Education Guidance Initiative www.aegai.ie
- The Adult Education Officer in the local VEC www.vec.ie
- The National Office VTOS www.vtos.ie
- Your local social welfare office www.welfare.ie
- Browse courses on www.qualifax.ie
- The Local Employment Services www.localemploymentservices.ie.

Please refer to the contacts section at the end of this booklet for relevant phone numbers.

“Throughout my adult life, I have contributed to my community and society at large. Education was always that golden apple just out of my reach, however I decided to return to education and the first hurdle was whether I could do it or not”. Michelle Mitchell – Adult Learner

Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)

What is the Back to Education Initiative?

The Back To Education Initiative provides part-time further education programmes for people with less than upper second level education in a range of flexible learning opportunities. BTEI was expanded in September 2007 to include people on low incomes. The aim is to give people an opportunity to combine their learning with family, work and other commitments. BTEI offers a wide range of subjects from Junior and Leaving Certificate courses, catering, tourism, communication, arts & crafts, and others. Courses are certified by FETAC. For application forms and further information on BTEI options in your locality, contact the Adult Education officer in your local VEC or your local adult Guidance service. Visit www.vec.ie or refer to the contacts section at the end of the booklet.

What is the cost of BTEI?

BTEI is free to all those:

- with less than upper second level education
- in receipt of Social Welfare Payment
- dependant on a Social Welfare recipient
- with a current medical card
- signing for credits

All other participants are charged a participation fee.

In general, you are allowed to take part in BTEI funded programmes for up to 17 hours per week without it affecting your Social Welfare payments. However, on certain payments you are expected to remain eligible for work. You must furnish your social welfare office with details of the course you are attending. It is best to discuss individual circumstances with the social welfare office.

What are the benefits of taking part in a BTEI programme?

- Learners have the opportunity to gain a qualification
- BTEI allows learners to develop new skills, build on existing skills and gain in confidence
- Pursue new employment options
- Keep on working while you are learning.

Community Education

What is community education?

Community education is adult education located in the community. It adopts a person centered approach as opposed to traditional education, and takes into account the life experiences of the participants as a starting point. In 2009 almost 60,000 learners participated in DES funded community education¹ and AONTAS estimates a further 30,000 learners participated in programmes organised by independent community groups. The range of programmes includes: FETAC accredited courses mostly level 1 to 5, and non-accredited courses which build confidence to progress and access further learning. Community education in Ireland has developed as a unique educational response to the diverse needs of adult learners, especially those who have gained least from formal education. It has developed mechanisms to help adults facing difficulty accessing and participating in education and has a proven track record in engaging with learners.

Where can I find a community education course?

Throughout the country, there is a wide range of community groups offering courses at various levels. Some community groups also offer courses accredited by various third level institutions. Not all community groups are affiliated to the VECs, so keep an eye on local newspapers, newsletters and community notice boards.

- For more information on community education in your local VEC contact the local Community Education Facilitator. AONTAS also supports the work of community

¹ AONTAS (2011) *Community Education: More than Just a Course*, p.23. AONTAS: Dublin.

education groups outside of the VEC structure through the Community Education Network. Visit www.aontas.com/commed/ or refer to the contacts section.

“My first introduction to community education and the Loreto Centre began when I was invited to participate in a Personal Development Course... This opened the door to me as a working class woman who left school at the age of thirteen” Karen Hollowed – Adult Learner

Foundation & Access Courses

'Return to Learning' or 'Access Courses' are designed for mature students (some access courses also work with students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are not mature students), who for social, economic or educational reasons were unable to access third level education. Access courses are primarily aimed at adults who have been away from formal education for a number of years and would like to improve their skills, confidence and knowledge in order to access a third level course. Access courses familiarise students with the structure and requirements of third level education.

For further information about access courses, contact your local Adult Education Guidance Initiative.

What third level institutions offer Foundation/Access courses?

There is a complete list of institutions currently offering access/foundation courses on the Mature Students Ireland website www.maturestudents.ie under the **access and foundation courses** section. You can also contact the access officer in the institution you would like to attend; a list of access officers is available in the contacts section at the end of the booklet.

“The Access course is a preparatory course for people from disadvantaged backgrounds... After successfully getting a place on the course, I threw myself into my studies. I knew that getting a university degree was the key to a better future for myself and my young family” Owen Ward – Adult Learner

Higher / Third Level Education

The decision to return to third level education after a break from formal learning or entering it for the first time as a mature student is a significant one. However, there is a wide range of options open to learners wishing to pursue third level education. Entry requirements (as a mature student you may not need your Leaving Certificate) vary from course to course and from institution to institution. Universities, Institutes of Technology and private colleges offer courses with

qualifications at certificate, diploma and degree level. Courses are available on a full-time and part-time basis. ***“Sometimes with crisis comes opportunity. Although it has been difficult balancing finances and going back to study I’ve discovered a potential that I never knew I had” Rachel Lynch – Adult Learner***”

How to make an application through the CAO?

The Central Applications Office (CAO) is the office appointed by the Higher Education Institutions with the task of processing centrally all applications to their first year undergraduate/diploma/certificate courses. In Ireland you apply for almost all full-time undergraduate courses (Higher Certificates (Level 6), Ordinary Bachelor's degrees (Level 7) and Honours Bachelor's degrees (Level 8) in the universities and Institutes of Technology through the Central Applications Office (CAO). The CAO provides an application pack with a handbook that lists all the courses on offer and gives information on how to apply. Decisions on offers of places are normally made in August and September, after the results of the Leaving Certificate have been announced. A student must also have the particular academic entry requirements (also called matriculation requirements) for the course he/she wants to take.

For all participating, higher level institutions applications can be made in paper and online via the CAO. Remember to check the closing date for application relevant to the year you are applying. The application whether online or paper has a fee attached, however if you apply online before mid January you may get a discount on this fee. During the year a number of colleges hold open days for students to become familiar with the college they wish to apply to. Remember www.cao.ie gives detailed information on criteria, deadlines and application procedure.

What dates should you make a note of?

- The closing date for applications from Irish and other European Union nationals is normally the 1st of February each year.
- March/April is usually the months where interviews and portfolio presentations take place but these are only for restricted courses.
- You can submit a "Change of Mind" form to amend your choice of courses from 1st of May until the 1st of July.
- The 1st of August is when Round Zero offers are made by the CAO; this round only applies to mature students, deferred students and reserved places etc.
- August 15th is generally when the Leaving Certificate results come out. This is shortly followed by rounds of offers. Round One offers are made by the CAO on August 20th. The closing date for acceptance of offers from this round is usually August 28th. This is generally followed by several rounds of offers from mid to late August. Generally the closing date for acceptance of offers falls the last week in August.

Students should check the exact dates for the above well in advance to making an application with the CAO.

What is a late application?

Late applications are those which are received after the closing date which usually is the 1st of February. Late applications will be accepted up to close of business generally on the 1st May, subject to the exceptions and restrictions mentioned below. However please bear in mind that there is a late application fee. Mature students are restricted in making late applications. Always check with the individual institution.

- A late application may **NOT** be made for Restricted Application Courses. For further information regarding this please make sure you refer to the warning section of the CAO handbook.
- It is also important to note that Mature Applicant Course Codes which are entered on a late application are invalid choices and will **NOT** be considered.
- In addition, individual HEIs may have further restrictions on late applications - for example, some HEIs may not consider late applications from certain categories of applicant.

Mature applicants should make enquiries from the appropriate Admissions Office and/or Mature Students Officer BEFORE submitting a late application or Change of Mind.

“I am the first in my family to ever attend University and my family is very proud of me”
Gregori Meakin – Adult Learner

How to make an application through Bluebrick?

Bluebrick.ie is part of the HEA Strategic Innovation Fund project: *Flexible Learning*. You can use Bluebrick to search and compare accredited courses from 14 Institutes of Technology. Courses are delivered in different formats including classroom, distance and online courses. They are also available as part-time, full time and evening courses. Institutes of Technology also offer a wide range of courses from Social Sciences, to Humanities & Arts and Computing to name a few. You can browse the courses available and choose the course that suits you best, and then apply online at www.bluebrick.ie. The Bluebrick website allows a user to apply for any course listed on the website. A useful feature is that once a user submits an application the information can be saved so that if you want to apply for another course at a later date the application form is automatically completed using the saved information. Details on the ‘Springboard’ initiative are available on the Bluebrick website.

Distance, On-Line, Flexible, and Blended Learning

The options for learning in non-classroom settings, has increased dramatically over the past few years. Distance, online, flexible and blended education allows a learner to study at a time and place that suits their own lifestyle.

****Distance Learning does not qualify for free fees although some courses qualify for tax relief. For a list of approved courses check www.revenue.ie**

Before engaging on any form of distance, online, flexible or blended learning; check the course cost and qualification.

Distance education is learning which is not linked to a physical location at fixed times throughout the academic year. It is fast becoming a new trend in education circles. Open learning, on-line learning and distance learning all qualify as types of distance education. The main advantage of this type of learning is that it can be combined with domestic and work commitments.

On-line learning is where the whole programme is delivered over the Internet. While it is a distance education model, isolation is reduced by internet-facilitated communication between students and between students and their teachers. At present, on-line learning is largely an electronic version of current distance learning techniques - notes are posted on the web, assignments are e-mailed between students and tutors, students set up chat rooms between each other etc.

Flexible learning provides learners with real opportunities for increased choice, convenience, and personalisation to suit the learner. It also recognises that different students have different learning preferences and requirements. This concept is sometimes understood as flexible delivery, which might include using different modes of delivery for course materials, including web-based, CDs, DVDs and so on.

Blended learning Blended learning refers to a mixing of different learning environments. This approach to teaching and learning combines traditional face to face classroom methods with more modern computer-mediated activities. This strategy creates a more integrated approach for both instructors and learners.

Why choose distance education?

- Personal commitments mean you don't have time to attend classes or lectures
- The course you are interested in is only offered at a time when you are at work

- You live too far or don't have transport to get to classes or lectures
- No organisation locally offers the course you want to study

As a learner you need to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages to this type of learning. e.g. you can study at your own pace, and you can combine study with domestic and work commitments, on the other hand you need to be very disciplined and allocate appropriate time for your studies and there is very little social contact.

What are the entry requirements?

Entry requirements vary depending on the institution concerned. Many web-based e-learning institutions base their entry requirements solely on interest, while others base entry on standard criteria. Check with the relevant institution for entry requirements.

How are distance courses assessed?

Assessment varies depending on the institution concerned. Many are assessed on a continuous assessment basis with no exams. Some are assessed partly by exam and partly by coursework. Again, check with the relevant institution for assessment methods.

Can you get exemptions for previous qualifications?

You may get exemption for previous certified study or work related learning within a subject area specific to your proposed course of study. However it is imperative to discuss any prior learning and/or qualifications gained with the provider to identify exemption eligibility.

Who offers distance courses?

In February 2012 over 1220 distance education courses were listed on the Qualifax site. The options cover a huge range of learning options from a mix of providers such as Universities, ITs, Teagasc and private providers. To access the list of courses just follow these steps:

1. Go to www.qualifax.ie
2. Go to the **Adult Learners** tab
3. Go to **course finder** and click on the **all courses** link
4. Scroll down to **attendance options** and choose the **distance option** from the drop down menu
5. **Click search** and a whole list of distance education courses will be visible
6. You can reduce the list by putting in a keyword or course title at the top of the search all courses page.

Some additional options:

Atlantic University Alliance

The Atlantic University Alliance (AUA), is a consortium of three Universities on the Atlantic coast of Ireland - NUI, Galway, the University of Limerick and University College Cork. The AUA have eight programmes that are rolled out using a blended learning approach so the courses are very accessible. For further information visit: www.aua.ie or refer to the contacts section.

FÁS e-learning at the library

The **FÁS e-learning at the library** project is a partnership between the nationwide public library network, FÁS, and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna. The programme is aimed at those who want to develop their skills in a supported workshop environment. Participants can select from a wide range of courses. A dedicated FÁS facilitator works with the learners in each of the libraries, ensuring that all participants, no matter what their prior learning, can get the most out of the programme. There are currently no entry requirements, no allowances paid and the programme is **free** to those participating. Once learners have signed up they can access the online courses from the library or from their own home. For a list of participating libraries visit: www.library.ie/fas-elearning. *Please note that FÁS and the local VEC are being merged and will be replaced by the Local Education and Training Board. Existing services will continue to be available until Legislation is in place under the newly formed further education and training authority SOLAS (Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) during the course of 2012.*

FÁS e-learning portal

This website provides a range of interactive online learning courses, available any time, for those who wish to learn at their own pace. The courses are aimed at employers, employees and unemployed people. Online courses are available free of charge to unemployed clients. Courses are also available, for a fee, to employed persons who wish to update their skills. Exam fees are not covered in the course prices.

The courses are delivered entirely over the Internet and participants have access to the courses for 6 months once they have registered with FÁS e-learning. Unemployed clients can also avail of the blended learning courses, which provide additional online tutor support and tutor led workshops. Many of the courses are certified by relevant bodies but clients are urged to check regularly for certification updates.

For further information visit www.ecollege.ie or refer to the contacts section. *Please note that FÁS and the local VEC are being merged and will be replaced by the Local Education and Training Board. Existing services will continue to be available until Legislation is in place under the newly formed further education and training authority SOLAS (Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) during the course of 2012.*

NALA – National Adult Literacy Agency

NALA provides a number of distance education supports so that learners have the opportunity to brush up on their reading, writing or numeracy skills in the privacy of their own home. This involves telephone tutor support and using an interactive learning website www.writeon.ie. It offers FETAC Level 2 and Level 3 learning content and accreditation in a wide range of subjects. Just log on to www.writeon.ie to get started or call **1800 20 20 65** for more information.

EPIC (Employment for People from Immigrant Communities)

EPIC (Employment for People from Immigrant Communities) is a free programme run by Business in the Community Ireland that supports adults from EU states who are entitled to work in Ireland. It also support those from non-EU states with stamp 4 to help secure employment, training and education in Ireland. EPIC provides six weeks classroom based training plus ongoing individual support including English for work training, Career guidance and Interview Skills. For more information please email epic@bitc.ie or call 01 874 3840. Applicants need an intermediate or higher level of English in order to take part in the course.

Open Learning Centres

Open learning centres are designed to meet a student's individual needs in terms of times, location, pace of learning and entry requirements. Delivery may involve a variety of media, classes, tapes, videos and internet.

For further details contact your local library, listed under your local authority in the phone book or visit www.librarycouncil.ie.

Some other useful websites:

- www.distancelearningireland.com
- www.learningireland.ie
- www.qualifax.ie

Apprenticeships & Training

Community Employment Schemes

Community Employment schemes are funded through FÁS and offer part time training and work experience opportunities for people who are long term unemployed. Qualifying criteria vary, but in general you must be in receipt of a social welfare payment for at least one year. Refer to the contacts section and www.fas.ie then go to **communities** then to **Community Employment**

FÁS Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships allow an individual to gain work experience and training with a view to obtaining a "trade" or becoming a qualified craftsperson. The main craft trades have been designated by FÁS and come within the scope of the statutory apprenticeship system, which is organised in Ireland by FÁS in co-operation with the Department of Education and Skills, employers and unions. During the apprenticeship your employer provides you with on the job training and work experience. You will also obtain off- the job training in a local FÁS job training centre or educational institution.

There are many reasons why people choose to complete an apprenticeship:

- An apprenticeship is an excellent opportunity to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge, competencies, experience and qualifications to build a successful career
- Apprenticeship training is relevant and tailored to the needs of industry
- Apprentices are paid as they progress through their apprenticeships
- On completion of an apprenticeship, an apprentice will become a craftsperson in the chosen occupation and hold a national and internationally recognised qualification.

For further information about becoming, or employing, an apprentice, contact your local FÁS Office. www.fas.ie then refer to the **contacts section**. *Please note that FÁS and the local VEC are being merged and will be replaced by the Local Education and Training Board. Existing services will continue to be available until Legislation is in place under the newly formed further education and training authority SOLAS (Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) during the course of 2012.*

Fáilte Ireland- EARN AND LEARN

In the current economic climate, full-time education is not always an option. For those who want to improve their skills and who may be in full-time employment in the tourism industry the 'earn and learn' model is ideal. Employees can access college education on a part-time basis while training on the job. This option is also available to school leavers who have employment in the sector and who may not savour the idea of full time education. Benefits for the student:

- Graduates receive a fully recognised qualification while working full time
- Students receive valuable paid work experience in a 'best practice' establishment in the tourism industry
- College fees are paid for by Fáilte Ireland – (with the exception of the Trainee Manager Development Programme)*

*The tuition fees payable do not include the payment to be made by students towards the cost of registration, examination and student services. Visit www.failteireland.ie or refer to the contacts section.

Female bursary-financial supports for women apprentices

FÁS is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in the workplace. Through its action programme for women – Women in Focus – FÁS provides opportunities for women to broaden their career options into new and non-traditional areas of work. To promote the entry of women into the designated apprenticeships, FÁS offers a bursary to employers in both the public and private sectors to encourage an increased level of recruitment of women apprentices. This bursary may help you in securing an apprenticeship. The bursary provides a total grant of €2,667 to each employer for each female apprentice recruited. The grant is a contribution towards wage and other apprentice costs over the first 28 weeks of phases 1 and 3 (on-the-job phases) of the Apprenticeship. The **Application form**, also available from FÁS Services to Business advisors in each Region, is sent in by the employer at the time of registering the female apprentice with FÁS. Visit www.fas.ie. *Please note that FÁS and the local VEC are being merged and will be replaced by the Local Education and Training Board. Existing services will continue to be available until Legislation is in place under the newly formed further education and training authority SOLAS (Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) during the course of 2012.*

JobBridge

JobBridge, the National Internship Scheme (NIS) is a Government initiative, designed to offer jobseekers who are on the Live Register and have been in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance/Benefit or signing on for credits for at least 3 months, the opportunity to enhance their current skills and develop new ones. The duration of individual internship positions will be a 6 month or a 9 month placement. If you take up an internship you will keep their social welfare payment and will get an extra €50 per week. The National Internship Scheme starts on 1 July 2011 and will be open for 2 years until 30 June 2013. If an individual commences on a scheme on the 29th June 2013 for 6 months they will be allowed finish up to the expiry date 28th December 2013. All recruitment of participants must take place during this period. The National Internship Scheme is part of the National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) and is being used by the Department of Social Protection as a means of activating unemployed people.

Is there an allowance?

You will receive an internship allowance that is equal to your current social welfare allowance (at time of commencement on the scheme) **plus** an additional €50 per week top-up which will be paid by the Department of Social Protection (DSP). This top-up will be paid for the duration of the internship. All payments of the Internship Allowance will be made directly to the intern. Visit www.jobbridge.ie for further information.

The Work Placement Programme

The WPP operated by FÁS provides a nine month unpaid placement for recent graduates and people who are unemployed. The placements are full time and you do not have to be in receipt of a social welfare payment to qualify. Alternatively, if you are on a social welfare payment for at least three months, you may be able to keep your payment but you must get approval from the Department of Social Protection first. Visit www.fas.ie then click **Work Placement Programme**. *Please note that FÁS and the local VEC are being merged and will be replaced by the Local Education and Training Board. Existing services will continue to be available until Legislation is in place under the newly formed further education and training authority SOLAS (Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanunaigh agus Scileanna) during the course of 2012.*

Tús – Community Work Placement Initiative

Tús was launched on 21st December 2010 and aims to provide short-term, quality work opportunities for those who are unemployed and to provide certain services deemed of benefit to the community. The types of projects carried out are likely to include: Energy conservation work, social care, coaching sporting activities and many more.

Who can participate?

Participants will, in the first instance, be identified by the Department of Social Protection by applying the following criteria:

- A person must be fully unemployed and in receipt of a jobseeker's payment for at least 12 months

Please visit the Department of Social Protection website to find out more details: www.welfare.ie then go to *Schemes & Services* then to *Rural Community Supports* and then to Tús – Community Work Placement Initiative.

Workplace learning

Workplace learning

Funding for workplace learning initiatives has decreased in recent years but there are still some opportunities. There are several ways you can take part, training can often be provided by an external training provider/instructor which can be delivered in the workplace, a classroom or by distance learning. In some workplaces in-house training is continually delivered by members of staff with the necessary skills. This is often described as on the job training. However everyday learning is continually taking place in workplaces throughout Ireland in more informal ways such as:

- observing colleagues
- listening to colleagues
- asking questions
- discussing a task which you may lack a particular skill to complete with a colleague and following this sharing your skills with each other
- mentoring
- self-studying

You can also try contacting organisations who actively promote workplace learning. These include:

- ICTU www.ictu.ie
- TUI www.tui.ie
- INOU www.inou.ie
- IMPACT www.impact.ie/iopen24
- Skillsnets www.skillnets.ie.

Financial Supports

Returning to education can have considerable financial impact on adult learners. Information on grants and funding can often be very confusing. This section aims to help you, the adult learner, overcome the financial hurdles so that you can reach your goal and achieve your educational potential by offering you comprehensive advice that is easy to understand.

“I can say that I’ve been fortunate to receive assistance with the costs of my education in the form of grant aid.” Anna Delaney – Adult Learner

General education and training allowances

As well as introducing some new measures to address rising unemployment, the government has reduced some payments in line with cuts to public expenditure. Allowances to participants in VTOS, Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Centres were reduced in line with the appropriate social welfare rates or FÁS trainee allowances. Check with the Department of Social Protection for information on your benefits. People in receipt of the Back to Education Allowance or PLC course participants on VTOS allowances, are no longer eligible to apply for the Student Maintenance Grant. This change applies to students taking a new course - so if you are heading into your second, third or fourth year then this change will not affect you. However, if you applied for a course this year, or if you intended to move from a PLC or access course to a third level course then you will be affected.

Following Budget 2012, there will be no increases for qualified children payable on the Community Employment (CE) Scheme. While the weekly rate of payment on CE will be reduced

it is understood that the One Parent Family Payment (OFP) will be recalculated to take account of the lower assessable earnings, however it is envisaged that the overall combined income from CE and OFP will be reduced.

N.B. You should apply for the grant even if you are on BTEA to ensure that the cost of your student contribution fee will be met.

Student grant scheme

The student grant is the main source of financial help available from the Irish State for students in full-time post leaving certificate courses (PLCs) and full-time higher education undergraduate/postgraduate courses. Support is available to eligible students in most colleges in Ireland as well as eligible Irish students in many colleges in Northern Ireland, the UK and other EU States. For eligible students, the grant is there to help with the various costs of participating in further or higher education. Students on part-time courses, access or foundation courses (in higher education institutions) and short courses are not eligible to apply for a student grant.

Previously there were four grant schemes to which full time students could apply for assistance. In the first major step to overhaul the student grant system, the four schemes have been replaced by a single unified scheme this year. This will help make it easier for students to apply for a grant.

The new **Student Grant Scheme** is available for the following course types, as prescribed for under the **Student Grant Scheme 2011**:

- Honours degree and Post Graduate Courses at Universities in Ireland for students who have already obtained a Higher Certificate or Ordinary Degree
- Honours Degree and Post Graduate Courses at Institutes of Technology
- Degree courses in universities in other EU Member States for students who have already obtained a higher certificate or ordinary degree
- Higher certificate and ordinary degree at Institutes of Technology
- Full-time approved courses at approved further education colleges

Family and/or personal income is a key factor that will be assessed when you apply for a student grant but there are also some other conditions. Full details on the Student Grant Scheme 2011, including associated legislation, are available on www.studentfinance.ie, this will assess whether you are eligible and guide you in starting the process. In all cases, the official decision on eligibility is made by the grant-awarding bodies. If students have queries in relation to the grant application they should contact the grants section of their local authority or their local VEC, visit www.vec.ie or refer to the contacts section. You should apply for the student grant as soon as possible; **you do not have to wait until you receive an offer of a place or enrol in college.** Only when your application has been completed in full and submitted to the grant-awarding authority can your full eligibility be determined. Students should visit www.studentfinance.ie to

access information about student grants and to complete or download a student grant application form. Guidance notes on completing the application form are also provided for download.

Budget 2012

Changes include:

- Value of some capital assets to be taken into account in the student grants means test from 2013
- Five scholarship schemes to be replaced by a single merit-based bursary scheme, with awards set at €2,000 per student

NB: Mature students no longer automatically qualify for the non adjacent rate of the grant:

according to Budget 2011, mature students are no longer automatically eligible for the non adjacent rate of the Student Maintenance Grant. This also applies to you if you have been on a VTOS allowance. Effectively this means that you must be living at least 45 km from your chosen educational institution in order to qualify for the non adjacent rate.

No maintenance grants will be paid for new entrants on postgraduate courses from the 2012-13 academic year. Fee grants (described below) will continue to be paid for those postgraduate students who would previously have qualified for the special rate of grant (see 'Special rates of grants for disadvantaged students' below).

In addition, based on their means, a further 4,000 postgraduate students will get a €2,000 fee contribution grant. The income threshold for this payment (which will be lower than the standard grant threshold) has not yet been determined.

Since autumn 2011 a new single Student Grant Scheme has replaced the 4 main support schemes for students. They were:

- Higher Education Grants Scheme
- Vocational Education Committees' Scholarship Scheme
- Third Level Maintenance Grants Scheme for Trainees
- Maintenance Grants Scheme for Students Attending Post-Leaving Certificate Courses

It is expected that the 2012-2013 updates to the Student Grant Scheme will be published later in 2012

For contact details of the Student Support Unit of the Department of Education and Science please refer to the contacts section of this booklet.

Free fees initiative

This is a state sponsored scheme. The state pays for the tuition fees of eligible students who are attending full-time third level education for the first time. Learners must be taking a full-time course that is more than two years in duration and they must be an EU national. You will have to

pay a Student Contribution Fee (formerly the Registration Fee) to the institution you plan to attend before commencing, if you don't qualify for a maintenance grant. Prospective learners should contact the institution to see how much this costs. Prospective adult learners from outside of Ireland should visit www.education.ie to find out if they meet the eligibility criteria.

The Free fees Initiative only applies to full time courses, if you intend taking a degree part time, then you are currently required to pay full fees.

The Student Contribution Fee (formerly the Student Registration Fee)

If you are paying full fees, you will also have to pay the Student Contribution fee, the cost of which varies depending on the institution. If you are deemed eligible for the Back to Education Allowance, then the government may meet the costs of the student contribution fee on your behalf. In order for this to happen, you must submit an application through the relevant students grant scheme. For more information visit: www.studentfinance.ie.

The Back to Education Allowance

This is a second chance educational opportunities scheme for people on welfare payments who wish to participate in full-time education. There are two options - a second level option for those who didn't complete their formal secondary education, and a third level option if you have not attended third level.

From the 2011/12 academic year the Student Grant Scheme is divided into 2 components – maintenance grants and fee grants. You cannot get the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) and the maintenance component of a student grant together *unless* you were getting BTEA in the 2009/10 academic year and are continuing your studies or progressing to a new course.

Although you are not entitled to the maintenance component of the student grant, you must still submit a student grant application form to be assessed for a fee grant to pay your Student Contribution (formerly called the student services charge), field trip costs and tuition fees (if payable).

If you are getting a One Parent Family Payment or a disability payment (Disability Allowance, Invalidity Pension or Illness Benefit) you can choose to stay on your current social welfare payment and apply for a student grant or you can choose to transfer to the BTEA.

Who is eligible?

An applicant must be in receipt of a relevant social welfare payment (for example, Jobseeker's Benefit, Jobseeker's Allowance or One Parent Family Payment) for 3 months if pursuing a 2nd level course or 9 months if pursuing a 3rd level course and be at least 21 years of age prior to commencing an approved course of study. You must be 24 or over for a third-level postgraduate

course. However, people getting an illness or disability-related payment or a person who is out of formal education for 2 years may qualify at 18 years of age. You may also be eligible for Back To Education Allowance if you are an adult dependent. For further information: www.studentfinance.ie or visit www.welfare.ie.

People who have been awarded statutory redundancy can have immediate access to the Back to Education Allowance scheme but they must be entitled to a qualifying social welfare payment before starting their course.

The allowance is paid at a rate approximately equivalent to the social welfare payment you receive. In addition, if you qualify for the Back to Education Allowance, you will keep an entitlement to any secondary benefits you already have, for example, Fuel Allowance or Rent Supplement and Mortgage Interest Supplement under the Supplementary Allowance Scheme. In addition to your payment, you will be eligible for an annual 'Cost of Education' allowance of approximately €500.

In Budget 2012 changes were announced to the Cost of Education Allowance. The Cost of Education Allowance will reduce from €500 to €300. (2012)

How to apply?

You can take a third level course at any university, college or third level institution provided it has been approved by the Department of Education and Skills. The Department may also meet the costs of the Student Contribution Fee (formerly the Student Registration fee) payable to the third level institution at the beginning of the academic year. You will need to complete the student grant application form. Since Budget 2010, if you receive the Back to Education Allowance, you will no longer qualify for a Student Maintenance Grant.

Contact your local 2nd or 3rd level school or college to get details of the courses available. Schools or colleges will also advise you on how to obtain a place on the course of your choice.

When you are accepted on a course, you should notify the Department of Social Protection by downloading and completing the Back to Education Allowance application form which is available online at www.welfare.ie and from your Social Welfare local office. Further information and the detailed qualifying conditions for the Back to Education Allowance are available at www.welfare.ie.

N.B. If you already have an undergraduate third-level qualification, (i.e. you have a degree) your application for the BTEA while pursuing post-graduate education will only be considered if you are doing a Higher Diploma in any discipline or the Postgraduate Diploma in Education, Primary or Secondary teaching only.

The Student Grant Appeals Board

The Student Grant Appeals Board is independent and was established under the Student Support Act 2011. It is the first such board for those seeking to appeal decisions made on grants and is open to students who applied for consideration in this academic year. A Student must first submit a written appeal to the awarding authority or appeals officer who has refused their grant. If their decision is upheld the student then has 30 days to appeal to the Student Grant Appeals Board. Application forms are available from the awarding authority or the Department of Education and Skills. For more information see www.studentfinance.ie (pages 30 &31) or call the Department of Education and Skills (Higher Education) on 01 8892338.

One of the changes made in Budget 2012 is that increases for qualified children is no longer payable on the Community Employment (CE) scheme when a similar increase is being made on the One Parent Family Payment scheme. In addition, the amount of earnings a person in receipt a One Parent Family Payment is allowed to have without affecting their OPFP payment has been reduced from €146.50 to €130 per week.

As a result of the Budget measure, the qualified child increase on the CE scheme will stop being paid from 20th February 2012. The new weekly rate of payment on Community Employment, for those in receipt of the One Parent Family Payment, will be €208 per week.

While the weekly rate of payment on Community Employment will be reduced, it is understood that the One Parent Family Payment will be recalculated, at the same time, to take account of the reduced assessable earnings from Community Employment and the revised One Parent Family Payment earnings disregard of €130 per week. The One-Parent Family Payment will increase to partially offset the reduction in the Community Employment payment but, on an overall basis, the combined income from Community Employment (CE) and the One Parent Family Payment (OPFP) will be reduced. Entitlement to Child Benefit (*Childrens Allowance*) will not be affected. If you are in receipt of a means tested Social Welfare payment in addition to your Community Employment payment, and your income has been reduced by the change to child dependent payment you may qualify to have your entitlement to Rent Supplement reviewed.

Additional Supports and Scholarships

Did you know that there is a range of bursary or scholarship schemes in operation which provide an opportunity for students or potential students to access additional financial support if they meet the criteria? Schemes are available which are specifically targeted at students with limited means, students with disabilities and students from minority ethnic groups. In general, bursary or scholarship schemes are focused on higher rather than further education, however there are a number of exceptions. Visit www.studentfinance.ie for further online information.

The Student Assistance Fund

The Student Assistance Fund provides financial assistance for full-time higher education to students who are experiencing financial difficulties whilst attending college. Students can apply for assistance to help them with either temporary or ongoing financial difficulties. The Student Assistance Fund provides a further source of funding for higher education students in addition to the student grant.

Each year, the State allocates a certain amount of student assistance funding to all publicly funded higher education colleges based on the size of the college's full-time student population. Students in need of financial support can then make application in the college for assistance under the Fund. The Student Assistance Fund is not available in further education/PLC colleges. To assess your eligibility for the Fund you need to be aware of the main conditions of the programme. You can check your eligibility with a **6-step guide** on www.studentfinance.ie.

The Education Finance Fund (formerly NOVA)

Under the terms of the Indemnity Agreement reached between the State and 18 religious congregations dated the 5th June 2002 there is provision for a sum of €12.7 million to be used for former residents and their families to facilitate them in accessing programmes. This fund is administered through the Education Finance Board, application forms can be obtained from them. You, your spouse and your children may qualify for funding under the Criteria of Eligibility that has been set down by the committee.

For more information visit www.educationfinanceboard.com.

St Vincent de Paul

Due to overwhelming demand last year the Education and Training grant will not be running this year. There will be some help on a local level for clients of SVP, and there will be a small scholarship fund. Keep an eye on their website: www.svp.ie, in the region section for further updates.

SIPTU

Members of SIPTU can apply for scholarships; awards can be made up to €1000. For more information on this scheme visit the SIPTU College section on their website www.siptu.ie.

IMPACT

Members of IMPACT can apply for a grant for specific courses. For more information on eligibility criteria visit www.impact.ie.

North/South Scholarship Scheme

Currently there are four to six scholarships worth €15,000 (approx. £13,500) available to all students currently registered at an Irish or Northern Irish University or Dublin Institute of Technology (or who have graduated in the past five years) who are:

- proposing to take up a place on a recognised Master's course or the first year of a PHD programme which would require them to relocate to the other jurisdiction on the island of Ireland
- wishing to follow a cross border Master's course or the first year of a PHD programme involving significant study in the other jurisdiction
- And regardless of nationality or birthplace.

Please visit www.crossborder.ie for more information. The call for 2012-2013 scholarships will go out in February 2012.

SPIDAS

The Special Initiatives for Disadvantaged Adults Scheme (SPIDAS) forms part of the Community Education grant. SPIDAS is a small discretionary fund to enable VECs support disadvantaged adult learners enrolled in second chance education at levels 1 – 4 by providing funds towards the cost of fees, books, materials, travel and meals. It is only used in exceptional circumstances where all other programmes do not apply to a disadvantaged adult learner. Those in receipt of the Back to Education Allowance or in receipt of an allowance pertaining to a particular programme are not eligible for additional funding from this fund. Contact your local VEC Community Education Facilitator (usually one of each per county) or the Adult Education Guidance Service to see what they may be able to support. Please refer to the contacts section at end of the booklet.

NUI Galway Scholarship

NUI Galway has announced details of a new scholarship scheme for mature students. 30 new scholarships will be awarded, consisting of €2,000 per student for every year of their study. The new initiative is open to mature applicants, aged 23 years and over. It is open to those applying through the CAO by 1 February and commencing study in autumn 2012. Scholarships will be awarded based on merit, and those interested can apply as normal through the CAO process. The top 30 applicants will be automatically selected for a scholarship and notified before September 2012.

Financial and other supports for Students with Disabilities

Fund for Students with Disabilities

This scheme allocates funding to further and higher education colleges for the provision of services and supports to full-time students with disabilities. Eligible students can receive assistance from the Fund from PLC level right up to doctoral level. You do not have to be in the first year of a course to be eligible to apply for the Fund. Application for the first time can be made during any year of study on an approved course at further or higher education level. The HEA administers the Fund which allows colleges to provide specialised equipment and support the specific needs of a learner with a disability. Applications to the Fund are made on behalf of an eligible student by their college following an assessment of need. Contact the Disability or Access offices in your institution for further information. Applications cannot be made directly to the Fund by students. Colleges are also responsible for the management of the funding approved for eligible students.

Find out more about the Fund for Students with Disabilities: visit www.studentfinance.ie and then click ***fund students with disabilities***.

CRC Ciaran Barry Graduate Scholarship

The scholarship is reserved for a student undertaking a postgraduate degree and is open to any academic discipline. The grant covers one year of study for students with disability. For further information, application form and rules visit www.crc.ie.

The NUI Award Scheme for students with disabilities

Awards with a total value of €11,000 are available to new entrant undergraduate students registered for the first year of a primary degree programme of studies, in one of the constituent universities or recognised colleges of the NUI, and who have serious physical disabilities.

More details can also be obtained from the Disability Office in each of the NUI colleges (NUI Galway, NUI Maynooth and University College Cork) or visit www.nui.ie.

DCU Scholarship

DCU run a scholarship scheme which supports disabled students who wish to combine their academic course with their sporting interests. There is a limited number available; those eligible must have secured a place at DCU through CAO as a Leaving Cert student or as a mature applicant. The award aims to cover training, travel and coaching expenses and involves free access to the DCU sports complex. Contact yvonne.mcgowan@dcu.ie for further information.

“After only a short while I came to realise that the way to create positive change within my life was to educate myself. The subsequent learning experience was a revelation and it opened up a whole new world of experiences and opportunities. It has literally been life changing. By taking one small step at a time I have managed to achieve personal goals that I would previously have thought impossible.” Anna Delaney – Adult Learner

Other supports:

How to access disability supports when applying to third level?

There are a number of supports in place for adult learners with disabilities thinking of returning to education. AHEAD is one organisation which exists to promote full access and participation in third level education for learners with disabilities also helping them gain employment after graduating. AHEAD provide an information service to learners and have developed information sheets and other key resources for learners. They also have an excellent website www.ahead.ie which is a one-stop shop for information in terms of legislation, funding, learning supports, training, projects, work placements and assistive technology.

What legislation exists in Ireland to support learners with disabilities?

Currently there are four key pieces of relevant legislation which are as follows;

- The Employment Equality Act 1998
- The Equal Status Act 2000
- The Equality Act 2004
- The Disability Act 2005

Can an adult learner with a disability qualify for exemptions when applying to third level through the CAO?

Through the CAO it is possible to gain entry via the Supplementary Admissions Route. However it is important to note that entry criteria can vary from one college to another. Some colleges accept learners with disabilities who have achieved 15% below the set points for the course the

year an application is being made. Whilst others may have another system in place and may assess each application on an individual basis. Unless a learner has an approved language exemption learners must obtain the minimum core subject entry requirements for their chosen course.

What supports can a learner with a disability avail of once they have secured a place in third level?

Firstly it is important to note that many HEIs especially within the university sector now have designated Disability Officers in place who can provide information on a range of supports such as funding, accommodation, assistive technology and who generally implements the institutions disability policy. However in smaller institutions this work is often done by the Access Officers.

One of the most important things a learner with a disability can do in making their application is tick the box on the CAO form marked **do you have a disability?** This information will be given to the institution and they will be aware that they will need support upon entry. However all information given to the institution will be treated confidential. It is also important to make arrangements in terms of examination facilities, and seek assistance and the relevant supports from the Disability Office/ Access Office at the beginning of your academic year. It may also be useful to make yourself known to your lecturers as they too may need to be aware of your circumstances.

Universities and colleges can provide many supports such as:

- Transcription services
- Enlarged examination papers
- Braille material
- Use of assistive technology
- Sign Language Interpreters
- Funding.

With regards to mental health USI have also recently launched an innovative mental health awareness pack which has been disseminated to all HEIs as part of their Mental Health Awareness Campaign. This pack provides information to learners through postcards, stickers and bookmarks. Learners can obtain a pack from their Access Office.

Below is a list of useful contacts that also provide information regarding support for people with disabilities.

ORGANISATION	PHONE	WEB
AHEAD	01-7164396	www.ahead.ie
AWARE	01-6617211	www.aware.ie
Centre for Independent Living	01-8730455	www.dublincil.org
Deaf Hear	01-8723800	www.deafhear.ie
Disability Federation of Ireland	01-4547978	www.disability-federation.ie
ENABLE IRELAND	01 872 7155	www.enableireland.ie
HADD Family Support Group	01 8748349	www.hadd.ie
Irish Deaf Women's Group	01-8601878	www.irishdeafociety.ie
Mental Health Ireland	01-2841166	www.mentalhealthireland.ie
National Council for the Blind	1850 334 353	www.ncbi.ie
National Disability Authority	01-6080400	www.nda.ie
The Irish Deaf Society	01-8601878	www.deaf.ie

Higher Education Authority Initiative - DARE

In 2009, The Irish Universities Association, Dublin Institute of Technology and partners launched, on a national basis, an access route for students who wish to progress to higher education. The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is for students with a disability. DARE is a college and university admissions scheme which offers places on a reduced points basis to school leavers with disabilities. The new route will be of interest not just to students but also to their parents/guardians, teachers and guidance counsellors. Further information and details are available on the website www.accesscollege.ie.

For questions on completing a DARE application, please contact the CAO Helpdesk by clicking 'Contact Us' at www.cao.ie or calling 091 509 800. For information on admission and supports for students with disability going to college contact the **AHEAD Helpline** at 01 716 4396 or go to the AHEAD website www.ahead.ie.

USI

The Students Union of Ireland (USI), Equality Officer has the responsibility of initiating campaigns for the defence and promotion of student's right in the areas of equality. The officer is responsible for running Equality Training Events and is the chairperson of Equality Working. Further information is available from the Equality Officer, USI equality@usi.ie or refer to the contacts section.

Area-based Scholarships/Grants

Credit Union Member Scholarships/Bursaries

Many Credit Unions in Ireland provide a number of scholarships or bursaries in their catchment areas for students studying at all levels of further and higher education. For details of your local Credit Union, visit www.creditunion.ie or refer to the contacts section at the end of this booklet.

Dublin Port Company Scholarships 2012

Dublin Port Company, in conjunction with the Dublin Port Community Liaison Committee, has initiated a scholarship scheme in order to provide opportunities for individuals living in the Port area of Dublin to fulfill their potential through education.

Candidates for Scholarships:

- Individuals living in the Port area of Dublin for a minimum of 5 years
- Individuals who would experience significant financial difficulty in undertaking a third-level course of study
- Candidates for the scholarships will include school leavers, mature students and individuals wishing to pursue third-level foundation courses as well as repeat Leaving Certificate students
- The scholarship programme does not include postgraduates.

More information and application forms are available at www.dublinport.ie. Also refer to the contacts section for more details.

Dublin Docklands Development Authority

The scholarships, originally supported by Reuters Ireland and SIPTU, offer €1,300 per annum for students on degree courses, and €650 for those on Diploma or Certificate courses. The scholarships are awarded by the Docklands Authority following a formal application and interview process. To apply all candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Candidates must live in the Docklands catchment area or its immediate hinterland
- Approved courses must be full-time third level courses
- Criteria for selection will be academic achievement, financial circumstances, motivation and interview
- Candidates may be school leavers or mature students.

Over the years applications have increased and therefore deadlines of application must be adhered to. Applicants should check closing dates with the DDDA prior to making an application. Applicants must also be available to attend interview. AONTAS advises you to check with the DDDA for up to date information. For further information on this grant visit www.dublindocklands.ie or refer the to contacts section for more details.

Annie Kelly Education Bursary

The Annie Kelly Education Bursary was established in 2002 in memory of Annie Kelly, a community activist from Drumalee in the North West Inner City who was a member of the North Inner City Drugs Task Force. The bursary is designed to help people from North Inner City communities access further education. For further information please phone Miriam at 01 8366592 or email admin@nicdtf.ie

General Scholarships/Grants

Bursaries

Many universities and institutions offer bursaries so it is useful to keep to regularly check the institutions website for new funding opportunities. When researching finance options have a look in their fees and funding section for up to date information, also visit www.postgradireland.com and www.studentfinance.ie for the latest information and advice.

All Ireland Scholarship Scheme

The All Ireland Scholarship Scheme will provide third-level education scholarships to 120 top-performing Leaving Certificate students from disadvantaged backgrounds each year.

Detailed information on this scheme is provided on www.education.ie go to **students & trainees / scholarships**.

The Walton Bursaries

A new scholarship scheme for higher education called the Walton Bursaries after Ernest Walton has been announced. This will replace the existing scholarship scheme with a new set of bursaries, aimed solely at students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

60 students from DEIS schools who hold medical cards will receive a bursary of €2,000 each this September. This number will rise over each of the next three years, with over 350 students a year benefiting by 2015. The bursary will be awarded regionally on the basis of the leaving cert results achieved by students. It is hoped that this new scholarship will benefit the students who most need the support to continue with their education.

For further information and details visit www.education.ie then go to students & trainees / scholarships on the scheme.

The above Scholarship Scheme has replaced the Third Level Scholarships For Students from the Gaeltacht, 2011, Scheme of Third Level Scholarships, 2011 (through Irish : Restricted), the Scheme of Irish Third Level Scholarships, 2011 (Unrestricted), the Donogh O'Malley Scholarship Scheme and the Easter Week Commemoration Scholarship Scheme.

Irish Taxation Institute Third Level Scholarship Programme

This scholarship programme is open to all Leaving Certificate students in the Republic of Ireland who have an interest in a career in taxation. The Irish Taxation Institute sponsors the student through third-level education and afterwards through the AITI taxation programme, qualifying the student to become a professional tax adviser. Visit www.taxireland.ie and refer to the contacts section, for further information on the application procedure, visit:

<http://www.taxireland.ie/education/Scholarship.aspx>

Scholarships for Postgraduate study

Fáilte Ireland Tourism Research Scholarship Scheme

The Fáilte Ireland Tourism Research Scholarship Scheme offers opportunities for students from tourism and hospitality-related disciplines, to pursue one of the following postgraduate degrees at a recognised higher education institution in Ireland:

- A masters degree by research
- A doctoral degree by research
- An integrated masters/doctoral programme leading to the award of a doctorate.

The maximum period of funding is up to two academic years. Scholarships for 2012 will be announced and the closing date for application is normally in May with funding being awarded in October of the study year, and applications must be in accordance with the Scheme's Terms and Conditions. The fund is valued at €16,000 per annum. For more information please visit: www.failteireland.ie/Research-Statistics/Tourism-Research-Schemes.

Trinity College Dublin postgraduate awards and prizes

As well as various university studentships and fellowships, Trinity College Dublin lists a total of 39 other postgraduate awards and prizes – largely private donations, bequests and bursaries – ranging from €63 to more than €16,000 per year. For more information please visit:

www.tcd.ie/Graduate_Studies/prospectivestudents/awards/index.php

UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School scholarships

UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School has announced its 2012 Aspire Scholarship programme which offers three MBA and nine MSc scholarships, aimed specifically at those who could not otherwise afford to study at the School. The scholarships cover half the cost of the tuition fees of the relevant courses. For more information please visit:

www.smurfitschool.ie/aspire/

Bord Bia Marketing Fellowship

UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School, in partnership with Bord Bia, offers 25 students the Bord Bia Marketing Fellowship. This intensive 12-month learning programme gives successful candidates the combined opportunity to gain hands-on experience working with some of Ireland's most respected food companies and also gain a postgraduate qualification. Participants' time is split between working in foreign locations, supported by Bord Bia, and studying for an MSc International Marketing Practice at UCD Smurfit School.

This is a fully-funded programme, including all tuition fees, and participants will receive a bursary of €22,800. For more information please visit www.smurfitschool.ie/bordbia/

Burren College of Art scholarships

Burren College of Art, a private art college affiliated to NUI Galway they offer 25 scholarships and funding opportunities for its fine art students. For more information please visit:

www.burrencollege.ie/programmes/mfa/fees2.html

Research funding for PhD students in telecommunications

The Telecommunications Graduate Initiative (TGI) promotes four-year structured PhDs in telecommunications across a consortium of seven Irish universities and ITs. 35 four-year studentships incorporating a tax-free €16,000 annual stipend and a €5,000 annual allowance were launched in October 2011 and a number are still available. For more information please visit: www.tgi.ie/

Queen's University Belfast studentships

In Northern Ireland, Queen's University Belfast offers an annual university studentships for both taught and research programmes, which cover the full payment of tuition fees and include a maintenance allowance. They also offer six other annual scholarships ranging from €650 to €5,000, and link to further external funding sources, including the Leverhulme Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. For more information please visit:

www.qub.ac.uk/home/Research/PostgraduateCentre/PostgraduateAwards/

University of Ulster scholarships and awards

Funding is available for both taught and research postgraduate study at the University of Ulster in the form of studentships and scholarships, including the Print Futures Awards and the North/South Postgraduate Scholarships. For more information please visit:

<http://prospectus.ulster.ac.uk/geninfo/postgrad-funding.html>

Government of Ireland Research Scholarships in the Humanities and Social Sciences

These scholarships fund research opportunities in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Law and Business Studies. Applicants must be nationals of a member country of the European Union. They should already be, or will be during the forthcoming year, registered in a recognised third-level institution as full-time postgraduate research students pursuing degrees by major thesis. Scholarships are awarded initially for one year, but subject to terms and conditions, and may be renewable for up to two additional years. Fees will also be covered for the period of the Scholarship. The closing date for receipt of applications is early January. Application forms and further information are available visiting www.irchss.ie also refer to contacts section.

Government of Ireland Research Scholarships in Science, Engineering and Technology

Graduate research scholarships are available to up to 150 outstanding students in Science, Engineering and Technology, by the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology (IRCSET). A formal call for submissions from interested students is advertised in national newspapers early in the new year and the funding starts in the following academic year. Funding will be available for three years to outstanding students who register to study towards a Ph.D., though this time period may be revised to cater for students whose research demands longer time periods. The level of funding will be kept under review and raised upwards on a regular basis. Applications must be made via the on-line system and forms are available from the website www.ircset.ie.

Tax Relief

Tax relief can be claimed on tuition fees up to a maximum fee limit of approximately €7000. Learners can claim back up to 20% of course fees through tax relief. Applicants are advised to contact their local tax office in relation to this and to note that the course must be delivered through or in conjunction with an approved institution. The Finance Bill passed in February 2011 makes some important changes to claiming tax relief. All tax-relief is abolished for the first €2,000 of charges for full time students, and the first €1,000 for part-time students.

To get a full list of approved courses students should visit www.revenue.ie.

Graduate Skills Conversion Programmes

More than 750 places are available on 17 new graduate skills conversion programmes in a joint Government-ICT action plan. The programmes, which will be held throughout the State, will start in March and can be applied for through the Bluebrick website: www.bluebrick.ie.

Adult Learner, Judith would certainly encourage anyone to look at adult education and where possible “to follow your heart. Look at where your interests are and there will be a course to match. It’s always easier to stay motivated if you are passionate about what you are studying. While there are always things to consider, like finances and family, anyone who hadn’t a chance to study when they were younger or feel they need to try something new should find out what is there. It will always stand to you, even if it doesn’t lead to a job straight away”. Judith Cullen – Adult Learner

How to?

How to become a Counsellor

Entry to this position is very competitive in Ireland and currently no formal educational qualifications are essential. The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) has strict ethical guidelines for training for its members and many employers will ask for IACP accreditation. To apply for accreditation applicants must join as an associate member and then take a core counselling course which must be at least 2 years duration full or part-time. Applicants must also complete 450 hours of supervision and training of client work.

There are different levels of entry to this job which include:

- Degree level – Qualifications in psychology/sociology or social work provide useful knowledge required for this type of job. A degree is very useful but not essential
- Postgraduate qualifications in counselling are available
- For adult learners very often life experience, maturity and personal qualities can be more important than formal educational qualifications
- Work experience- as entry to this job is competitive it's important you try to gain some experience in the field. This would include anything that involves dealing with the public and using the core skills required for the job. Work experience in the caring profession is of benefit.

For more detailed information on counselling visit www.irish-counselling.ie.

What skills are required to be a counsellor?

There are many important personal qualities required for this area of work which include; excellent listening skills, the ability to provide encouragement and support, discretion, tactfulness, and the ability to sympathise. The ability to maintain confidentiality is crucial to this position.

How to repeat your Leaving Certificate

I want to repeat the Leaving Certificate but I don't know how to find a course or how much it will cost?

City and County Vocational Educational Committees (VEC's) offer repeat Leaving Certificate courses in a number of colleges throughout the country. Alternatively a number of private colleges offer repeat Leaving Certificate courses. Enrolment and advice on subject choices

normally takes place from the beginning of August to mid September each year, depending on the college. The cost of doing a repeat Leaving Certificate varies. VEC colleges are the less expensive option, however students are advised to check with their local VEC to see what exact costs are involved. If you choose to repeat it with a private college the cost is considerably higher. You should contact your local Adult Education Guidance Initiative if you are thinking of repeating your Leaving Certificate. For further information, refer to the contacts section of this booklet or visit www.ncge.ie.

How to become an adult education tutor

Can you give me some tips on how to become an adult education tutor?

In Ireland the VECs and FÁS are currently the main providers of adult education locally. These are also two of the most well known employers in this area. However recruitment processes for those interested in gaining employment in this area can vary from institution to institution. Therefore potential tutors need to contact them directly to find out about their recruitment processes. Generally there is no hard and fast way of becoming an adult education tutor. On average most adult education tutors are secondary school teachers. Although it is advisable, it is not essential for every adult education tutor to hold a qualification in this area. Most tutors come with an experiential background and have developed their skills through their work. However often tutors can have a variety of qualifications and experiences. There is no set pattern in qualifications.

Community groups such as Meitheal often offer courses independently of VECs & FAS so if you are interested in this field it is recommended that you keep an eye on local community noticeboards to see who is offering what and where. Potential adult education tutors can benefit from gaining certification in facilitation. Groups such as Meitheal deliver courses at various levels in this area. Activelink is an online network for Irish non-profit organisations. Activelink offers information on training and employment opportunities for those interested in a career in the adult education sector. Their website is www.activelink.ie.

It can be advisable but not always necessary to have a qualification in adult education if thinking about teaching adults – NUIM and UCC offer certificates and diplomas in adult education, community education and community development. You may also be able to avail of these courses on an outreach basis.

Adult literacy tutors are people who want to work with adults who have literacy difficulties. If an adult wants to specialise in teaching literacy, they should contact their local literacy schemes. To be a tutor it is not necessary that you are a teacher, have a degree or have even finished second

level education. Prospective tutors, however, will need to have excellent communication skills, strong literacy skills, be good listeners and have the ability to be discreet. It is essential that tutors provide training in complete confidence. After completing the training, the new tutor and student are matched to start one-to-one sessions. Tutors will be required to meet with the students at an agreed place and time.

How to become a Teacher's Assistant

What is a Teacher's Assistant?

A teacher's assistant supports teachers with classroom activities and learning, generally in primary or secondary school. This work generally involves working with children, on a one-to-one or in small groups, who may have physical, visual, hearing or behavioural, emotional, or learning difficulties and who therefore have special educational needs. Increasingly the role of the Special Needs Teaching Assistant is to help those with emotional/physical problems to achieve their full potential whilst in education.

What qualifications do you need to become a Teacher's Assistant?

Previous experience of working with children is essential and maturity is also an advantage. However some employers ask employees to have a formal qualification such as a FETAC certificate in Childcare, Special Needs Assistants or both. Prospective students should note that entry to a FETAC course for mature students does not require formal academic qualifications and is by interview.

So how do you become a Teacher's Assistant?

It is advised that before taking up a course in this area, that prospective students gain some form of experience of working with children. Prior work or voluntary experience can also provide students with the skills needed to be utilised in the future and this also adds to an individual's CV. Individuals can however apply directly to a school of their choice for this position. Many schools provide in- house training. Formal training in areas such as first aid and health and safety can support an individual's application.

How to become a TEFL tutor

Courses are delivered on a part-time, evening, distance and weekend basis throughout the country. Fees vary from institution to institution and therefore it is recommended that potential students research their chosen course with the provider. For current listings of recognised courses information is available on the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland website www.nqai.ie under the ACELS (Accreditation and Co-ordination of English Language Services).

What skills are required to pursue a course or career in this area?

Regulations to teach English vary from country to country, however to teach in Ireland the Department of Education & Skills requires the teacher to have a primary degree plus have successfully completed a TEFL course of not less than 70 hours duration. Although a foreign language is not a requirement it can often prove to be very useful.

What choices are available?

Currently there are 2 recognised certificates for initial TEFL qualifications on offer by course providers in Ireland:

- **Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language** – This is a full initial TEFL Qualification. All successful students who are awarded this certificate are eligible to work in all Department of Education and Skills recognised schools in Ireland. Students are generally required to have a Level 7 Qualification i.e. Ordinary Degree.
The length of courses varies but on average is generally 115 hours and includes practical teaching experience.
- **Certificate for Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Secondary Level Students** - This is a preparatory TEFL Qualification aimed at state qualified teachers. It is also open to teachers in their final year of training and all successful students who obtain this qualification are eligible to work in Junior English Language Teaching (Secondary School) sector and in the summer school sector in Ireland. Students are required to have completed or are in the process of completing a H. Dip in Education or alternatively are in their final year of a B.Ed course. Successful completion of both of these is required before students are eligible to teach on Junior courses in recognised English Language Training organisations. These courses are much shorter in length and last approximately 1 week.

Contacts

Contacts by section

How to get involved in adult learning			
Adult Education Guidance Initiative	www.ncge.ie , www.aegai.ie	01 8690715/6	ncgeinfo@ncge.ie
AONTAS	www.aontas.com	01-4068220	mail@aontas.com
Local Employment Services	www.localemploymentservices.ie		
Jobs Facilitators	www.welfare.ie		
Qualifications			
NQAI	www.nqai.ie	01-887 1500	info@nqai.ie
HETAC	www.hetac.ie	01-63145 67	info@hetac.ie
FETAC	www.fetac.ie	01-865 9500	
National Framework of Qualification Authority	www.nfq.ie		
Europass and National qualification authority	www.europass.ie or www.nqai.ie		info@europass.ie
Where can I find information about my learning options?			
Adult Education Guidance Initiative	www.ncge.ie , www.aegai.ie	01-8690715/6	ncgeinfo@ncge.ie
Career Directions	www.careerdirections.ie		
Citizens Information	www.citizensinformation.ie		
City and Guilds	www.cityandguilds.com/ireland	01-405 2020	ireland@cityandguilds.com
Department of Social Protection	www.welfare.ie		
Fáilte Ireland	http://www.failteireland.ie/Tourism-Education	1890-525 525 01-8847 808	info@failteireland.ie
FÁS	www.fas.ie	01-607 0500	
LES guidance counsellors	www.localemploymentservices.ie		
INOUE	www.inou.ie	01-8560088	info@inou.ie

Department of Education and Skills- Student Support Unit	www.education.ie	01-8734700 or 057-9324387/9324383	
Qualifax, The Learner Database	www.qualifax.ie	059 97 20924	info@qualifax.ie
AONTAS	www.aontas.com	01-4068220	mail@aontas.com
Local Employment Services Network	www.localemploymentservices.ie		
The Library Council	www.library.ie	01-6761167/6761963	info@librarycouncil.ie
NALA	www.nala.ie	01-4127900	info@nala.ie
Teagasc	www.teagasc.ie	059-917 0200	info@teagasc.ie
The Union of Students in Ireland (USI)	www.usi.ie	01-7099300	press@usi.ie
Vocational Education Committees (VECs)	www.vec.ie		
Activelink	www.activelink.ie	01-6677326	
DARE	www.accesscollege.ie		
HEAR	www.accesscollege.ie		
Adult Basic Education			
Vocational Education Committee (VEC)	www.vec.ie		
National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) at their	www.nala.ie www.writeon.ie	freephone helpline 1800 20 20 65	
Local Employment Services Network	www.localemploymentservices.ie		
Second Chance & Further Education			
Vocational Education Committees (VECs)	www.vec.ie		
Qualifax	www.qualifax.ie	059 9720924	info@qualifax.ie
Learning Ireland	www.learningireland.ie	01-865 2160	info@learningireland.ie
Careers portal	www.careersportal.ie		
Studentfinance.ie	www.studentfinance.ie		
Senior Traveller Training centre	www.sttc.ie	0656828 930	
VTOS	www.vtos.ie	01-4020427	
Adult Education Officer in your local VEC	www.aeoa.ie ; www.vec.ie		
Local social welfare office	www.welfare.ie		
Local Employment Services	www.localemploymentservices.ie		

Community Education			
AONTAS	www.aontas.com/commed	01-4068220	mail@aontas.com
CEFA	www.cefa.ie	090-6497004	
Foundation & Access Courses			
Mature Students Ireland (MSI)	www.maturestudents.ie		info@maturestudents.ie
CAO	www.cao.ie	091-509800	
Higher / Third Level Education			
CAO	www.cao.ie	091-509800	
Bluebrick, Institutes of Technology	www.bluebrick.ie		
Distance, On-Line, Flexible, and Blended Learning			
Qualifax	www.qualifax.ie	059 97 20924	info@qualifax.ie
Atlantic University Alliance	www.aua.ie		
Libraries e-learning	www.library.ie/fas-elearning		
FÁS e-Learning Portal	www.ecollege.ie	01-2043732 / 2043752	ecollegeinfo@fas.ie
FÁS e-learning at the library	www.librarycouncil.ie	01-6761167	
NALA	www.nala.ie www.writeon.ie	01-4127900	info@nala.ie
Distance Learning	www.distancelearningireland.com		
Revenue	www.revenue.ie		
Learning Ireland	www.learningireland.ie	01-865 2160	info@learningireland.ie

Apprenticeships & Training			
FÁS	www.fas.ie		
IBEC	www.ibec.ie	01-605 1500	
Jobbridge	www.jobbridge.ie	046 973808	jobbridgeapp@fas.ie
TUS	www.welfare.ie		
Workplace Learning			
ICTU	www.ictu.ie	01- 8897777	congress@ictu.ie
TUI	www.tui.ie	01-492 2588	tui@tui.ie
INOUE	www.inou.ie	01- 8560088	info@inou.ie
IMPACT	www.impact.ie/iopen24		
Skillsnet	www.skillnets.ie	01- 2079630	info@skillnets.com
Financial Supports			
AONTAS	www.aontas.com	01- 4068220	mail@aontas.com
Student Finance	www.studentfinance.ie		
VECs	www.vec.ie		
DES-student support unit	www.education.ie	01- 8734700 057- 9324387 9324383	
Education Finance Board	www.educationfinanceboard.com	1890 742 742	info@educationfinanceboard.com
Saint Vincent de Paul	www.svp.ie	01-838 6990	info@svp.ie
SIPTU	www.siptu.ie	01- 8586300	
IMPACT	www.impact.ie		
Crossborder	www.crossborder.ie	+44 (0)28375 1 1550	

Financial and other supports for students with disabilities			
AHEAD	www.ahead.ie	01-7164396	
AWARE	www.aware.ie	01-6617211	
Centre for Independent Living	www.dublincil.org	01-8730455	info@dublincil.org
CRC	www.crc.ie		
DCU	www.dcu.ie		anne.oconnor@dcu.ie
Deaf Hear	www.deafhear.ie	01-8175700/ Minicom: 01-8175777	
Disability Federation of Ireland	www.disability-federation.ie	01-4547978	
ENABLE IRELAND	www.enableireland.ie	01- 8727155	
Irish Deaf Women's Group	www.irishdeafwomensgroup.weebly.com	0861719570	
Mental Health Ireland	www.mentalhealthireland.ie	01-2841166	
National Council for the Blind	www.ncbi.ie	1850 334 353	
National Disability Authority	www.nda.ie	01-6080400	
NUI	www.nui.ie		
The Irish Deaf Society	www.irishdeafsociety.ie	01-8601878	
Area-based Scholarships/Grants			
Credit Unions	www.creditunion.ie	01-6146700	info@creditunion.ie
Dublin Port Authority	www.dublinport.ie	01-8876000	info@dublinport.ie
Dublin Docklands	www.dublindocklands.ie	01-8183300	info@dublindocklands.ie
DES	www.education.ie	01-8896400	
Revenue	www.revenue.ie		
Scholarships for Postgraduate study			
Fáilte Ireland	www.failteireland.ie/Tourism-Education	1890-525 525 01-8847 808	info@failteireland.ie
Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences	www.irchss.ie	01-660 3652	info@irchss.ie

Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering & Technology	www.ircset.ie		info@ircset.ie
Revenue	www.revenue.ie		
HOW TO			
Union of Students of Ireland, Equality Officer	www.usi.ie	01-709 9300	equality@usi.ie
VECs	www.vec.ie		
NUIM	www.nuim.ie	01-7086000	admissions@nuim.ie
UCC	www.ucc.ie		
FETAC	www.fetac.ie		
IACP	www.irish-counselling.ie	01-272 3427	iacp@iacp.ie
NQAI	www.nqai.ie	01-887 1500	info@nqai.ie
Meitheal	www.meitheal.ie	01-6719803	info@meitheal.ie
Activelink	www.activelink.ie	01-6677326	

Access Officers

COUNTY	ORGANISATION	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
Antrim	Open University (Belfast)		0044-(0)80-1232245025	www.open.ac.uk
	University of Ulster (Belfast)		+44(0)28 7012 3456	www.ulster.ac.uk
	Queens University (Belfast)		+44(0) 2890 245133	www.qub.ac.uk
Carlow	Institute of Technology Carlow	Ashling McHugh	059-9176229	ashling.mchugh@itcarlow.ie
Clare	Shannon College of Hotel Management	Joan Markham	061-712590	joanmarkham@shannoncollege.com

Cork	UCC	Mary O'Sullivan	021-4903670	m.osullivan@ucc.ie
	CIT	Deirdre Creedon	021-4335140	deirdre.creedon@cit.ie
		Sinead O' Neill	021-4335109	sinead.oneill@cit.ie
Donegal	Letterkenny Institute of Technology	Brian McGonagle	074-9186170	brian.mcgonagle@lyit.ie
Dublin	Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	Adrienne Harding	01-8851015	adrienne.harding@itb.ie
	National College of Ireland	Niamh McAuley	01-4498502	nmcauley@ncirl.ie
	DIT College of Technology	Julie Bernard	01-4027601	julie.bernard@dit.ie
	Open University	John Darcy	01-6785399	ireland@open.ac.uk
	Royal College of Surgeons Ireland	Sandra Bonetto	01-4022106	sbonetto@rcsi.ie
	Royal Irish Academy of Music	Francis Hogan	01-6764412	fhogan@riam.ie
	Higher Education Authority	Alan McGrath	01-2317100	amcgrath@hea.ie
	National College of Art and Design	Finola Mc Ternan	01-6364217	mcternanf@ncad.ie
	St. Patrick's College	Vivienne Byrne	01-8842169	vivienne.byrne@spd.dcu.ie
	Dublin City University	Colette Keogh	01-7008868	colette.keogh@dcu.ie
	All Hallows College	Lisa Maye-Gregary	01-837-3745	info@allhallows.ie
	University College Dublin	Ronan Murphy	01-7168245	ronan.murphy@ucd.ie

	Mater Dei Institute of Education	Carmel Carroll	01-8086584	carmel.carroll@materdei.dcu.ie
	Institute of Technology Tallaght	Maggie Ryan	01-4042173	maggie.ryan@ittdublin.ie
	American College	Damien O'Farrell	01-6768939	dofarrell@amcd.ie
	Trinity Access Programme	Cliona Hannon	01-8962752	channon@tcd.ie
	Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology	Patricia Byrne	01-2144628	patricia.byrne@iadt.ie
Galway	NUI Galway	Imelda Byrne	091-524411	imelda.byrne@nuigalway.ie
	Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	Deirdre O'Connor	091-742129	deirdre.oconnor@gmit.ie
Kerry	Tralee Institute of Technology	Valerie Moore	066-7191682	valerie.moore@staff.ittralee.ie
Kildare	Pontifical University/NUI Maynooth	Emer Sheerin	01-7083307	emer.sheerin@nuim.ie
Limerick	Mary Immaculate College of Education	Maura Moore	061-204927	maura.moore@mic.ul.ie
	University of Limerick	Noreen Coveney O'Beirne	061-213481	noreen.coveney-o'beirne@ul.ie mso@ul.ie
	Limerick Institute of Technology	Linda Barry	061-490103 Ext:103	linda.barry@lit.ie
Louth	Dundalk IT	Eileen Lynch	042-9370200 Ext:2883	eileen.lynch@dkit.ie
Sligo	Institute of Technology Sligo	Catherine McNelis	071-9155381	access@itsligo.ie

	St. Angela's College	Karen Kennedy	071-9143580	kkennedy@stangelas.nuigalway.ie cgallagher@stangelas.nuigalway.ie
Tipperary	Limerick Institute of Technology Tipperary	Linda Barry	061-490103 Ext:103	linda.barry@lit.ie
	St. Patrick's College	Paula Hourigan	0504-21201	phourigan@stpats.ie
Waterford	W.I.T.	Nuala Lennon	051-302762	nlennon@wit.ie
Westmeath	Athlone Institute of Technology	Theresa Ryan	090-6468123	access@ait.ie tryan@ait.ie

Adult Education Officers				
COUNTY	ORGANISATION	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
Carlow	Co. Carlow VEC	Marian Duffy	059-9138568	mduffy@carlowvec.ie
Cavan	Co. Cavan VEC	Fiona Maloney	049-4361881	fionamaloney@cavanvec.ie
Cork	Cork City VEC	John Fitzgibbons	021-4273377	jfitzgibbons@corkvec.ie
	Co Cork VEC	Ger Canning	025 42945	gercanning2007@eircom.net
	Co Cork VEC	Nuala Glanton	022-50982	nglantonvec@eircom.net
Clare	Co. Clare VEC	Aobhan Haverty	065-6824819	ahaverty@clarevec.ie
Donegal	Co. Donegal VEC	Crona Gallagher	074-9161570	cronagallagher@donegalvec.ie
	Co. Donegal VEC	Dr. Martin Gormley	074-9721705	martingormley@donegalvec.ie
Dublin County	County Dublin VEC (North County)	Austin Wynne	01-8408946	austin.wynne@codubvec.ie
	County Dublin VEC (West County)	Michael McLoughlin	01-6283910	michael.mcloughlin@codubvec.ie

	County Dublin VEC (South County)	Patricia Doran	01-2989283	patricia.doran@codubvec.ie
	Dun Laoghaire VEC	Don't have one at present	01-2147200	
Dublin City	VEC Dublin North Inner City	Bernadette Sproule	01-8720576	bernadette.sproule@parnell.cdvec.ie
	Parnell Adult Learning Centre	Bernadette Sproule	01-8720576	bernadette.sproule@parnell.cdvec.ie
	City of Dublin VEC (North West City)	Kevin Smullen	01- 8443234	ksmullen@colaisteide.ie
	City of Dublin VEC (North Central City)	Celia Rafferty	01-8623828	info@aesballymun.cdvec.ie celia.cdvec@gmail.com
	City of Dublin VEC (South West City)	Liz O'Sullivan	01-4535487	liz.osullivan@cdu.cdvec.ie
	City of Dublin VEC (South East City)	Cathie Hogan	01-6676267	cathie.hogan@ringtec.cdvec.ie
	Galway	Galway City VEC	Fiona O'Loughlin	091-567194
Galway County VEC		Eithne Nic Dhonnchadha	091-874260	adulthoodeducation@cogalvec.ie
Kerry	Kerry Adult Education Service	Shivaun Shanahan	066-7121488	sshanahan@cokerryed.ie
	Kerry Adult Education Service	Sharon Browne	066-7121488	sbrowne@cokerryed.ie
Kildare	Co. Kildare VEC	Des Murtagh	045 988 000	desmurtagh@kildarevec.ie
Kilkenny	Co. Kilkenny VEC	Eileen Curtis	056776 5103	ecurtis@kilkennyvec.ie
Laois	Co. Laois VEC	Joe Cunningham	057-8621352	jcunningham@laoisvec.ie
Leitrim	Co. Leitrim VEC		071-9620024	

Limerick	Co. Limerick VEC	Eimear Brophy	061-442100	ebrophy@limerickvec.ie
	City of Limerick VEC	Mary Hamilton	061-315358	maryhamilton@clvec.ie
Longford	Co. Longford VEC	Mary Farrell	043-3334000	aeo@longfordvec.ie
Louth	Co. Louth VEC	Sadie Ward McDermott	042-9334047	sadie.mcdermott@louthvec.ie
Meath	Co. Meath VEC	Deirdre McGivern	046-9068200	deirdre.mcgivern@meathvec.ie
Monaghan	Co. Monaghan VEC	Fiona McGrath	047-30888	fmcgrath@monaghanvec.ie
Offaly	Co. Offaly VEC	Tony Dalton	057-9349424	tdalton@offalyvecaded.ie
Roscommon	Co. Roscommon VEC	Don't have one at present	090-6626151	
Sligo	Co. Sligo VEC	Michael Burke	071-9145025	mburke@sligovec.ie
Tipperary	Tipperary South VEC	Eileen Condon	052-6126269	econdon@tippsouth.ie
	Co. Tipperary VEC (North)	Antoinette Coffey	067-31845	antoinettecoffey@lllvec.ie
Waterford	City Of Waterford VEC	Michael Kirwan	051-873195	mkirwanaeo@gmail.com
	Co. Waterford VEC	Mary Walsh	058-51404	mwalsh@wd-vec.ie
	Co. Westmeath VEC	Rina McKenna	090-6474080	aeo@westmeathvec.ie
Wexford	Co. Wexford VEC		053-9123799	
Wicklow	Co. Wicklow VEC	Catherine Byrne	0404-60522	cbyrne@wicklowvec.ie

Adult Literacy Organisers				
COUNTY	ORGANISATION	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
Co. Carlow	Carlow	Tara Kelly	059-9135544	calcadmin@eircom.net

Co. Cavan	Cavan Town	Regina Lynch, Carmel Lee & Siobhán McEntee	049- 4361881	carmel@calc.ie regina@calc.ie
	East Cavan	Carmel Lee	049- 4361881 087- 9721227	carmel@calc.ie
	West Cavan	Siobhán McEntee	049- 4361881	siobhan@calc.ie
Co. Clare	Co. Clare	Maira Greene	065- 6897641	m.greene@cabes.ie
		Maire Dempsey	065- 6897616	m.dempsey@cabes.ie
		Karl Quinn (ESOL)	065- 6897611	k.quinn@cabes.ie
		Loretta Hughes	065- 6897616	l.hughes@cabes.ie
		Mary Flanagan (Family Learning)	065- 6897645	m.flanagan@cabes.ie
Cork City	City of Cork ABE Service		021- 4907102 021- 4907123 021- 4907124	adulted@corkvec.ie
	ABLES - The Glen / Blackpool/ Shandon/ Ballyvolane	Mary Chambers	021- 4553180	mchambers@corkvec.ie

		Fiona Long	086-8237078 021-4553180 086-6087111	flong@CorkVEC.ie
	Altrusa/ Douglas/	Mary Ryder	021- 4255542	mryder@corkvec.ie
	VEC Morrison's Island	Joan O'Leary	086- 0487404	
	Bishopstown/ Model Farm Rd./ Curraheen	Mary Ryder	086- 0487404	mryder@corkvec.ie
		Cathy Kelly	087- 6849150	ckelly@corkvec.ie
	Cork Traveller – Turkey Street, Cork	Mary O'Sullivan	021- 4274716	sbrett@corkvec.ie
		Sandra Brett	086-3053229 086-1731274	mosullivan@corkvec.ie
	Farranree	Mary Matthews	021-4211822 021-4301030 087-7913427	mmatthews@CorkVEC.ie
	Mahon, Spell It Write/ Blackrock	Bríd Murphy	021-4358866 086- 8577820	bmurphy@corkvec.ie corkbrid@gmail.com
	Mayfield - Write On / Tivoli	Mary Chambers	021- 4500434 086- 8237078	mchambers@corkvec.ie
	Read Write Now Ballyphehane/ Togher	Mary Ryder	021- 4319085	mryder@corkvec.ie
		Cathy Kelly	086- 0487404 087- 6849150	ckelly@corkvec.ie

	Write Together Knocknaheeny- Hollyhill Gurranebraher- Churchfield	Máire Dorgan, Ann Williamson, Margo Kelleher & Sheila Lee	021- 4307969	mdorgan@corkvec.ie
Co. Cork (East Cork and Harbour)	Co-ordinator	Marian O'Mahoney	025-33225 086- 8212257	eastcorkal@eircom.net
	Cobh	Tracy Conran	021- 4855472 086- 8238772	cobhabe@gmail.com
	Fermoy	Marian O'Mahoney	025-33225	eastcorkal@eircom.net
	Middleton	Veronica Bowen	021- 4621567 086- 8238769	learningskills@gmail.com
	Youghal	Cathy O'Mahony	024-93674 086- 8238746	youghaladultlearning@gmail.com
Co. Cork (Mid)	Co-ordinator	Anne O'Donovan	023-56957 086- 8337704	wcnalo@eircom.net
	Ballincollig	Sarah Donovan	021- 4878899 086- 8808057	sdonovanabes@eircom.net
	Carrigaline	Frances McInerney	021- 4376084 086- 8238757	francesmcinerney2@hotmail.com

	Dunmanway	Dorothy Beamish	023-8856708 086-8239149	dwayals@eircom.net
	Kinsale Centre	Clodagh FitzGerald	021-4773077 086-8239092	kinsalealc@eircom.net
	Kinsale Road	Michael Lyons	086-8238770	mikelyonskrac@eircom.net
	Macroom	Sheila Scully	026-20248 086-8239097	macroomalc@eircom.net
Co. Cork (North)	Co-ordinator	Eilish Roche	022-51958 086-3137370	eilishrochevec@eircom.net
	Charleville	Mary O'Connell	087-6720018	michaeloconnell1@eircom.net
	Kanturk/Newmarket	Mary Healy	086-3019375	
	Mallow (Return to Education)	Celine Gyves	022-51958 086-8337674	celinegyves@eircom.net
	Mallow Adult Learning Centre	Kathleen Dennehy	022-42642	mallowadultlearningcentre@eircom.net
	Millstreet	Elaine Hooper	086-8337811	elainehooper48@yahoo.ie
	Mitchelstown	Ina Keating	086-8238733	

Co. Cork (West)	Co-ordinator	Eleanor Calnan	028-23502 087- 2958460	eleanorcalnan@eircom.net
	Bandon & Upton	Raymond O'Regan	023- 8842870 086- 8239094	raymondoregan@gmail.com
	Bantry	Irene O'Driscoll	027-53970 086- 8239140	cnocadu@hotmai.com
	Castletownbere	Nick Caffrey	027-71881 086- 8239147	baec.ctb@gmail.com
	Clonakilty	Margaret Lavin	023-36968 086- 8239089	noreenmurphy@clon@yahoo.com
	Schull	Eleanor Calnan	028-23502	eleanorcalnan@eircom.net
	Skibbereen	Eleanor Calnan	028-23502	eleanorcalnan@eircom.net
Co. Donegal	Co-ordinator	Martina Needham	074- 9740181 086- 6474122	martina@donegalvec.ie
	East Donegal - Raphoe	David Kirwan	086- 1740643	davidkirwan@donegalvec.ie
	Gaeltacht	Dolores Mhic Geidigh	074- 9180871 086- 1740677	adultlearner@donegalvec.ie
	Inishowen	Joyce Burns	074- 9329774 086- 1740684	joyceburns@donegalvec.ie

	Letterkenny	Bríd McIntyre	074916156 1/9161600 086- 1740683	bridmcintyre@donegalvec.ie
	South Donegal - Ballyshannon	Adele Davin	071- 9851276 086- 8207338	adeledavin@donegalvec.ie
City of Dublin	Ballyfermot	Siobhan Condron	01 6239716	siobhan.condron@cdu.cdvec.ie
	Ballymun	Mary Love	01-8622402	barws@eircom.net
	Cabra	Mairin Kenny/Mary Comerford	01-8688342 087 1772301	mairin_kenny@eircom.net comerford.mer@gmail.com
	Dublin North Inner City, Parnell Square	Mary McDermott	01-8746700 086- 1709792	mary.mcdermott@parnell.cdvec.ie
	DALC, Mountjoy Square	Mary Maher, Columba O'Connor & Maureen Nevile	01-8787266	info@dalc.ie
	Finglas Read & Write	Cora Rafter / Jacqui Crowther	01-8340893 01- 8361666	cora.rafter@eoin.cdvec.ie
	Inchicore	Siobhan Condron	01-6239716	siobhan.condron@cdu.cdvec.ie
		Stefan Piskorski (ESOL)		d8d10esol@gmail.com
	KLEAR, Kilbarrack	Rose Brownen	01-8036238	kleared@eircom.net
	Larkin Community College	Anne Stone (Acting ALO)	01-8171990	larkinrw@eircom.net

	Liberties College	Maria Riordan	01-4540759	maria.riordan@liberties.cdvec.ie
	Northside Read & Write, Coolock	Pat Ayton	01-8487172	pat.ayton@cdcfe.cdvec.ie
	Rathmines	c/o Maria Riordan	01-4540759	lzy@eircom.net
	Ringsend	Cathie Hogan	01-6684571 01-6676267	cathie.hogan@ringtec.cdvec.ie
	South West Dublin City (Crumlin)	Frances Ward	01-4547054 01-4540662	fward@crumlincollege.ie
	T.A.R.G.E.T.	Brenda Kellett	01-8671967	brendarw@targeteducation.net
	Donaghmede/GLA D Donnycarney		01-8510190 087- 9047230	
	SIPTU – Liberty Hall	Tom O'Brien (Acting ALO)	01-8586311 086- 0759655	basicenglish@siptu.ie
Co. Dublin	AEO	Rosemarie McGill	01-4529600 ext. 173	r.mcgill@codubvec.ie
	BEST – Tallaght	Toni Lambe	01-414 7187	lambetoni@eircom.net
	Blanchardstown (AKSES)	Sharon Hennessy	01-8212600	ab_le@eircom.net
	Choices (Shankill)	Caroline Storey	01-2820110	rebecca_choices@eircom.net
	Clondalkin	Ann McCann	01-467 0043	ann.mccann@edu.codubvec.ie
	Dundrum	Mary McGrath	01-296 4321	sdalc@edu.codubvec.ie
	Fingal (Balbriggan)	Paul Carroll	01-8417763	paul.carroll@codubvec.ie
	Fingal (Swords)	Maria Culbert	01-8408946	mariaculbert@fingaladulthoodeducation.ie
	Choices (Shankill)	Caroline Story	01-2820110	

	J.A.E.N – Jobstown	Patricia Nolan	01-462 8523	p.nolan@taladed.ie
	Lucan Institute of Further Education	Una Dwyer	01-628 0029	lucanabe@eircom.net
	Parish of Travelling People - Swords	Maria Culbert	01-8408946	mariaculbert@fingaladulthoodeducation.ie
Dun Laoghaire	Dun Laoghaire	Aedin O'Toole	01-285 5633	info@dlalc.ie
Galway City	Galway city	Kieran Harrington	091-567660 086- 8134711	kieran.harrington@cgvec.ie
Co. Galway	Ionad Foghlama (Connemara)	Neasa de Bhailis	091-506060	ndebhailis@eircom.net
	East Galway (Loughrea)	Sheila Donnellan	091-847850	loughrealiteracy@eircom.net
	East Galway (Headford area)	Theresa Byrne	093-34746 087- 6404438	tbyrnegalwayvec@eircom.net headfordalc@eircom.net
	Tuam	Sheila Holland-Fox	093-26609	tuamlearningcentre@eircom.net
	West Galway	Teresa Gilligan	091-555877 087- 6480042	tgilligan@cogalvec.ie
		Connemara/ Clifden	095-22699	
Co. Kerry	Co-ordinator	Aoife McCormack	066- 7193923 087-298608	amccormack@cokerryed.ie
	An Daingean	Bill McConnell	066-9150933 086-8159881	kesabebmc@eircom.net

	Kenmare	Maggie O'Sullivan-Graham	064-42728	returntolearning@gmail.com
	Killarney	Mary Concannon	064-6636990 086-7969625	maryconcannon@eircom.net
	Killorglin	Jenny O'Reilly	066-9790765	kals@eircom.net
	Listowel	Mary Flynn	068-23866	Marybswaine7@eircom.net
	South Kerry	Deirdre Fitzgerald	066-473166	kesabekos@eircom.net deirdreabe@oconnellcentre.ie
	Tralee	Maeve Tuohy	066-7124114	kesabemt@eircom.net
Co. Kildare	Athy	Imelda Carroll	059-8632460 059-8633270	imeldacarroll@kildarevec.ie
	Kildare	Imelda Carroll	045-522003	imeldacarroll@kildarevec.ie
	Leixlip	Mary Faughnan	01-6246528	mfaughnan@kildarevec.ie
	Naas	Pat Bennett	045-866314	pbennett@abce.ie patbennett@kildarevec.ie
Co. Kilkenny	Word Aid (Kilkenny city)	Mary Dermody	056-7763149	mdermody.wordaid@kkvec.ie
Co. Laois	Laois	Kathleen Bennett	057-8661338	kbennett@laoisalc.ie
Co. Leitrim	LEAP (Leitrim)	Anne Bohan	071-9621366	leapadlit@eircom.net
City of Limerick	City of Limerick	Lorraine Markham	061-445700	basicedolutions@limerickcityaes.ie lorrainemarkham@limerickcityaes.ie

Co. Limerick	Co. Limerick	Eimear Brophy	061-442100	adliteracy@limerickvec.ie
Co. Longford	Longford	Frances Stephenson	043-3345609	francesstephenson@eircom.net
	Granard	Therese Smyth	043-3386211	granardalc@eircom.net
	Ballymahon	Catherine Flynn	090-6438009	alcballymahon1@eircom.net
Co. Louth	Drogheda	Maria Morgan/Sheila McEvoy	041-9830870 041-9845465	droghedaadultlearning@louthvec.ie
	Dundalk	Mary Reilly	042-9353591 fax: 042-9353594	dundalkadultlearning@louthvec.ie
Co. Mayo	Ballina	Marion Cusack	096-71652 087-6651796	marioncusack@mayovec.com
	Ballinrobe	Orla Ryder	094-9542288	
	Belmullet/Westport region	Rosario Cooney	097-82981 087-6831560	rosariocooney@mayovec.com
	Castlebar		094-9038038	adlitcastlebar@eircom.net
	Swinford	Noelle Staunton	094-9253837	returntolearn@eircom.net
Co. Meath	Co-ordinator	Bernie McKeivitt	046-9068280 087-9498524	bmckeivitt@meathvec.ie

	Ashbourne	Dympha O'Brien	01-8011787	dobrien@meathvec.ie
	Kells	Ger Waldron	085-1487060	gwaldron@meathvec.ie
	Laytown/ East Meath	Eileen Doohan	087-3723835	edoonhan@meathvec.ie
	Mosney	Eileen Doohan		edoonhan@meathvec.ie
	Navan	Ciara Flood	046-9068205 087-2074093	cflood@meathvec.ie
	Trim	Mary Lucy Ennis	046-438513 086-3140273	mlennis@meathvec.ie
Co. Monaghan	Monaghan	Helen Fitzpatrick, Mary Connolly & Angela McCrossan	047-30888	hfitzpatrick@monaghanvec.ie gela@monaghanvec.ie
Co. Offaly	Offaly Reading & Writing Scheme	Margaret Keeley/Alison McEvoy	057-9349426	literacy@offalyvecaded.ie
	Roscommon	Briege Fullam & Briege Clarke Geraldine Raftery	090-6634189 087-9892860	bfullam@roscommonvec.ie
Co. Sligo	Sligo	Michelle Rudden, Esther Hoad	071-9138416	cpowell@sligovec.ie
Tipperary North	Co. Tipperary NR	Liz Flannery	067-31845	ntippals@eircom.net LizFlannery@lllvec.ie

Tipperary South	Co. Tipperary SR	Mary Roche	052-6127543	mroche@tippsouthvec.ie
City of Waterford	Waterford	Joann Power	051-854444	adulthoodliteracy@eircom.net
Co. Waterford	Dungarvan	Nicola McCarthy-Hanlon	058-42774 087-6535141	nicola@wd-vec.ie
	Lismore	Edel Walsh	058-54109	edel@wd-vec.ie
	Tramore	Emma Tobin Coles	051-393794	etobin@wd-vec.ie
Co. Westmeath	Athlone	Joan Slevin	090-6474080 086-1731931	adulthoodliteracysouth@westmeathvec.ie
	Mullingar	Helen Donnelly	044-9342111 086-8536857	adulthoodliteracynorth@westmeathvec.ie
Co. Wexford	Co Wexford	Sarah Lavan	051-425118	adlit@cowexfordvec.ie
Co. Wicklow	Wicklow	Roisin Hutchinson	0404-64002 086-0430062	wicklow@wicklowlearners.ie
	Arklow	Mary McCall	0402-39680 087-9176508	arklow@wicklowlearners.ie
	Baltinglass	Annette Mangan	059-6482642 086-8462771	baltinglass@wicklowlearners.ie
	Blessington	Annette Mangan	045 851494 086-8462771	blessington@wicklowlearners.ie
	Bray	Niamh Maguire	01-2761350	bray@wicklowlearners.ie

	Carnew	Mary McCall	053-9426568 087 917 6508.	carnew@wicklowlearners.ie
--	--------	-------------	---------------------------------	--

Adult Education Guidance Initiative				
COUNTY	ORGANISATION	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
Carlow	Co Carlow Adult Educational Guidance Service	Shane Rooney	059-9133123	info@carlowadultguidance.ie
Cavan	Co Cavan Adult Educational Guidance and Information Service	Jason Donohue	049-4377001	jasondonohue@cavanvec.ie cavanaegis@cavanvec.ie
Clare	Clare Adult Learners Guidance Service	Jacinta Davenport	065-6824819	jdavenport@clarevec.ie
Cork	City of Cork Adult Educational Guidance Service	Andrea McCarthy	021-4273377	guidanceinfo@corkvec.ie
	West Cork Adult Guidance Service	John Murphy & Patricia Walter	028-21011	jmurphy@cocorkvec.ie patricawaltervec@eircom.net
Donegal	Donegal Adult Learner Guidance Service	Sean Debney	074-9178088	seandebney@donegalvec.ie
Dublin	City of Dublin VEC	Mary Stokes & Sinead McNerney (p/t)	01-8787495	dicaegs@eircom.net
	City of Dublin VEC- Cabra/Finglas Adult Educational Guidance Service	Karen Granville	01-8342333/ 01-844 3243	aegs@ide.cdvec.ie
	City of Dublin VEC- Coolock Adult Educational Guidance Service	Tina Dowling	01-862 3835	aegi@aesballymun.cdvec.ie

	City of Dublin South West Adult Educational Guidance Service	Anne Smyth	01-4540662 ext 119	anne.smyth@ccfe.cdvec.ie aegs@ccfe.cdvec.ie
	Dun Laoghaire Adult Guidance Service	Deirdre Johnston	01-2365190/01-6639211	djohnston@ess.dlvec.ie
	West Co Dublin Adult Guidance Service	Patrick Stewart	01-4643124/01-6100812	patrick.stewart@codubvec.ie
	Tallaght Adult Educational Service	Caroline Duffy	01-4515733	caroline.duffy@codubvec.ie
Galway	Galway City Adult Learner Guidance Service	Jill Farrell	091-768596	jill.farrell@cgvec.ie
	Co Galway Adult Educational Guidance	Tadhg Crowley	091-794191/087	aegs@cogalvec.ie
Kerry	Kerry Adult Guidance Service	Rico Stein & Ita Lane	066-7121488	guidance@cokerryed.ie
Kildare	Adult Education Guidance Service	Angela Doherty	045-448512	adultguidance@kildarevec.ie adoherty@kildarevec.ie
Kilkenny	Co Kilkenny Adult Guidance Service	Bernadette O' Rourke	056-7764448	adultguidance@kkvec.ie
Laois	Adult Educational Guidance & Information Service	Carmel Hoolan	057-8672963	info@laoisaegis.ie
Limerick	Co Limerick Adult Educational Guidance Service	Marguerite Wallis	069-62667	mwallis@limerickvec.ie
	City of Limerick Adult Educational Guidance Service	Emma Maher	061-310880	learninginfo@limerickcityaes.ie
Longford	Co Longford Adult Educational Guidance Service	Mary Farrell	043 3348177	claegs@eircom.net

Mayo	Co Mayo Adult Guidance Service	Barbara Ronayne	094-9035814	barbararonayne@mayovec.com
Meath	Co Meath Adult Educational Guidance Service	Martin Bellew	046 9068249	mbellew@meathvec.ie
Monaghan	Co Monaghan Adult Educational Guidance Service	Eithne O' Callaghan	047-30800	eithneocallaghan@monaghanvec.ie
Offaly	Co Offaly Adult Educational Guidance Service	Catherine Gavigan	057-9349424	cgavigan@offalyaegi.com
Roscommon	Co Roscommon Adult Educational Guidance Service	Maria Delaney	090-6628220	mdelaney@rosscommonvec.ie
Sligo	Sligo Adult Guidance in Education (SAGE)	Josephine McGread	071 91 45025	jmcgread@sligovec.ie
	North Tipperary VEC Adult Guidance Information Service	Nora Gubbins	067-46022	info@ntags.ie
Waterford	City of Waterford REGSA (Guidance Project)	Peter Lucey	051-302287	plucey@wit.ie
	Co Waterford Adult Educational Guidance Service	John Wynne	058-48228	j.wynne@wd-vec.ie
Westmeath	Co Westmeath Mullingar Adult Educational Guidance Service	Caroline Cornally	044-9342111	ccornally@whvec.ie
	Co Westmeath Athlone Adult Educational Guidance Service	Majella Macken	090-6474080	mmacken@whvec.ie
Wexford	Co Wexford Adult Educational Guidance Service	Grace Finlay	053-9152067	adultguidance@cowexfordvec.ie

Wicklow	Bray Adult Guidance Service	Catherine Green	01-2764638	catherine@wags.ie
	Wicklow/Arklow Adult Guidance Service	Nuala Kilgannan	0404-32651	nuala@wags.ie
	West Wicklow Adult Guidance Service	Irene Haydon	045-851496	irene@wags.ie

Community Education Facilitators

COUNTY	ORGANISATION	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
Carlow	Carlow VEC	Fiona Dunne	059-9179376	fdunne@carlowvec.ie
Cavan	Cavan VEC	Gemma Brady	049-4377562	cef@cavanvec.ie
Clare	Clare VEC	Brida O' Driscoll (Community Education resource person)	065-6824819	bodriscoll@clarevec.ie
Cork	Cork City VEC	Denis Barrett	021-4315052	dbarrett@corkvec.ie
	Cork Co VEC	Lena Cronin	021-4665000	lcronin@cocorkvec.ie
Donegal	Donegal VEC	Maeve Mc Garvey	074-9725522	maevemcgarvey@donegalvec.ie
Dublin	West Dublin Co VEC	Siobhan Lynch	01-6283557	siobhan.lynch@codubvec.ie
	Blanchardstown & Fingal VEC	Seamus Hughes	01-8408946	seamus.hughes@codubvec.ie
	Dun Laoghaire VEC	Barbara Hammond	01-214 7227	bhammond@dlvec.ie
	Dublin Co VEC South-Dundrum	Eileen Uhlemann	01-2989283	Eileen.uhlemann@codubvec.ie

City of Dublin	Dublin Co VEC South West	Lorna Patterson	01-4515733	l.patterson@codubvec.ie
	Dublin City VEC	Patricia McCormack	086-1719997	pat.mccormack@ringtec.cdvec.ie
	Dublin City VEC	Helen Geoghegan	01-8746607/086-1719996	helen.geoghegan@parnell.cdvec.ie
Galway	Co Galway VEC	Máire Úi Éanaigh	091-874260	cef@cogalvec.ie
	Galway City VEC	Donal Walsh	091-567194	donal.walsh@cgvec.ie
Kerry	Kerry VEC	Michelle Ann Houlihan	066-7121488	mhoulihan@cokerryed.ie
Kildare	Kildare VEC	Susan Cullinane	045-881863	scullinane@abce.ie
Kilkenny	Kilkenny VEC	Martha Bolger	056-7786896	comedkk@eircom.net
Laois	Laois VEC	Teresa McEvoy	057-8661890	tmcevoy@laoiscommed.ie
Leitrim	Leitrim VEC	Paul Hamilton	071-9621366	fneenan@leitrimvec.ie
Limerick	Limerick City VEC	Mary Flannery	061-419933	mary.flannery@lcaes.ie
	Limerick Co VEC	Regina Duane	061-442100	rduane@limerickvec.ie
Longford	Longford VEC	Mary Toher	043-3345474	ceflongford@eircom.net
Louth	Co Louth VEC	Sinead Fearon	042-9334047	sinead.fearon@louthvec.ie

Mayo	Mayo VEC	Katie Sweeney (acting)	094- 9024188/094- 9023159	adultedinfo@mayovec.com
Meath	Meath VEC	Shauna Doherty	046- 9068247	shauna.doherty@ce.meathvec.ie
Monaghan	Monaghan VEC	Deirdre Byrne	047- 71914	dbyrne@monaghanvec.ie
Offaly	Offaly VEC	Tony Dalton	057- 9349424	tdalton@offalyvecaded.ie
Roscommon	Co Roscommon VEC	Ann McNamara	090- 6634189	amcnamara@roscommonvec.ie
Sligo	Co Sligo VEC	Mary Brodie	071- 9138310	mbrodie@sligovec.ie
Tipperary	Tipperary NR VEC	Deborah Ryan	067-31845	DeborahRyan@lllvec.ie
	Tipperary SR VEC	Veronica Crowe	052- 6126269	vcrowe@tippsouthvec.ie
Waterford	Waterford City Adult Education Centre	Helen Rafferty	051-873195	comed@adulthoodeducationservice.ie
	Waterford Co VEC	Aine Whelan	058- 51405	awhelan@wd-vec.ie
Westmeath	Adult Education Centre	Nuala O' Brien	090- 6497004	cef@westmeathvec.ie
Wexford	Wexford VEC	Fran Kennedy	053- 9123799	frankennedy@cowexfordvec.ie
Wicklow	Co Wicklow VEC	Brenda Delaney	0404- 32650	bdelaney@wicklowvec.ie

Partnership Education Co-ordinators				
COUNTY	ORGANISATION	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
Cavan	Breffni Integrated Ltd	Eimear Ryan	049-4331029	eryan@breffniint.ie
Cork	Comhair Chathair Chorcai	Brida Fitzgerald	021-4302310	bfitzgerald@partnershipcork.ie
Donegal	Inishowen Development Partnership	Denise McCool	074-9362218	denise@inishowen.ie
Dublin	Ballymun Partnership Ltd.	Colma Nic Lughadh	01-8423612	colma@ballymun.org
	Tolka Area Partnership	Colm Downes	01-8361666	colm.downes@tap.ie
	Canal Communities Partnership	Claudia Vaulont	01-4732196	education@canalpartnership.com
	Dodder Valley Partnership	Deborah Brock	01-4664280	deborah.brock@doddervalley.ie
	CPNL Area Partnership	Miriam McNamee	01-4508784	mmcnamee@cpln.ie
	Northside Partnership	Matthias Borscheid	01-8485630	matthias.borscheid@nspartnership.ie
	Ballyfermot Partnership	Jane Rooney	01-6235612	jrooney@ballyfermotpartnership.ie
	Southside Partnership	Aileen O' Brien	01-2090610	aileen.obrien@sspship.ie
Galway	Galway City Partnership(Project officer)	Seamus Morrissey	091-773466	seamus@gcp.ie
Kerry	Partnership Trá Lí	Deirdre Curran	066-7180190	deirdrecurran@nekd.ie

	South Kerry Development Partnership	Deirdre Fleming	066-9761615	dfleming@skdp.net
Leitrim	Leitrim Development Company	Paul Hamilton	071-9641740	info@ldco.ie
Limerick	Paul Partnership Limerick	Yvonne Lane	061-419388	ylane@paulpartnership.ie
	West Limerick Resources Ltd.	Adrienne O'Connell	069-62222	aoconnell@wlr.ie
Longford	Longford Community Resources Ltd.	Pat Deegan	043-3345555	pdeegan@lcrl.ie
Louth	Louth Leader Partnership	Hugh Doogan	041-9842088	hugh.doogan@louthleaderpartnership.ie
Monaghan	Monaghan Integrated Development	Shauna Farrell	042-9749500	sfarrell@midl.ie
Sligo	Sligo Leader Partnership Company	Gerladine Bruce	071-9141138	gbruce@sligoleader.com
Waterford	Waterford Area Partnership	Maria Lindell	051-841740	mlindell@wap.ie
Wexford	Wexford Local Development	Angela Hogan	053-9237033	ahogan@wld.ie
Wicklow	Bray Area Partnership	Jennifer Darcy	01-2868266	jennifer@brayareapartnership.ie

Glossary of Terms

Access Programme: specifically targeted programmes and courses for mature students who come from backgrounds that are under-represented at 3rd level institutions.

Assessment: evaluation of a student's potential/or performance by whatever means the Faculty Board/ Admissions Board has determined.

Bachelor's Degree: a first degree, usually termed undergraduate degree. It normally requires at least three years of full-time or part-time study.

CAO (Central Applications Office): the office delegated by the Higher Education Institutions with the task of processing centrally all applications to their first year undergraduate degree. It normally requires at least three years full-time study.

Certificate: a qualification at a non-degree level, usually after one year of study.

Diploma: a qualification at the undergraduate or non-degree level, usually after two years of study.

Distance Learning: opportunities to follow a course primarily from one's home environment or local community. Classes can sometimes be taken at week-ends, or part-time and may involve online, televised, or on campus lectures.

FÁS: Ireland's national training and employment authority.

Failte Ireland: State Tourism Training Agency.

FEI: Further Education Institute.

HEI: Higher Education Institution.

Honours Degree: a degree programme in which a student takes a more intensive concentration in their major study area (as opposed to an ordinary degree).

NALA: National Adult Literacy Agency.

Postgraduate: a person who has obtained a bachelors degree.

Post-graduate study: a course of study further to a degree.

Return to Learning Courses: this offers preparation before you take up a third level or long-term course. Many universities/Institutes of Technology offer access or foundation courses and from these there can be a progression option into further third level courses. VECs sometimes run return to learning courses.

Teagasc: The Irish Agricultural and Food Development Authority. It provides research, advice and training services.

VEC: Vocational Education Committee.

VTOS: Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme.

Undergraduate student: a student who is studying/reading for a Bachelor's degree in any subject area or discipline at a 3rd level institution.