

12. Further Education/Adult Education

Further Education

The term “Further Education” embraces education and training which occurs after second-level schooling but which is not part of the third-level system. The following bodies provide advice, guidance and training for adults and young persons:

The Vocational Education Committee (VEC), see contact list below.

The National Training and Employment Authority (FÁS) www.fas.ie.

Please refer to page 30.

Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA) see www.welfare.ie.

Examples of the many programmes on offer in the region are:

E.S.O.L: English for Speakers of Other Languages refers to education that is concerned with developing reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in functional language for everyday use. This is provided by Vocational Education Committees and there is usually a charge for attending classes. However, in some cases, employers arrange sponsorship if the participants are working for that company.

Post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLC): These are full-time one and two year programmes of integrated education, training and work experience. The post leaving certificate course aims to prepare participants for employment or further education/training, as well as developing the learner’s skills for specific occupations.

Adult Literacy / Numeracy (Basic Education): This involves one to one tuition and group tuition for basic literacy and numeracy. Personal development skills are an integral part of this programme.

Adult Community Education: This programme aims to support community groups, organise and set up learning opportunities in the local community. Community education offers the learners an opportunity to ‘taste’ lifelong learning. It targets specific groups such as women’s groups, men’s groups, older people, travellers, and people with disabilities.

Contact Details

Co. Carlow VEC Tel: 059 9138560
www.carlowvec.ie

Co. Kilkenny VEC Tel: 056 7770966
www.kilkennyvec.ie

Co. Tipperary N.R. VEC
Tel: 067 31854/31250
www.tippnorthvec.ie

Co. Tipperary S.R. VEC
Tel: 052 21067/23067
www.tippsouthvec.ie

Co. Waterford VEC Tel: 058 41780

Waterford City VEC Tel: 051 874007
www.waterfordvec.ie

Co. Wexford VEC Tel: 053 91 23799

Third Level Education

Universities and Institutes of Technology (IT) mainly provide third level education in Ireland. Universities generally offer degree programmes at Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate level. Institutes of Technology generally provide progression from certificate, diploma to degree level as well as postgraduate degrees. Each university and IT produces a prospectus every year, which outlines all its courses and other services and is available free of charge. In addition, a number of other third level institutions provide specialist education in a number of professions such as medicine and law. Private colleges also provide third level education.

Third Level Fees

Irish and EU citizens pay no tuition fees for their first full time, undergraduate course. People with refugee status may also qualify for free fees. All other students, including non-EU citizens, post graduate students and part time students etc must pay fees. The rate of fees may vary depending on factors such as length of residency.

A grant scheme operates which supports students on Third Level courses. It is called the Higher Education Grants Scheme and this provides maintenance grants for eligible students attending full time courses. Additional top up grants are available for disadvantaged students. These are currently administered by the Local Authorities, but from mid-2007, the VEC will take over this role.

The grant scheme is open to Irish and other EU/EEA citizens, people with refugee status and some other categories of people with permission to remain in the state. To qualify your income must be below a certain level and you must have lived in the area for one year before applying. Fees vary between colleges and courses. Tax relief may be available on fees for certain courses.

Contact Details

The Student Support Unit of the Department of Education

Tel: 057 932 4381/4387/5344

Email: studentsupportunit-tullamore@education.gov.ie

Regional Educational Guidance Service for Adults (REGSA)

www.ncge.ie

Applying for Third Level Education

Applications for most full time, undergraduate courses are made once a year (closing date is usually 1 February) through the Central Applications Office (CAO). Applicants should indicate which courses and where they would like to study in order of preference. Once the Leaving Certificate results are available in August, offers of places are sent to applicants. Entry requirements are linked to Leaving Certificate results and some courses require very high results (e.g. medicine). A list of all courses and information on how to apply is available in the CAO handbook

If you have taken your secondary school exam in another country you will need to check if your qualifications will be sufficient to secure a place in the Irish third level course of your choice. Contact the Access Officer at the college directly before making your application.

Further Information

CAO

33 Eglinton Street
Galway
Tel 091 5098000
www.cao.ie

Mature Students

Mature students (i.e. those aged 23 or over) may apply for third level courses regardless of their Leaving Certificate results. See the “Guide for Mature Students” available free of charge from the Department of Education and Science. Supports, exemptions and application procedures for mature students differ between colleges – many now have mature student officers who can provide advice and information. See www.education.ie

Qualification Recognition

At present a number of different bodies in Ireland award or validate qualifications in the further and higher education sectors. For example universities award their own degrees, diplomas etc. and most institutes of technology and other colleges grant degrees, diplomas and certificates which are validated by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) or the Further

Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC). Both Awards Councils work within the ambit of the NQAI.

If you have obtained a qualification outside Ireland, you may wish to have it assessed in order to gain accreditation. If you want to find out whether it’s recognized in Ireland, contact the NQAI. See also Chapter 4 Employment – Europass.

Contact Details

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI)

5th Floor
Jervis House
Jervis Street
Dublin 1.
Tel: 01 8871500
Email: info@nqai.ie

Other Training

FÁS is Ireland’s national training and employment authority. It aims to promote a more competitive and inclusive knowledge-based economy, by enhancing the skills and capabilities of individuals and enterprises. FÁS offers day, evening and online courses. Citizens from EEA member states and Switzerland are entitled to register for employment or training and can avail of guidance and counselling services. Training and childcare allowances may apply. To contact FÁS, see www.fas.ie. See also Chapter 4 Employment.