

# What Next?

Education and  
Training  
Opportunities  
for Adults in  
Ireland





get yourself back on track

onestepup.ie



Freephone Helpline  
1800 303 669

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For more information visit [www.aontas.com/whatnext](http://www.aontas.com/whatnext)

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## Mission Statement

The mission of AONTAS is to advocate for the right of every adult in Ireland to quality learning.

**AONTAS Disclaimer:** Please be aware that information is subject to change. Qualification for a course or entitlement varies depending on individual circumstances. For further information contact your local Education and Training Board or your local Employment Services/Intreo office.

## Welcome to the AONTAS Information Booklet 2014

Whether you are looking for ways to develop yourself personally, to improve your current job prospects or to simply learn for fun, **What Next** offers you lots of useful tips and advice for getting started.

The wide variety of courses available along with different entry criteria and funding options can be overwhelming. This booklet aims to introduce adult learners and potential adult learners to the options available to them in a way that is simple and easy to understand.

There is an extensive range of courses available for adults wishing to return to learning. With programmes from improving literacy skills to a third level degree, part time or full time, we are confident that there is something to suit everyone in their pursuit of lifelong learning.

Remember, this booklet is simply a starting point in your discovery of lifelong learning, call AONTAS on **01-4068220** if you have any further queries and keep an eye on our website for further updates, [www.aontas.com](http://www.aontas.com).

We wish you every success in your journey through lifelong learning.

## The Adult Learner

AONTAS believes that people are continually learning throughout their lives from the time they are born until the end of life. We also know that adults have many responsibilities, in the workplace, at home and in their communities, and that formal learning has to be fitted around things we need to do in everyday life. Some of us have left school early while others have completed primary, secondary and third level education.

Work life is also changing and most adults are now likely to change jobs several times in their lifetimes. Information technology has transformed both the workplace and home life and this means that we

constantly need to renew our skills. We also need to take periods of time away from the workplace to take care of our children or older people and will need to refresh our skills to return to employment. Whatever our situation there are opportunities available to us. At our Learners' forum during the Adult Learners' Festival the message from adult learners was:

### **“Start where you left off”**

The first thing you will need to do is find out what education and training opportunities are available and assess how they fit with your current level of education and training, and where you want to get to. The information in the booklet will help you to do that. Hearing how other learners got started also helps.

### **Here is what learners are saying about returning to education**

#### **Des Mooney - Adult Learner**

I spent my early years being told that I was not much good and wouldn't amount to much. I believed what was being said and I gave up, leaving school without any qualifications and drifting into an apprenticeship and subsequent trade. I was quite happy for a number of years but I found 'social' situations difficult and used alcohol to make them more bearable.

A family tragedy forced me to confront who I was becoming and I re-evaluated my lifestyle and gave up my trade. I met new people who began to influence me. I had always been interested in education and began to do short courses and I eventually did a Diploma, a Degree and have recently completed a MA in Higher Education. I have become a passionate advocate for education. As part of this process new careers beckoned, relationships became less frenetic and unmanageable; life has seemed easier to bear. The world has become a far more interesting place; I am married and have children, a house and a job I love doing. I have interests, friends and ambition. Corny really but adult education was the catalyst for all this. I am no longer blissfully unaware, rather I have become blissfully aware of what it is I have and what it means to me.

#### **Sarah Lambe - Adult Learner**

I was always made to feel stupid in school and was left with the belief that I wasn't worthy of an education. I left school at 14. With mainstream school not working for me, I did a year and a half in the Youthreach Programme. They had smaller classes, giving more attention to you as an individual. I sat N.C.V.A, now FETAC, which is equivalent to the Junior Cert, and I passed the exams. The teachers in Youthreach believed in me and cared.

Unfortunately I got caught up in the drug scene which destroyed all ambition to continue my education and better myself. Fortunately, my partner chose to get help for our drug problem and thanks to his support I turned my life around. I have always loved learning new things and I got involved through the Women's Resource Centre. I rekindled my interest in knowledge and I completed a FETAC level 3 course. The support I got from the staff there made me believe I could take this further and go on to third level.

I applied for a course in Education and Training in Whitehall College, an Access course to a Degree programme in DCU. With the support of a local organisation J.U.S.T, I stuck with it and successfully completed the Access course. I am currently in my third year of studying for a BSc in Education & Training at DCU and as I progress through the course I find that my study and language skills are developing.

Sir Francis Bacon wrote "Knowledge is Power". It's true, knowledge is power. To better yourself, to have a career, you need education. When I finish this course I hope I will be able to use that "power" to inspire and motivate other people who struggle in mainstream education the way I did.

To read more inspirational stories visit:

[www.aontas.com/inspiringlearners](http://www.aontas.com/inspiringlearners).

## Getting Started

## SECTION 1: Further Education and Training

A number of key changes are currently taking place in the further education and training sector. The 33 former VECs have been amalgamated to form 16 new Education and Training Boards. The ETBs are responsible for co-ordinating further education services formerly delivered by the VECs. FÁS has been dissolved and the training delivery functions of FÁS, on a phased basis, will transfer to the new ETBs. This phased transfer of training centres will be completed during 2014. The Education and Training Boards will be responsible for the delivery of Further Education and Training. SOLAS will focus on planning, funding and driving the development of a learner focused Further Education and Training sector. Until the transfer process is complete, SOLAS will manage training on a temporary basis. Training courses will continue as normal and learners will not be affected by the change. Certification of courses will not be affected. For information regarding training programmes and course listings contact your local Employment Services/Intreo office or visit [www.solas.ie](http://www.solas.ie). Please see a map of the newly formed ETBs below.

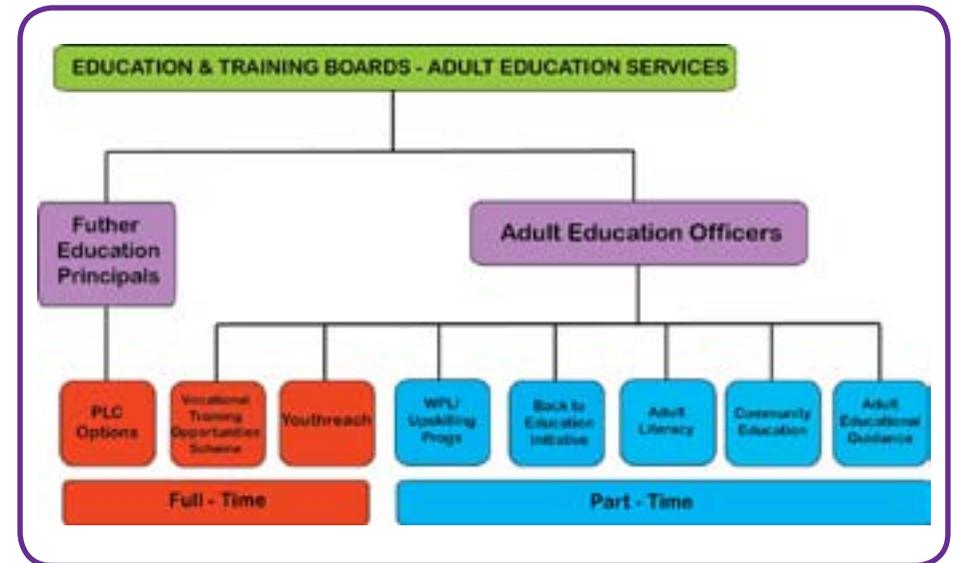
## Education and Training Board Areas



A map of the Education and Training Boards in Ireland

## Part 1: Services provided by the Education and Training Boards (ETBs)

ETBs are the main providers of education and training programmes in Ireland. There are a wide range of programmes available for all ages. The Adult Education Officer in the ETB manages and coordinates the adult education services and he or she can put you in touch with the other services within the Education and Training Boards. The following diagram shows the services provided.



A map of the Adult Education Services in Ireland

## Adult Education Guidance Service

If you need advice from someone on what your first step should be, the Adult Education Officer in your local ETB will be able to direct you to your local guidance service.

"Good guidance was essential for me, they talked me through all my options and directed me to a course that was suitable for my needs."

Many people are unsure of where they should start when returning to education and often the first step is the hardest. The Adult Education Guidance Service in Ireland is available to adults who are thinking of returning to learning. Guidance counsellors and coordinators give guidance to adults who are participating in, or are considering adult education programmes such as the Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme, (VTOS), Adult Literacy programmes and Community Education, including the Back To Education Initiative (BTEI).

Guidance Information officers in the ETBs can also provide advice and information on local, regional and national opportunities for adult learners and supports for adult education. In many areas this information service is open to members of the public as well as the designated target groups. For more information contact the Adult Education Officer in your local ETB or your local Adult Guidance Service. Visit [www.etbi.ie](http://www.etbi.ie) for details of your local ETB.

### Adult Basic Education

"I couldn't help my kids with their homework, their school gave me the number of my local ETB and I began with a personal development course and went from there."

#### What is Adult Basic Education?

Lots of adults return 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 done 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.

#### What are the benefits of taking a course like this?

People who return to adult basic education want to catch up on what they missed at school. It's a great opportunity to improve your skills and also gain the confidence to go on and learn new ones.

### 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 Education Officer (AEO) in your nearest ETB ([www.etbi.ie](http://www.etbi.ie)) for advice
- ✓ Freephone the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), 1800 20 20 65 for support and information on where to go for help or visit [www.nala.ie](http://www.nala.ie)

### The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)

#### What is the Back to Education Initiative?

The Back To Education Initiative provides:

- ✓ part-time further education programmes
- ✓ aimed at people with less than the Leaving Certificate

BTEI is free to all those:

- ✓ less than the Leaving Certificate
- ✓ in receipt of Social Welfare payment
- ✓ dependant on a Social Welfare recipient
- ✓ with a current medical card
- ✓ signing for credits
- ✓ people on low incomes

"My quality of life has improved dramatically, for the first time in a long time I have a sense of routine in my life."

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.

Contact your local Employment Services/Intreo office for more information or visit [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie).

BTEI gives you an opportunity to combine your learning with family, work and other commitments. It 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 ETB or your local Adult Guidance Service. Visit [www.etbi.ie](http://www.etbi.ie) for details of your local ETB.



“I had a very negative and traumatising experience at school and this offered me something different.”

## Youthreach

YOUTHREACH is a programme that is targeted at unemployed young early school leavers aged 15-20. It offers participants the opportunity to identify and pursue practical options and provides them with opportunities to acquire certification. It operates on a full-time, year-round basis.

Visit: [www.youthreach.ie](http://www.youthreach.ie) or contact your local ETB [www.etbi.ie](http://www.etbi.ie).

## Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)

VTOS is a 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. Each VTOS centre will provide a different combination of learning opportunities.

To get information on learning opportunities under VTOS contact the Adult Education Officer in your local ETB. Visit [www.etbi.ie](http://www.etbi.ie) for details of your local ETB.

You can also browse courses available through VTOS centres on Qualifax ([www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie)), the National Learners Database.

### Who are VTOS courses for?

They are for people:

- ✓ Aged 21 or over and
- ✓ In receipt of a Job Seekers' Allowance or a Job Seekers' Benefit or signing for credits for at least six months or
- ✓ 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
- ✓ 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 local Employment Services/Intreo office for more information or visit [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie).

### 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 within the ETBs.

The courses are offered to school leavers and adults who wish to return to education. Courses are designed to prepare students for work by giving them specific skills 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](http://www.qualifax.ie), to find the courses. Then apply directly to the school or college offering that course.

#### Who are PLC Courses for?

They are for people:

- ✓ **People who have completed senior cycle education, and require further vocational education and training**
- ✓ **Adults returning to education that may not have completed the Leaving Certificate but have the necessary 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.*

## Community Education

“One size does not fit all. The supports that are available in community education allow you to participate and flourish.”

#### What is Community Education?

Community Education works with adults who wish to return to or continue their education, offering a learner-centred approach involving personal supports and tuition leading to positive personal, social and economic outcomes. It focusses its work on people who are distant from education, training and the labour market, and is generally developed in local community projects and centres. It starts from the person's current situation and you are encouraged to work together in creative and participative ways to set and achieve goals such as employment, personal and social change, formal certification up to Level 8, and community activity.

#### Who delivers Community Education?

Community Education is delivered all over Ireland by a range of providers including Education and Training Boards and independently managed not for profit groups. It takes place in a wide variety of community projects, resource centres, voluntary organisations etc.

Community education in the ETBs is co-ordinated by Community Education Facilitators. Contact your local ETB for more information. AONTAS also supports the work of community education groups outside of the ETB structure through the Community Education Network. Visit [www.aontas.com/commed/](http://www.aontas.com/commed/) for more information.



## SECTION 1

## Part 2: Upskilling/Training

## Intro/Department of Social Protection

If you are looking to get back to work or to upskill there are various options open to you. Due to the high levels of unemployment in Ireland the government have focussed on the area of upskilling and training. Reform is also underway in the Department of Social Protection, with the establishment of the new Intreo services. Intreo aims to provide a one stop shop for people on the live register, including advice and information about education and training. Your first point of contact should be your local Employment Services/Intreo Office. Visit [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie) for more information. They will be able to refer you to your nearest service.

Intreo is part of Pathways to Work. It is a single point of contact for all employment services and the provision of income supports. It provides individualised supports to jobseekers to assist them in getting back to work and increasing their employability. The service is being extended across the Department's network of offices. *Pathways to work is a government strategy to respond to long term unemployment.*



Pathways to Work diagram

## Intreo – Services and Supports to Jobseekers

Intreo provides practical, tailored supports and services to assist jobseekers with their individual needs. It gives them access to a wide range of employment and work experience opportunities.

"I was brought back to the work environment through adult education, I now have a full time job and life couldn't be better."

## The range of services include:

- Expert assistance and advice on employment, training, work experience and personal development opportunities.
- A focus on individual needs to assist a jobseeker to enter the workforce
- Self-service facilities to provide Jobseeker's with information and guidance on employment and training opportunities
- Access to information on job vacancies through [www.jobsireland.ie](http://www.jobsireland.ie)
- Information on the full range of income supports provided by the Department of Social Protection, for example, jobseeker's payments, back to work and back to education payments, one-parent family payments, pensions and others
- On-going support with any queries in relation to Jobseeker's or one parent family payment claims will continue to be dealt with by the team in your local Intreo Centre

## SOLAS

SOLAS (Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) is the new Further Education and Training Authority and will manage, co-ordinate and support the delivery of integrated Further Education and Training by Education and Training Boards. The Education and Training Boards will deliver further education and training previously organised by the VECs and FÁS Training Centres. FÁS has been dissolved and the training delivery functions of FÁS, on a phased basis, will transfer to the new ETBs. This phased transfer of training centres will be completed during 2014.

Courses available include anything from short courses, to specific skills training relevant to particular industries or sectors. Your Employment Services Officer will advise you on employment opportunities, training courses and other options which may lead to employment. For more information contact your local Employment Services/Intreo office or visit [www.solas.ie](http://www.solas.ie).

### Community Employment Schemes

Community Employment Schemes are:

- ✓ offer part time training and work experience opportunities for people who are long term unemployed

“Without the help of my CE scheme I would not have got my dream job.”

**Qualifying criteria vary, but in general you must be in receipt of a social welfare payment for at least one year.**

For more information contact your local Employment Services/Intreo office or visit [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie).

## TÚS – Community Work Placement Initiative

Tús aims to provide short-term, quality work for those who are unemployed and to provide services that are of benefit to the community. The type of projects carried out 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

Visit the Department of Social Protection website to find out more information: [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie).

### The Work Placement Programme (WPP)

The WPP provides a nine month unpaid placement for recent graduates and people who are unemployed. 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. For a work placement, contact your local Employment Services/Intreo office.

### Skills for Work

Skills for Work is a national programme aimed at providing training opportunities to help employees deal with the basic skills demands of the workplace. The initiative is funded by the Irish Government under the Department of Education and Skills, and delivered by the newly formed Education & Training Boards (ETB) across the country. The project is managed nationally by Dublin & Dún Laoghaire ETB. For more information please visit [www.skillsforwork.ie](http://www.skillsforwork.ie).

## Skillnets

If you are unemployed and looking for work then you may be eligible to take part in a Skillnets training programme. By training with a Skillnets network, you can access training relevant to industry needs and get networking opportunities with companies and employees in your chosen sector and/or region. Skillnets also offers a Job Seekers support programme which offers free training in skills which are in demand as well as work placement opportunities. To find out more information and a network near you visit [www.skillnets.ie](http://www.skillnets.ie).

## JobBridge - National Internship Scheme

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.

- ✓ **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**

For more information visit: [www.jobbridge.ie](http://www.jobbridge.ie)

## Labour Market Activation Measures

From time to time the government introduces Labour Market Activation Measures to target specific groups of people to equip them with the necessary skills to get them back into the workforce. Keep an eye out for initiatives that you may be eligible for. An example of some recent initiatives are MOMENTUM and Springboard.

## MOMENTUM

MOMENTUM is a:

- ✓ **government initiative**
- ✓ **provides free education and training for long-term jobseekers**
- ✓ **It will assist 6,500 long term unemployed jobseekers to gain in-demand skills and to access work in sectors of the economy where there are job opportunities**
- ✓ **Programmes include work experience modules as well as the development of workplace skills**

Providers from both the private and public sector are offering individual MOMENTUM programmes in locations all across Ireland in areas such as ICT, digital media, healthcare and social services, the green economy, food processing and sales and marketing.

Specific projects were made available for those under 25 to assist them to enter or return to employment including, 'Train To Work Opportunities', 'Green Pathways' and a Graduate Activation Programme.

For more information contact your local Employment Services/Intreo office or visit [www.momentumskills.ie](http://www.momentumskills.ie).

"It gave me a goal and a vision and I realised I was worthy of a good job."

## Springboard

Springboard offers free, part time higher education courses at certificate, degree and masters level. Two rounds of the Springboard initiative have already been advertised, with almost 12,000 places made available throughout the country. Courses are particularly targeted towards people employed in areas now experiencing significant structural unemployment. Further funding for the initiative was announced as part of Budget 2013.

In order to qualify for a Springboard course you must be in receipt of an unemployment payment, however no qualifying period applies. You must be available for work for the duration of the course. Springboard courses have been developed around the needs of adult learners and are generally flexible.

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 Springboard website – [www.springboardcourses.ie](http://www.springboardcourses.ie), which also allows learners to compare different courses and search by area.

**There is also a dedicated Springboard helpline at: Freephone 1800 303 523.** (*The Helpline is open from May until late September/October*).

Visit [www.springboardcourses.ie](http://www.springboardcourses.ie) or contact your local Employment Services/Intreo office.

## ICT Conversion Courses

The ICT plan involves a number of higher education providers who offer 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. Visit [www.ictskills.ie](http://www.ictskills.ie) for more information.

For more information visit [www.aontas.com/whatnext](http://www.aontas.com/whatnext)

## Upskilling/Training contacts and other useful resources:

Intreo	<a href="http://www.welfare.ie">www.welfare.ie</a>		
Community Employment Schemes	<a href="http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Employment-Services-Offices.aspx">www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Employment-Services-Offices.aspx</a>		
TÚS – Community Work Placement Initiative	<a href="http://www.welfare.ie">www.welfare.ie</a>		
The Work Placement Programme (WPP)	<a href="http://www.solas.ie">www.solas.ie</a>		
Skills For Work	<a href="http://www.skillsforwork.ie">www.skillsforwork.ie</a>		
Skillnets	<a href="http://www.skillnets.ie">www.skillnets.ie</a>		
SOLAS	<a href="http://www.solas.ie">www.solas.ie</a>		
JobBridge - National Internship Scheme	<a href="http://www.jobbridge.ie">www.jobbridge.ie</a>		
Career Directions	<a href="http://www.careerdirections.ie">www.careerdirections.ie</a>		
Momentum	<a href="http://www.momentumskills.ie">www.momentumskills.ie</a>		
Springboard	<a href="http://www.springboardcourses.ie">www.springboardcourses.ie</a>	Freephone 1800 303 52	
ICT Conversion Courses	<a href="http://www.ictskills.ie">www.ictskills.ie</a>		
The Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOUE)	<a href="http://www.inou.ie">www.inou.ie</a>	For the WORKING FOR WORK Publication visit: <a href="http://www.inou.ie">www.inou.ie</a>	01-8560088
Jobs Ireland	<a href="http://www.jobsireland.ie">www.jobsireland.ie</a>		

## SECTION 2: Higher and Third Level Education

Higher Education in Ireland is provided mainly by 7 Universities, 14 Institutes of Technology, including the Dublin Institute of Technology and 7 Colleges of Education. Also, a number of other third level institutions provide specialist education in such fields as art and design, medicine, business studies, rural development, theology, music and law. Please visit: [www.education.ie/en/Learners/Information/Providers-of-Higher-Education/List.html](http://www.education.ie/en/Learners/Information/Providers-of-Higher-Education/List.html) for a list of institutions that provide higher education. There are a number of independent private colleges.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the statutory planning and development body for higher education and research in Ireland. For more information visit [www.heai.ie](http://www.heai.ie).

“It gave me a second opportunity to do what I was good at and what I was drawn to.”

### 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 the HEA [www.heai.ie](http://www.heai.ie), **1890 200 637**. 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.

## What is the Central Applications Office (CAO)?

The Central Applications Office (CAO) deals with the task of processing 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).

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. You can also apply for Institutes of Technology through [www.bluebrick.ie](http://www.bluebrick.ie).

## How to make an application through the 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](http://www.cao.ie) gives detailed information on criteria, deadlines and the application procedure.

Students should check the exact dates well in advance to making an application with the CAO. Visit [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie) for more information.

**Mature Students**

Late applications are usually accepted up to close of business generally on the 1st May. However mature students are **RESTRICTED** in making late applications.

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



“Third level education offered me a second opportunity for me and it was a different experience, my opinions were valued and acknowledged.”

**Higher and Third Level Education contacts and other useful resources:**

Higher Education Authority	1890 200 637	<a href="http://www.hea.ie">www.hea.ie</a>
Central Applications Office (CAO)	091-509800	<a href="http://www.cao.ie">www.cao.ie</a>
Bluebrick	<a href="http://www.bluebrick.ie">www.bluebrick.ie</a>	
Union of Students of Ireland (USI)	01-7099300	<a href="http://www.usi.ie">www.usi.ie</a>
Postgraduate Ireland	<a href="http://www.postgradireland.com">www.postgradireland.com</a>	

**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.

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

**Distance education** is learning where you do not have to attend a physical location at fixed times throughout the academic year. 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 home life and work commitments.

**On-line learning** is where the whole programme is delivered over the Internet, notes are posted on the web, assignments are emailed between students and tutors, students set up chat rooms between each other etc.

**Flexible learning** provides learners with opportunities for more choice, convenience, and personalisation to suit the learner. It also recognises that different students have different learning preferences and requirements. Flexible learning courses might include using different modes of delivery for course materials, including web-based, CDs, DVDs and so on.

**Blended learning** refers to a mix 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. To find a distance course visit [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie).

"Distance learning gave me the flexibility to go at my own pace and from the comfort of my home while juggling my family and work life."

### Other useful contacts for Distance/Online Learning:

The Open University	+44 0 845 300 60 90	<a href="http://www.open.ac.uk">www.open.ac.uk</a>
Oscail - DCU Distance Education	01-700 5481	<a href="http://www.dcu.ie">www.dcu.ie</a>
Atlantic University Alliance	<a href="http://www.aua.ie">www.aua.ie</a>	
eCollege	<a href="http://www.ecollege.ie">www.ecollege.ie</a>	
NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency)	1800 20 20 65	<a href="http://www.writeon.ie">www.writeon.ie</a>
<a href="http://www.distancelearningireland.com">www.distancelearningireland.com</a>		
<a href="http://www.learningireland.ie">www.learningireland.ie</a>		
<a href="http://www.nightcourses.com">www.nightcourses.com</a>		
<a href="http://www.daycourses.com">www.daycourses.com</a>		
<a href="http://www.qualifax.ie">www.qualifax.ie</a> - The National Learners' Database		

### Computer and IT courses

We are very much living in a digital era where everything from paying our bills to contacting family members is done online. No matter what your level of knowledge of computers there is a course for you.

- ✓ **The Age Action Getting Started Programme delivers one to one training on computers, the internet and mobile phones to people over the age of 55. For more information call 01 475 6989 or visit: [www.ageaction.ie/getting-started-programme](http://www.ageaction.ie/getting-started-programme)**
- ✓ **Contact your local ETB for a list of courses [www.etbi.ie](http://www.etbi.ie)**
- ✓ **Search [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie) to find courses in your area**

For more information visit [www.aontas.com/whatnext](http://www.aontas.com/whatnext)

## SECTION 4: Financial Supports

### General education and training allowances

As well as introducing some new measures to address rising unemployment, the government has reduced some payments. Allowances to participants in VTOS, and Youthreach have been reduced in line with the appropriate social welfare rates. Check with the Department of Social Protection for information on your benefits. Visit [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie) for more information.

### The 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](http://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 Grant Scheme and SUSI

The student grant is the main source of financial support 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 for a student grant.

From August 2012, a new online grant application scheme called SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland) replaced the previous system. SUSI is managed by the City of Dublin ETB.

**The Student Grant Scheme is available for the following course types:**

- ✓ 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

The existing grant awarding authorities will continue to process renewal applications for students to whom they have already awarded grants until such time as those students have completed their current courses. If you are changing your course or progressing to a new course you will have to apply through SUSI.

Visit [www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie) to make an application.

If you have any queries on the application process or the student grant scheme contact the “**SUSI Support Desk**” by telephone at **0761 08 7874** or email [support@susi.ie](mailto:support@susi.ie). The SUSI support is available from 9.00am-10.00pm Monday-Friday and 9.00am-6.00pm Saturdays. To facilitate applicants with visual/hearing impairments, the scheme can be made available in different formats on request from the Department’s Higher Education - Equity of Access Section.

### 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](http://www.studentfinance.ie) or call the Student Grants Appeals Board, Department of Education and Skills on **(057) 9325317**.

### 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](http://www.studentfinance.ie).

**The maximum student contribution for the academic year 2013-2014 is €2,500. It will be €2,750 in 2014-2015 and €3,000 in 2015-2016. This may change with the coming budget. Check with your institution as the amount can vary from one institution to another.**

### 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 Registration Fee), 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](http://www.studentfinance.ie) or visit [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie).

"I was a single parent with little or no skills and was looking towards a life on social welfare unless something radically changes; adult education offered me a new opportunity."

## 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.

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](http://www.studentfinance.ie).

## Tax Relief

Tax relief can be claimed on tuition fees. 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. For more information visit: [www.revenue.ie/en/tax/it/leaflets/it31.html](http://www.revenue.ie/en/tax/it/leaflets/it31.html).

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](http://www.postgradireland.com) and [www.studentfinance.ie](http://www.studentfinance.ie) for the latest information and advice.

## Scholarships

### Caranua (formerly the Residential Institutions Statutory Fund)

Caranua is the new service name of the Residential Institutions Statutory Fund established in March 2013, to improve the quality of life and well-being of survivors of institutional abuse.

It can do this by ensuring that survivors are receiving statutory entitlements, adding to statutory entitlements and providing grants to individual survivors to avail of services. Assistance can be provided in the areas of:

- Health, including mental health
- Personal social services
- Education
- Housing

For more information on Caranua (RISF) please visit: [www.caranua.ie](http://www.caranua.ie). Please note that this scheme commences from January 2014.

### 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 at local level for clients of SVP, and there will be a small scholarship fund. Keep an eye on their website: [www.svp.ie](http://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](http://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](http://www.impact.ie).

## SPIDAS

The Special Initiatives for Disadvantaged Adults Scheme (SPIDAS) forms part of the Community Education grant. SPIDAS is a small discretionary fund to enable ETBs 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 the Adult Education Officer in your local ETB. Visit [www.etbi.ie](http://www.etbi.ie) for details of your local ETB.

### Female bursary-financial supports for women apprentices

From time to time there are opportunities for women to broaden their career options into new and non-traditional areas of work. To encourage an increased level of recruitment of women apprentices a bursary is sometimes offered. For more information visit [www.solas.ie](http://www.solas.ie).

### Burren College of Art scholarships

Burren College of Art, a private art college affiliated to NUI Galway they offers scholarships and funding opportunities for its fine art students. For more information please visit: [www.burrencollege.ie/college/graduate-studies-fees-scholarships](http://www.burrencollege.ie/college/graduate-studies-fees-scholarships).

### 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](http://www.creditunion.ie).

### Dublin Port Company Scholarships

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](http://www.dublinport.ie).

### Annie Kelly Education Bursary

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](mailto:admin@nicdtf.ie).

### Ernest Walton STEM Bursary

For the 2013/14 academic year eight bursaries (Ernest Walton STEM Bursary) are being made available and are aimed at students who intend completing a third level course in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) field. See more at: [www.education.ie/en/Learners/Services/Scholarships](http://www.education.ie/en/Learners/Services/Scholarships).

### 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](http://www.taxireland.ie) and refer to the contacts section, for further information on the application procedure, visit: [www.taxinstitute.ie/CareersandCourses/ThirdLevelScholarship.aspx](http://www.taxinstitute.ie/CareersandCourses/ThirdLevelScholarship.aspx).

### POSTGRADUATE FUNDING

For a full an updated list of postgraduate funding please visit: [www.postgradireland.com](http://www.postgradireland.com).

**North/South Postgraduate Scholarship** These bursaries are open to students currently registered at an Irish or Northern Irish university or Dublin Institute of Technology (or who have graduated within the past two years) proposing to take up a place on a course which would require them to relocate to the other jurisdiction on the island of Ireland. For more information visit: [www.crossborder.ie](http://www.crossborder.ie).

### NUI Galway Scholarship

NUI Galway has announced details of a new scholarships scheme for postgraduate students designed to reward exceptional achievement.

Postgraduate Scholarships valued at €1,500 per student will be awarded to all students studying a postgraduate taught Masters programme in who have a first class honours undergraduate degree. The new initiative is open to postgraduate students, applying for a fulltime taught Master's programme due to commence in autumn 2014. Scholarships will be awarded to students accepted on a fulltime taught Master's and who fulfill the criteria as outlined by the University. For more information visit: [www.nuigalway.ie/postgraduate/scholarships](http://www.nuigalway.ie/postgraduate/scholarships).

### 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/scholarships/index.php](http://www.tcd.ie/Graduate_Studies/prospectivestudents/awards/scholarships/index.php).

### UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School scholarships

UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School has announced its 2014 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/scholarships/aspire scholarship/](http://www.smurfitschool.ie/scholarships/aspire scholarship/).

### 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. For more information please visit [www.smurfitschool.ie/bordbia/](http://www.smurfitschool.ie/bordbia/).

### Financial Support contacts and other useful resources:

General education and training allowances	<a href="http://www.welfare.ie">www.welfare.ie</a>	
The Free Fees Initiative	<a href="http://www.education.ie">www.education.ie</a>	
The Student Grant Scheme and SUSI	<a href="http://www.susi.ie">www.susi.ie</a>	076-108 7874
The Student Grant Appeals Board	<a href="http://www.studentfinance.ie">www.studentfinance.ie</a>	
The Student Contribution Fee (formerly the Student Registration Fee) & the Student Assistance Fund	<a href="http://www.studentfinance.ie">www.studentfinance.ie</a>	
The Back to Education Allowance	<a href="http://www.studentfinance.ie">www.studentfinance.ie</a> <a href="http://www.welfare.ie">www.welfare.ie</a>	
The Student Assistance Fund	<a href="http://www.studentfinance.ie">www.studentfinance.ie</a>	
Tax Relief	<a href="http://www.revenue.ie">www.revenue.ie</a>	
Caranua (formerly the Residential Institutions Statutory Fund)	<a href="http://www.caranua.ie">www.caranua.ie</a>	
St Vincent de Paul	<a href="http://www.svp.ie">www.svp.ie</a>	
SIPTU	<a href="http://www.siptu.ie">www.siptu.ie</a>	
IMPACT	<a href="http://www.impact.ie">www.impact.ie</a>	

Female bursary-financial supports for women apprentices	<a href="http://www.solas.ie">www.solas.ie</a>	
Burren College of Art scholarships	<a href="http://www.burrencollege.ie">www.burrencollege.ie</a>	
Credit Union Member Scholarships/Bursaries	<a href="http://www.creditunion.ie">www.creditunion.ie</a>	
Dublin Port Company Scholarships	<a href="http://www.dublinport.ie">www.dublinport.ie</a>	
Annie Kelly Education Bursary	<a href="mailto:admin@nicdtf.ie">admin@nicdtf.ie</a>	
Ernest Walton STEM Bursary	<a href="http://www.education.ie/en/Learners/Services/Scholarships">www.education.ie/en/Learners/Services/Scholarships</a>	01-8366592
Irish Taxation Institute Third Level Scholarship Programme	<a href="http://www.taxinstitute.ie/CareersandCourses/ThirdLevelScholarship.aspx">www.taxinstitute.ie/CareersandCourses/ThirdLevelScholarship.aspx</a>	
North/South Postgraduate Scholarship	<a href="http://www.crossborder.ie">www.crossborder.ie</a>	
NUI Galway Scholarship	<a href="http://www.nuigalway.ie/postgraduate/scholarships">www.nuigalway.ie/postgraduate/scholarships</a>	
Trinity College Dublin postgraduate awards and prizes	<a href="http://www.tcd.ie/Graduate_Studies/prospectivestudents/awards/scholarships/index.php">www.tcd.ie/Graduate_Studies/prospectivestudents/awards/scholarships/index.php</a>	
UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School scholarships	<a href="http://www.smurfitschool.ie/scholarships/aspirescholarship/">http://www.smurfitschool.ie/scholarships/aspirescholarship/</a>	
Bord Bia Marketing Fellowship	<a href="http://www.smurfitschool.ie/bordbia/">www.smurfitschool.ie/bordbia/</a>	

For more information visit [www.aontas.com/whatnext](http://www.aontas.com/whatnext)

## SECTION 5: Other Supports

### Supports for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with disabilities, looking for advice and support for returning to education, contact AHEAD. AHEAD promotes full access and participation in third level education for learners with disabilities also helping them gain employment after graduating. They provide an information service and other key resources for learners. They also have an excellent website [www.ahead.ie](http://www.ahead.ie) which is a one-stop shop for information for legislation, funding, learning supports, training, projects, work placements and assistive technology or you can call them on:

**01 7164396.**

### Fund for Students with Disabilities

This fund 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. It 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. Find out more about the Fund for Students with Disabilities: visit [www.studentfinance.ie](http://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](http://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 significant 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](http://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. For more information: [www.dcu.ie/students/disability/faq.shtml](http://www.dcu.ie/students/disability/faq.shtml).

### Google Europe Scholarship for Students with Disabilities

Google has partnered with EmployAbility, a nonprofit organization who assist students with disabilities while they pursue education and careers.

Scholarship recipients of the Google Scholarship for Students with Disabilities will each receive a €7,000 scholarship for the 2014-2015 academic year. Scholarships will be awarded based on the strength of the applicant's academic background, leadership skills and demonstrated passion for Computer Science.

For more information please:

[www.google.com/studentwithdisabilities-europe/faq.html](http://www.google.com/studentwithdisabilities-europe/faq.html) or email: [googlescholarship@employ-ability.org.uk](mailto:googlescholarship@employ-ability.org.uk).

### 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 below the points requirement in colleges that operate Supplementary Admission schemes for example DARE (Disability Access Route to Education). However it is important to note that entry criteria 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. Other colleges 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?

Many HEIs have a designated Disability Officer in place who provides information on disability related supports in the learning environment, assistive technology etc. In institutions without a Disability Officer this work is carried out by the Access Officer.

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.

USI have also 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.

### Higher Education Authority Initiative - 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 called DARE (Disability Access Route to Education). It is a supplementary admissions scheme for students with a disability. Visit [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie) for more information.

### The Students Union of Ireland (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](mailto:equality@usi.ie) or refer to the contacts section.

### WAM (Willing Able Mentoring) Programme

The WAM (Willing Able Mentoring) Programme offers graduates with disabilities the chance to take up mentored work placements for up to six months in a variety of companies around Ireland. The placements offer graduates the chance to gain valuable experience and to pick up solid skills. All participants are paid the going rate for the work they do.

All WAM placements have a company mentor who helps graduates to settle into the workplace. This company mentor is the link between the WAM programme and the company. WAM is funded by the Department of Social Protection (2012/2013) and has placed over 150 graduates with disabilities within its network of employers since 2006.

For more information on the WAM Programme and current work placement opportunities please contact Linda Kelly, Telephone: 01 278 9325, E-mail: [wam@ahead.ie](mailto:wam@ahead.ie).

### Disability Activation Project (DACT) – Training Options

The Disability Activation Project (DACT) is a project run by The Irish Congress of Trade Unions that offers training and support to people with disabilities. It aims to increase the capacity and potential of people on disability/illness welfare payments to participate in the labour market. There is a range of courses available including personal development, Information Technology and work related programmes.

To be eligible for the (DACT) Training Options programme, participants/applicants must be in receipt of one of the following welfare payments:

- Disability Allowance
- Invalidity Pension
- Illness Benefit
- Blind Pension
- Disability Benefit
- Incapacity Supplement
- Injury Benefit

For further details, please contact the Irish Centre for Trade Unions to find a Congress Centre in your area. Phone: 01-8897704, visit [www.ictu.ie](http://www.ictu.ie).

#### Supports for students with disabilities contacts and other useful resources:

AHEAD	01-7164396	<a href="http://www.ahead.ie">www.ahead.ie</a>
AWARE	01-6617211	<a href="http://www.aware.ie">www.aware.ie</a>
Centre for Independent Living	01-8730455	<a href="http://www.dublincil.org">www.dublincil.org</a>
CRC Ciaran Barry Graduate Scholarship	01-8542200	<a href="http://www.crc.ie">www.crc.ie</a>
Deaf Hear	01-8723800	<a href="http://www.deafhear.ie">www.deafhear.ie</a>
DCU Scholarship	<a href="http://www.dcu.ie/students/disability/faq.shtml">www.dcu.ie/students/disability/faq.shtml</a>	
Disability Federation of Ireland	01-4547978	<a href="http://www.disability-federation.ie">www.disability-federation.ie</a>

For more information visit [www.aontas.com/whatnext](http://www.aontas.com/whatnext)

Disability Activation Project (DACT)	01-8897704	<a href="http://www.ictu.ie">www.ictu.ie</a>
Google Europe Scholarship for Students with Disabilities	<a href="mailto:googlescholarship@employ-ability.org.uk">googlescholarship@employ-ability.org.uk</a>	
ENABLE IRELAND	01-872 7155	<a href="http://www.enableireland.ie">www.enableireland.ie</a>
Epilepsy Ireland	01-455 7500	<a href="http://www.epilepsy.ie">www.epilepsy.ie</a>
HADD Family Support Group	01-8748349	<a href="http://www.hadd.ie">www.hadd.ie</a>
Higher Education Authority Initiative - DARE	<a href="http://www.accesscollege.ie">www.accesscollege.ie</a>	
Irish Deaf Women's Group	01-8601878	<a href="http://www.irishdeafsociety.ie">www.irishdeafsociety.ie</a>
Mental Health Ireland	01-2841166	
National Council for the Blind	1850 334 353	<a href="http://www.ncbi.ie">www.ncbi.ie</a>
National Disability Authority	01-6080400	<a href="http://www.nda.ie">www.nda.ie</a>
The Irish Deaf Society	01-8601878	<a href="http://www.deaf.ie">www.deaf.ie</a>
The NUI Award Scheme for Students with Disabilities	<a href="http://www.nui.ie">www.nui.ie</a>	
The Students Union of Ireland (USI)	01-7099300	<a href="http://www.usi.ie">www.usi.ie</a>

### Additional Learner Supports:

Returning to education can be a daunting experience especially when you are trying to juggle other life and work commitments. There are other supports available and you should always talk to your provider to see what additional supports may be available such as childcare, counselling and mentoring.

For more information visit [www.aontas.com/whatnext](http://www.aontas.com/whatnext)

### Childcare

The Childcare Education and Training Support programme (CETS) is administered by the Department of Children & Youth Affairs on behalf of FÁS and the ETBs. There are about 2,800 places in total available at any one time under the programme. These are divided between FÁS and ETB places, with full-time, part-time and afterschool places available. The allocation of places under the scheme is managed by the Department, via the City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs).

Visit the Department of Children and Youth Affairs for more information [www.dcy.gov.ie](http://www.dcy.gov.ie) or contact your local childcare committee - you can find a list of details on the department's website.

### Other Useful Contacts:

This booklet gives details of the main providers of adult education in Ireland however there are a range of other organisations that provide education and may be useful if you are looking for information such as partnerships and family resource centres. Have a look to see what may be available in your community, courses may be advertised in notice boards in the local shops, in local schools etc. If you need any additional information you can contact AONTAS on **01-4068220**.

EPIC (Employment for People from Immigrant Communities)	<a href="mailto:epic@bitc.ie">epic@bitc.ie</a>	01-874 3840
Family Resource Centres	<a href="http://www.familyresource.ie">www.familyresource.ie</a>	01-4200580
Citizens Information	<a href="http://www.citizensinformation.ie">www.citizensinformation.ie</a>	076-107 4000
One Family	<a href="http://www.onefamily.ie">www.onefamily.ie</a>	01 662 9212
Pobal	<a href="http://www.pobal.ie">www.pobal.ie</a>	01-511 7000
Teagasc	<a href="http://www.teagasc.ie">www.teagasc.ie</a>	059-917 0200

For more information visit [www.aontas.com/whatnext](http://www.aontas.com/whatnext)

## SECTION 5: Jargon Buster

Here are some explanations of terms that are used in this booklet.

**AEO:** Adult Education Officer: manages and co-ordinates the adult education services in the Education and Training Boards across the country.

**BTEI:** The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) provides part-time Further Education programmes for young people and adults.

**BTEA:** The Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) allows qualifying persons to return to full-time education in approved courses while continuing to get income support.

**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 degrees.

**ETBs:** Education and Training Board: Sixteen ETBs provide education and training programmes at local and community level across the country.

**HEI:** Higher Education Institution

**INTREO:** the new service from the Department of Social Protection which helps people on the Live Register with employment and income support services. It provides a personalised service, based on needs including; advice on education, training and personal development opportunities, job search assistance as well as information on and access to our a range of income supports.

**NALA:** National Adult Literacy Agency

**PLCs:** Post Leaving Certificate courses

**QQI:** Quality and Qualifications Ireland brings together the agencies FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council), HETAC (Higher Education and Training Awards Council) and the NQAI (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland) to form a new qualifications authority. Awards will continue to be issued as previously.

**SOLAS:** the new Further Education and Training Authority, it will manage, co-ordinate and support the delivery of integrated Further Education and Training by Education and Training Boards.

**Springboard:** The Springboard initiative provides free, part-time courses in higher education from certificate, to degree, to post-graduate level for people who are unemployed.

**SUSI:** Student Universal Support Ireland is the Awarding Authority for all new student grant applications

**VTOS:** Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme

## SECTION 7: Contacts

## Adult Education Officers

COUNTY	ORGANISATION	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
Carlow	Kilkenny and Carlow ETB	Marian Duffy	059-9138568	mduffy@carlowvec.ie
Cavan	Cavan and Monaghan ETB	Fiona Maloney	049-4361881	fionamaloney@cavanvec.ie
Cork City	Cork ETB	Ruth Griffin	021-4665000	ruth.griffin@corketb.ie
Cork County	Cork ETB	Ger Canning	025-42945	gercanning2007@eircom.net
Cork County	Cork ETB	Nuala Glanton	022-50982	nuala.glanton@corketb.ie
Clare	Limerick and Clare ETB	Aobhan Haverty	065-6824819	ahaverty@clarevec.ie
Donegal	Donegal ETB	Cróna Gallagher	074-9161570	cronagallagher@donegaletb.ie
Donegal	Donegal ETB	Martin Gormley	074-9721705	martingormley@donegaletb.ie
Dubin City (North Inner City)	City of Dublin ETB	Bernadette Sproule	01-8746607	bernadette.sproule@aes.cdetb.ie
Dubin City (North West City)	City of Dublin ETB	Kevin Smullen	01-8342333	ksmullen@colaisteide.ie
Dubin City (South West City)	City of Dublin ETB	Liz O'Sullivan	01-7090250	liz.osullivan@aes.cdetb.ie
Dubin City (North Central City)	City of Dublin ETB	Celia Rafferty	01-8623828	celia.rafferty@aes.cdetb.ie
Dubin City (South East City)	City of Dublin ETB	Eithne Doherty	01-6684571	eithne.doherty@aes.cdetb.ie
Dublin County (North County)	Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB	Austin Wynne	01-8408946	awynne@ddletb.ie

For more information visit [www.aontas.com/whatnext](http://www.aontas.com/whatnext)

Dublin County (West County)	Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB	Michael McLoughlin	01-6283910	mmcloughlin@ddletb.ie
Dublin County(South West)	Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB	Terry McCann	01 8211518	tmccann@ddletb.ie
Dublin County (South County)	Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB	Vacant	01-2989283	info@learning-southdublin.ie
Dublin County (Dun Laoghaire)	Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB	Vacant	01-2147200	
Galway City	Galway and Roscommon ETB	Fiona O'Loughlin	091-567194	fiona.oloughlin@gretb.ie
Galway County	Galway and Roscommon ETB	Eithne Nic Dhonnchadha	091-874260	eithne.nicdhonnchadha@gretb.ie
Kerry	Kerry ETB	Shivaun Shanahan	066-7121488	sshahanan@kerryetb.ie
Kerry	Kerry ETB	Sharon Browne	066-7121488	sbrowne@kerryetb.ie
Kildare	Kildare and Wicklow ETB	Des Murtagh	045-988000	desmurtagh@kildarevec.ie
Kilkenny	Kilkenny and Carlow ETB	Eileen Curtis	056-7765103	ecurtis.adulted@kkvec.ie
Laois	Laois and Offaly ETB	Joe Cunningham	057-8621352	jcunningham@laoisoffalyetb.ie
Leitrim	Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim ETB	Vacant	071-9620024	vecoffice@leitrimvec.ie
Limerick City	Limerick and Clare ETB	Mary Hamilton	061-445700	maryhamilton@lcaes.ie
Limerick County	Limerick and Clare ETB	Eimear Brophy	061-442100	ebrophy@limerickvec.ie
Longford	Longford and Westmeath ETB	Mary Farrell	043-3334000	aeo@longfordvec.ie
Louth	Louth and Meath ETB	Sadie Ward McDermott	042-9334047	sadie.mcdermott@louthvec.ie
Mayo	Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim ETB	Vacant	094-9023159	admin@mayovec.ie
Meath	Louth and Meath ETB	Vacant	046-9068200	education@meathvec.ie

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## Contacts

Monaghan	Cavan and Monaghan ETB	Fiona McGrath	047-30888	fionamcgrath@cmetb.ie
Offaly	Laois and Offaly ETB	Tony Dalton	057-9321406	tdalton@offalyvecaded.ie
Roscommon	Galway and Roscommon ETB	Vacant	090-6626151	admin@roscommonvec.ie
Sligo	Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim ETB	Michael Burke	071-9145025	mburke@sligovec.ie
Tipperary (South)	Tipperary ETB	Eileen Condon	052-6126269	econdon@tippsouthvec.ie
Tipperary (North)	Tipperary ETB	Antoinette Coffey	067-31845	a.coffey@tippnorthvec.ie
Waterford City	Wexford and Waterford ETB	Michael Kirwan	051-873195	mkirwanaeo@gmail.com
Waterford County	Wexford and Waterford ETB	Mary Walsh	058-51404	mwalsh@wd-vec.ie
Westmeath	Longford and Westmeath ETB	Rina Mc Kenna	090-6474080	aeo@westmeathvec.ie
Wexford	Wexford and Waterford ETB	Vacant	053-9123799	frankennedy@cowexfordvec.ie
Wicklow	Kildare and Wicklow ETB	Catherine Byrne	0404-60500	catherinebyrne@wicklowvec.ie

### ACCESS OFFICERS:

COUNTY	ORGANISATION	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
Antrim	Open University (Belfast)	John Darcy	0044(0)80 1232245025	ireland@open.ac.uk
	University of Ulster (Belfast)		0044(0)28 7012 3456	www.ulster.ac.uk
	Queens University (Belfast)		0044(0)2890 245133	www.qub.ac.uk
Carlow	Institute of Technology Carlow	Ashling McHugh	05991-76229	ashling.mchugh@itcarlow.ie
Clare	Shannon College of Hotel Management	Joan Markham	061-712590	joanmarkham@shannoncollege.com

## SECTION 7

## Contacts

Cork	UCC	Mary O'Sullivan	021-4903670	mary.osull@ucc.ie
	CIT	Deirdre Creedon	021-4335140	deirdre.creedon@cit.ie
		Sinead O' Neill	021-4335109	sinead.oneill@cit.ie
Dublin	Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology	Patricia Byrne	01-2144628	patricia.byrne@iadt.ie
	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	Mary-Liz Trant	01-2317100	mltrant@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
	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	
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	

Donegal	Letterkenny Institute of Technology	Brian McGonagle	074-9186170	brian.mcgonagle@lyit.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	Rhona McCormack	061-204927	rhona.mccormack@ul.ie
	University of Limerick	Noreen Coveney O'Beirne	061-213481	noreen.coveney-o'beirne@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
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

## Membership

You should join AONTAS because we provide:

- Networking opportunities with other practitioners and learners at our free events
- Up to date information on adult education, adult education organisations and events
- Promotion of the work of your organisation through our website and weekly ebulletin
- Free AONTAS publications and research reports
- A strong collective voice for lobbying government
- A Nationwide Adult Learners' Festival

How can you join AONTAS?

Find out more at [www.aontas.com/membership](http://www.aontas.com/membership) or fill in our online membership form.

For information on Individual or Organisational membership contact Mairéad Tynan on 01 4068220 or email: [mtynan@aontas.com](mailto:mtynan@aontas.com).

Membership Type	Membership Category	Annual Income Band	Annual Fee
Individual membership	Regular fee		€30
	Reduced fee (Unwaged)		€2
Organisational membership	Small organisations	€0 - 80,000	€30
	Medium organisations	€80,000 - €250,000	€100
	Large organisations	€250,000 +	€200
Associate membership	Overseas individuals and organisations		€100

# Adult Learners' Festival

24th February to the 1st March 2014

The Adult Learners' Festival is a nationwide celebration of adult learning coordinated by AONTAS, the National Adult Learning Organisation. The Festival has become a firm fixture on the adult learning calendar with over 400 events taking place nationwide, including anything from information sessions, taster workshops, sample lectures to small gatherings of people who love to learn.

For more information visit:  
[www.adultlearnersfestival.com](http://www.adultlearnersfestival.com)

## NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS



### AWARDING BODIES

- RTÉLC - awarded by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- SEC - State Examinations Commission (Department of Education and Skills)
- ICTEC - awarded by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- IET - Institutes of Technology
- BIT - Dublin Institute of Technology
- Universities

### AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK

- There are four types of award in the National Framework of Qualifications:
- Major Awards: awarded in the outer rings, and the principal class of awards made at a level
  - Minor Awards: are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award
  - Supplemental Awards: are for learning that is additional to a Major Award
  - Special Purpose Awards: are for narrowly defined or purpose-specific achievement



For further information consult: [www.nfq.ie](http://www.nfq.ie) [www.qqi.ie](http://www.qqi.ie)

**AONTAS**

**The Voice of Adult Learning**

**National Adult Learning Organisation**

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