

# College & Training

## Choosing a College

People choose different Colleges for different reasons. Some people might pick one that is close to them, some people might pick one that has a very good course. Other people might choose a College or University because they have family or friends there. All of these reasons are ok. Choosing where you go to is an important decision. If you are unsure where you would like to study, or if you would like to study more, again – you can talk to a parent, carer or guidance counsellor to help you.

You can decide to go to College or University Full-Time, which is every day for the whole day, or Part-Time, which may be evenings or weekends.

In Ireland, there is an organisation called AHEAD which can be helpful in making these decisions. There is also an event called 'Better Options' which is run by AHEAD, where you can talk to people from different Colleges and Universities about different subjects.

## Applying to College or University

All students in Ireland who wish to go to College or University must apply through the Central Applications Office (CAO). As a student with a disability, there may be some extra forms to complete to make sure you get the support you need. This information can be really helpful to the College or University you hope to go to. You can ask a parent or carer to help you fill the forms out.

As a student, you do not have to tell the College or University that you have a disability or specific learning difficulty, but it might help you to do so. Legally, a College or University cannot refuse you or discriminate against you for these reasons (See Rights and Responsibilities). By filling in these forms it may mean that you can use a different entry route called DARE (Disability Access Route).

This means that you may be able to get onto the course you want even if you didn't get enough Leaving Cert points. DARE can help you get a place on a course with 10-15% less points than the College or University ask for.

## Support in College/University

Most Higher Education institutes have a Disability Office or an Access Service. This could be an office of a few different people, or in smaller Colleges, it may just be one person who you can ask for help when you need it. When you apply to a College or University, you should let the Disability Office or Access Service know, so that they are ready for you starting and can help you in whatever way you might need. The kind of things that the Disability Office or Access Service may be able to help with are:

- ★ More time in exams
- ★ Longer deadlines with assignments
- ★ Assistive technology
- ★ Not getting marked down for spelling and grammar
- ★ Lecture notes in advance
- ★ Sign language interpreter
- ★ A notetaker or scribe
- ★ Early registration.

## Options outside of College or University

When you leave school, you may not be ready to go to College or University, or you may need some more qualifications to get the course you want.

Here are some other options available in Ireland:

### Full Time

- ★ Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)
- ★ Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
- ★ Youthreach
- ★ Apprenticeship
- ★ Traineeships
- ★ Blended Learning
- ★ Local Training Initiatives

## Part Time

- ★ Back to Education Initiative
- ★ Adult Literacy
- ★ Community Education
- ★ Skills for Work

## Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are offered through Further Education colleges or training organisations and you will need to have an employer willing to train you on the job. They allow young people to learn all the practical skills they need to get a job as well as the technical qualifications. Apprenticeship programmes usually involve 4 days with your employer and one day at in a classroom and a training allowance is usually paid to help with your transport and lunch costs. The most popular apprenticeships are for careers in construction, plumbing, electrical and ICT areas.

## Vocational Training

This is training for a specific career focusing on practical skills that you need to know. For example, jobs in catering, childcare, hospitality. You will spend most of your time in a classroom learning but there are also opportunities for work experience.