

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN CHOOSING A COURSE IN 2015?

If you don't have all the relevant information then you haven't done enough research to make an informed decision!

Access Programs: If you feel that you cannot achieve your full academic potential because of a disability (dyslexia / dyscalculia), or extended illness, you may make a supplementary application through the CAO. Any assistance for disadvantaged students? Check out www.accesscollege.ie

Accommodation: What are the options available? Rented room with family or dorm? 'Digs', Self-catering accommodation? Do I share, will I get broadband? What are the costs involved? When do I make an application? (December for Maynooth!)

Age Requirements: Nursing applicants for the UK must be 17½ by start of course. 17 by January following year of entry for N.U.I. Colleges.

Application Procedure / Deadline: Is it in the C.A.O.? Does it require a Portfolio, Interview, Assessment or Audition? Do I apply directly to the College? Is there Garda Vetting involved? Is there a closing date? Is there any other route into this course, such as Pre-Nursing PLC's for Nursing Degrees? (And what would my chances be? Not great!) Watch for the closing dates for UK Medical Courses and the Oxbridge System! What about my European options of courses taught through English? (www.eunicas.ie)

Career Prospects: Where are the jobs? What do they pay? What do Graduates do? Check out the graduate employment surveys, such as the one at University of Limerick.

Class Size / Gender: Just over 370 places in Medicine in the country / Trinity has 14,000 students/ 1200+ in Arts in Maynooth. Mostly males in Computer Science, mostly female in Social Care, Medicine and Social Work. 5 places for Law with French Law in UCD / 165 for Agricultural Science in UCD. Do you want to break the Glass Ceiling on Engineering? The New Dublin Technical University will have over 23,000 students and 3 different sites!

College Facilities: Crèche / Computers / Gym / Counselling Services / Library / Career Services / Clubs / Societies / Banking / Shops / Church etc. How much for a meal in the Canteen? Do they have an indoor rock climbing wall? (They have in Trinity.)

Cost of Materials / Administration Fees: Students who qualify for 'free' fees pay only €2981 in UCD! Your materials for Beauty Therapy could cost you over €1200. Sports Therapy/Physiotherapy Assistant Year 1 in Cavan was €1309 this year.

Course Content: Computer Science is more about Logic and Discrete Math. How much Accountancy on your Business Course? Biology content on the Beauty Therapy Courses! What's the difference between Nutritional Science and Dietetics? On the Business and Law, how much Business and how much Law? Can I study Polish Cinema on an English Degree? Is my Degree accepted by the Teaching Council? Is my Engineering Qualification accepted by Engineers Ireland? Can I practice Law in New York?

Course Duration: Arts Degree is normally Three years at Maynooth and Four Years at Trinity. Five Years Architecture. Watch for the extra year on the ladder system. Look at the combined Masters Degree in Engineering at DCU.

Course Satisfaction: Is this really what I want to do? Is there a difference between the course and the job?

Daily/ Annual Timetable: Much of this is available on the web. Arts Degree vs. Engineering Degree! Is it Modularised? What about the Horizons option in UCD or the Broad Curriculum in Trinity?

Deferred Entry: Is it possible on this course? Watch Cork, NCAD and DLIADT. How do I defer? How does the college look at a Gap Year?



Form of Assessment: Is it continuous assessment or terminal exam? Extended essay? Lab work? Tutorials and workshops?

HEI Requirements / Faculty Requirements / Course Requirements: What are the minimum requirements for getting in? Remember Art & Music cannot be accepted for matriculation as two of your Higher Level subjects for Trinity! For DCU you need a Leaving Certificate with Grade C3 in two Higher Level subjects and Grade D3 in four Ordinary or Higher Level subjects (which must include Mathematics and English or Irish). Five passes will get me into Cavan. DKIT carries a 200 points minimum entry requirement. NCI accepts Foundations Maths.

International Work Programme / Industry Placement: INTRA. The majority of Degrees in DCU have this paid option for about 800 students a year? Watch for the International options with your Degree! What type of work placement on your PLC? Also ask about the new work experience options on some Engineering courses.

Is the course running this year? Check the C.A.O. Codes.

Lab / Workshop Facilities: NUI Galway has a new sports building with a climbing wall. Olympic size swimming pool in U.L. What's the computer to student ratio? Do I need to purchase a laptop? NUI Maynooth launched a new High Performance Computing Facility and a €20 million Library not too long ago.

Language Option: Broad Curriculum in Trinity (Croatian, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish & Turkish). Watch for German on Engineering courses! Is it ab initio?

Location / Ease of Access: Can take an hour to get from Kells to Blanchardstown! Look for private bus routes from Kells to Dundalk I.T., and the 7.30 a.m. from Kells to Maynooth.

New Courses: CAO Course Changes 2015. New Courses may mean lower points! Accounting & Finance in American College Dublin and Electrical Engineering in NUI Maynooth all appeared on the Vacancy list.

Open Days: When? Are there any special open days, e.g. Engineering in UCD or Arts in Maynooth? Keep a close eye on the events section on the Qualifax website.

Options & Electives: Venture Management in NUI Maynooth no longer has options in Bioscience, Electronic Engineering and Information Technology. Watch new Law Options and the introduction of Politics as a subject.

Overall Costs: Is it covered by the Free Fees and/or a Maintenance Grant? Watch for Comp. Sc. In Griffith! The first two years' fees will be funded by the Department of Education. Private colleges will set you back about €5,000 a year, but 20% is tax deductible. If it is a U.K. college will I get help with tuition fees? What about courses in the E.U.?

Points: How are they awarded? Watch for weighting! Is there a pattern? How many will you achieve? What are you doing to achieve them?

Progression: Higher Certificate / Ordinary or Higher Degree/ Post Grad Diploma / Professional Diploma. What are the Research Options and Packages? What PLC are linked with your University Course? (Under 100 places available for Nursing this year.)

Qualification? / Who Confers?: HETAC or DCU etc. LLB in Irish Law from Griffith is awarded by Nottingham Trent University. B.A. Hons Marketing from DBS is awarded by Liverpool John Moore's University. What FETAC level is your P.L.C.? The Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Building Surveying in DKIT has been accredited for membership of the Society of Chartered Surveyors (SCS). What about Engineers Ireland and the Teaching Council?

Retention Rates: Overall figures on student completion of university courses in Ireland suggest that an average of 83.2% of students complete the university courses on which they originally enrol. Some courses loose more than 40% of their students. One in four students that begin a third level computer science course drop out before the end of their first year. Maynooth kept 82% of its 1st Year students this year. Why are their students staying or leaving?

Scholarships / Bursaries / Fellowships: TCD assists students of limited means through the Financial Assistance Committee. The Reid Entrance Exhibition is available only to natives of Kerry. Maynooth offers scholarships with coaching at the Golfing Academy. (Is it worth investigating American Scholarships?) I.T. Carlow among others gives €1200 for the best entrance results. Maynooth give €1000 to those with over 525 points. The Elite Scholarship at DCU offers you, subsidised campus accommodation, financial support for academic fees, equipment, books, travel to competition etc, personal tuition (where necessary) and High Performance Education Talks and Workshops.

Staff: Student Ratio: Waterford I.T. has the worse! How big are your tutorial classes? How many students in a lab? Do we share classes with bigger groups? Is there a gender balance?

Teaching Quality: Talk to students. See if you can sit in on a lecture! Attend an Open Day Talk Workshop, Taster Session, Summer camp or Seminar.

Travel Options: Life Long Learning/ Erasmus: These are an EU-funded education program designed to encourage students to expand their university education by spending a period of study in another EU member state, or member states of the European Economic Area. Finds out what Universities are involved? What might it cost you? What about the JET program in DCU? Maynooth has links with Universities in Japan, Russia and Argentina



Errors and Omissions Excepted

The technical details in this document are being constantly updated, and any student would do well to check and triple check all their information before making any decisions about courses or colleges.