

Preparation Notes and Evaluation Worksheet

Higher Options 2017

Royal Dublin Society, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. Thursday 14th September 2017

My Intended Time of (a) Arrival:

(b) Departure:

There are three stages in this activity..... Before – During – After

Stage One - Before you go – Planning and Preparation

Why Visit the Higher Options?

Your opportunity to meet with people from the 180+ post-Leaving Cert Colleges of Further Education, Institutes of Technology and Universities attending from Ireland, UK, Europe and beyond and from other information providers.

You can ask the same question of different colleges and compare the answers.

Your opportunity to hear talks on a careers in which you have some interest - broadening your knowledge and giving you new insights.

Your opportunity to hear talks on careers you have not considered before.

Your opportunity to attend lecture sessions covering topics such as the options on offer in Irish and UK third level education, the CAO and UCAS admissions systems, alternative routes to third level through FE, how to choose a career and how to cope with college life.

Your opportunity to listen to the question and answer sessions at the end of each talk, to ask your own questions and talk one-to-one if you wish with the speaker.

Get Answers to Your Questions

Visiting Higher Options gives you the chance to talk to faculty and admission staff and perhaps, some students. You can get answers to questions, but **you must have the questions prepared beforehand.** Remember **if you go without questions you will come home without answers.**

Higher Options is a great opportunity to find out what is really being offered by a Third Level College over

and above what is written in the prospectus and on the website, even if you have already some prior knowledge about the College. Picking the right college is a big decision - one of the more important you'll ever make. You will need to ask many questions when making a college choice.

Starting to Prepare for Higher Options

List the things you would like to find out during the day.

If you find it hard to do this, then maybe you have to face the fact that you have not been really thinking yet in a constructive way about your life after the Leaving Cert.

Sit down and give yourself time to START thinking about what you may want to do after the Leaving Cert. Write down anything in which you just might have an interest.

Using that list, check out your course options in QualifaX.

Check each College's website, read the prospectus and make notes as you go along.

This will take some time, but really, it is critically important that you make time for yourself. It is your future and the time to start addressing it is NOW.

The Secret of getting the Most out of Your Higher Options Day :
Plan + Preparation = List of Questions = List of Answers

Issues other than Course choice

Accommodation is generally the most expensive part of going into higher education. Find out about university/college owned accommodation in your first year. Ask if you can see the accommodation when you go to visit on an open day. You will probably have to find your own accommodation in the second year, so ask how easy it is to find, and generally how expensive it is. Remember that you will have to buy food, electricity, water, gas, heating, telephone. Ask when booking starts – for some colleges it is months ahead of CAO offers!

Find out what the cost of living is - living in Dublin requires a lot more money than living in Drogheda. Compare accommodation costs - also find out if the university / college offers student accommodation information.

Don't worry about **where your friends** are going - despite the travel they can still come and visit. You are guaranteed to make new friends when you get to university so don't sacrifice your happiness to go where your friends, boyfriends or girlfriends are going. It's your life, so make it your decision. Just make sure that you've thought of everything before you make the choice!

Go with a friend(s) to the stands in which you are interested - they can give you a valuable second

opinion (Class discussion afterwards), as well as provide company and boost your confidence. Go with them to the stands *they* wish to visit. You might learn something.

SOCIAL LIFE You will be in the place for at least three years and the friends you make will be with you for life, so, apart from bars and night-clubs (which are usually in great abundance anyway), what clubs/societies are available? What entertainment venues – theatres, cinema, and the like - are close by?

STUDENT UNIONS operate bars, clubs, shops and societies. Find out what is available and where it is based - is social life based in the town/city or within the College?

MUSIC in the form of orchestras, choirs, bands and individual tuition if available. Find out how frequently it is run and how much it costs.

SPORT provision is important. Find out what sports are available, how many teams there are and what the facilities are like.

Also, find out what sort of non-curricular support the university/college offers (such as health + welfare - counselling etc.). When at the university/college you may be assigned a personal tutor to look after things as this, so find how many students there are per tutor and find out how regular tutorials are.

Stage Two – The Day of the Event – What to do and Expect

	What I Want to Achieve For The Day
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

During the Open Day ensure you get answers to all your questions such as: *Types of assessment used? / Leaving Cert. subjects & levels required/desirable for this course? / What tutoring is provided? / A qualification recognised by the professional body?* You will also have your own concerns – record them here and the answers you get.

	Questions I Would Like Answered On The Day
Q1.	
A.	
Q2.	

A.	
Questions I Would Like Answered On The Day / Contd.	
Q3.	
A.	
Q4.	
A.	
Q5.	
A.	

Courses That Interest Me, and, The College(s) Offering Such Courses (Use www.qualifax.ie & see EXHIBITORS & FLOOR PLAN on www.higheroptions.ie website):	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Venue:	Titles of The Lectures That I Will Attend (Choose from list on website):	Time:
Industries Hall 1:		
Industries Hall 1:		
Industries Hall 2:		
Industries Hall 2:		
Concert Hall:		
Concert Hall:		

Contact Details (Get name, phone, email etc for further questions –to be filled in on the day):	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Advice On How To Get The Best From Your Visits To The Various Exhibition Stands

Follow these simple rules and you should find the day very helpful.

Do have a specific strategy for maximizing your time at the event.

Do attempt to research basic information about each College or stand you hope to visit before you go.

Do have a few questions prepared, but **don't** ask questions that any good student should already know, such as "What does your College do?"

Do get a business card (or at least contact information) from each College that interests you.

Don't monopolize a stand.

Don't ever just walk up to a stand and interrupt a current conversation; wait your turn and be polite.

Do anticipate a hard day's work.

Do listen to others questions and the answers they get, there might be something here that you overlooked.

Advice On How To Get The Best From The Lectures

There will be at least 15 lectures / seminars which you can attend. They are an invaluable source of information and they will help you in your thinking.

Do go to www.higheroptions.ie; look at the lists of lectures and times and decide which ones are a Must for you.

Do choose at least two talks from each of the three venues. That way you will come away more informed.

Do prepare questions for each talk before attending Higher Options.

Do arrive at least five minutes before the start of the talk.

Do encourage a friend or friends to attend your talks and make sure you attend at least two other talks in which you think you have little interest. You will learn something and you may even widen your horizons.

Do take a seat near the front when you arrive. Some speakers like to work without a microphone and talk with the students around them to make the Q&A session more lively and interesting.

Don't allow anyone to distract you when the talk is on.

Do listen attentively, have your mobile switched off and do take some notes.

Do listen to others' questions and ask anything that you wish to know that is not already covered.

Do wait until the end of the talk (to do otherwise is impolite), even if it is not what you expected. Relax and learn.

Notes

Choosing a Third Level College – Higher Options Review Worksheet

Stage Three – After you come home – the Follow up

This should be completed shortly after Higher Options to take stock and record what you felt about the Conference. It is essential that you take time to organise the material and ideas you collected now while it is fresh in your mind. Do not put off this stage or much of the learning potential will be lost.

List The Benefits You Gained From Higher Options – What You Felt Were Its Strengths:

What I liked

List What You Didn't Like from Higher Options - What You Felt Were Its Weaknesses.

What I didn't like

Review The Courses and Colleges You Investigated During Your Visit To Higher Options:

	My Opinion on Courses / Colleges Which I Examined
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

What Were Your General Impressions And Feelings About Your Visit To Higher Options?

Comments on visit

Do you benefit from the visit to Higher Options ?

Yes

Maybe

No

Was there a course highlighted that suits you ?

Yes

Maybe

No

The Next Step – ACTION LIST

What's next ? Do I need more information, review my choices. Do I need to start all over again ?

Follow Up Actions I Must Take:
Information I Need To Get:
Points I Need To Discuss With My Guidance Counsellor:
Preparation I Should Make Before I Meet My Guidance Counsellor:
Suggestion For An Area I Would Like Explored In A Future Guidance Class:

Know yourself – Know your options – Make a good decision