



Borderwise:

Education

This information sheet aims to provide a general overview of the education system in the Republic of Ireland (ROI).



Introduction

The Department of Education and Science is responsible for education in Ireland. At present education is compulsory for children from age six to sixteen. The education system is made up of primary, second, third-level and further education. While the vast majority of schools are State funded some private schools also exist. Further information is available at www.education.ie



Early childcare programmes

At present there is very little provision for pre-school children in Ireland. The Government has only implemented pilot schemes and these have tended to focus on children with disabilities or those from socially deprived backgrounds. Pre-school education is usually provided by privately funded child-care facilities or providers.



First Level Education

First level schools are known as National/Primary Schools. Although children are not obliged to attend school until the age of six, most four and five-year-olds are enrolled in primary schools. There are no formal exams at the end of first level education.

Second Level Education

There are four types of schools in second level education. These are secondary, vocational, comprehensive and community schools. They all provide a common compulsory curriculum. Children generally begin Secondary school aged twelve and usually sit their Junior Certificate after three years. A transition year usually follows the Junior Certificate examination. The Leaving Certificate examination is held at the end of the final year in secondary school when students are usually 17/18 years old. It is the basis for entry into higher education and training.

Third Level Education

Third level education is made up of a number of sectors:

Universities -There are seven universities and they are autonomous and self-governing. They offer degree programmes at bachelor, masters and doctorate level.

Institutes of Technology -The technological sector includes institutes of technology which provide programmes of education and training. The Department of Education and Science has overall responsibility for the sector.

Colleges of Education -There are five colleges of education which specialise in training for primary teachers. They offer a three-year bachelor of education degree and an 18-month post-graduate diploma.

Going
South

Fees

Most undergraduate students attending publicly funded third-level courses do not have to pay fees. In order to qualify for free fees, applicants must meet set criteria. Further information is available at: www.education.ie

Registration Fee

There is an annual student services charge that all students are required to pay. The fee covers student services and examinations and the amount charges vary between institutions.

Students from Northern Ireland

As European nationals students from N. Ireland accepted on third level courses in ROI will generally have their course fees paid by the Department of Education and Science. In terms of their living costs these students can apply to their local Education and Library Board in N. Ireland for a student grant and/or loan toward maintenance in the same way as they would if they had applied to a UK College or University.

How do I apply for higher education courses in ROI?

Students should apply for full-time undergraduate courses at Irish universities/ higher education institutions through the Central Application Office (CAO). For further information contact the Central Applications Office
Tel: +353 91 509800 or visit the Website: www.cao.ie

Further and Adult Education

Further education comprises education and training which takes place after second level schooling but which is not part of the third level system. It includes literacy and basic education courses and provides the opportunity for those who have completed secondary education to develop vocational and training skills.

Vocational Training and Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)

The VTOS scheme is designed to equip people with the necessary skills to find employment. It is available to anyone over the age of 21 who is unemployed and has been receiving Social Welfare payments for at least six months. Further information is available from the website: www.vtos.ie

Youthreach

If you are aged between 15 and 20 years of age and have left school without any formal qualifications, the Youthreach programme can provide opportunities for basic education and vocational training. Further information can be found by visiting the website at www.youthreach.ie

Back to education allowance

If you are unemployed, a single parent or have a disability, you may be able to enroll on approved second-or third-level education courses through the Back to Education Allowance scheme. In order to qualify applicants must meet the criteria. For further information contact your local Social Welfare Office.

Contact Details

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