



OLLSCOIL NA
GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY
OF GALWAY

University
of Galway.ie

Access Diploma Programmes Guide



Follow your own pathway!

For over twenty years, the Access Diploma Programme has represented the University's efforts to ensure that higher education is within reach for all members of society. Over 3,000 students have participated in University of Galway Access courses over the lifetime of the programme, representing 3,000 people whose lives have been significantly changed by educational opportunity. These programmes have been offered in Galway city and county, and throughout our region – addressing economic, social, geographic, and other barriers to higher education.

The Access Programmes Office is part of the Access Centre. The aim of the Access Centre is to create a supportive learning environment where students who have experienced socio-economic disadvantage, students with disabilities and mature students are enabled to access and succeed in third level education. This involves a wide range of educational approaches and specialist services that include the Disability Support Service, Mature Students Officer and the Traveller Education Officer, and are targeted at large numbers of students who are classified by the Higher Education Authority as 'non-traditional'.



Access Diploma Programmes Information Evening – Inclusive Learning

Visit our website for the dates of our information evenings.

This special information evening is designed particularly for school leavers and mature students, who never had the opportunity to study at third level and could not for a diverse range of reasons perform to their full potential academically. It is aimed primarily at those on a low income and/or who have long-term disabilities. It is an annual event to reach out to community that university is accessible to all and particularly to those who thought college was out of their reach. These courses build confidence in self, ability and supports each individual to reach their full potential.

Representatives and past students from our Access Centre will be there to advise and talk with you on the Access Diploma Programmes, financial aid, and support you while deciding to take that first step into education and to encourage you to reach your full potential.

For more information and to register for open days visit

www.universityofgalway.ie/opendays

www.universityofgalway.ie/access

T: +353 91 493553

E: access@universityofgalway.ie

The aim of the Access Centre is to create a supportive learning environment

Come and meet with us

**Access Diploma
Foundation Programme
Information Session:**
[universityofgalway.ie/
access/](http://universityofgalway.ie/access/)

Open Days are the perfect opportunity for you and your family to experience life at University of Galway. Visit us and immerse yourself in our vibrant and diverse community. Meet our world-leading academics, our current access students and see how they can inspire you.

**University of Galway
open days:**

universityofgalway.ie/opendays/

Disclaimer; whilst every effort is made to ensure contents are accurate, the Access Diploma Programmes Guide is issued only for the guidance of students. It does not impose or infer any legal obligations on the University of Galway. Course syllabi, fees, regulations or other information given may be altered, cancelled or otherwise amended at any time. The Access Diploma Programmes Guide does not confer any rights on a student registered for any course of study.

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Is this the pathway for you?

Are you eligible for an Access course?

University of Galway's Access students can be either school leavers (22 years and under) or mature students (23 years and over) who are generally part of under-represented groups in higher education.

They are mainly from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, students with disabilities and mature students including adults who may be in low paid employment. You must be resident in the Border, Midlands and Western (BMW) region or in County Clare for at least 1 year prior to the commencement of the course.

You will not be eligible to participate on an Access diploma course if you already hold a third-level qualification (Level 8 or higher), but you may apply if you commenced, but did not complete, a third-level course in the past. Your family income should be low enough for you to qualify for a student maintenance grant when you progress to third-level.

The financial and social reasons considered for eligibility for the programme include:

- Long-term unemployment
- Low family income
- Little or no family tradition of progression onto higher education
- Family stresses (particularly those related to family finance)

Access diploma programmes are designed to provide a supportive educational environment which prepare students academically and personally for an undergraduate programme at third level. University of Galway currently deliver a number of Access diploma programmes for school leavers (22 or under) and mature students (23 or above) on campus in University of Galway, as well as in our outreach centres in Tuam and a bilingual course in An Cheathrú Rua.

The preparatory programmes are student centred and are delivered in a very supportive environment by experienced tutors and staff.

The overall aim is to give the chance of college to everyone and to provide an opportunity to progress to full-time or part-time degrees upon successful completion of the course. Continued support is provided to all students by the Access Centre

Find out more:

www.universityofgalway/access/faqs

University of Galway

Campus Access Foundation Diploma Programme

for School Leavers and Mature Students

This is a 21 week full-time free course specifically designed for students who have a real desire to study at third level but are unable due to financial or social reasons. This scheme facilitates school-leavers from all schools in the Border Midlands and Western (BMW) region and County Clare. School Leavers who have completed a Leaving Certificate OR completed a QQI Level 5 or Level 6 qualification OR its equivalent can apply. Students who have gained access to a third level institution, post-leaving cert course or who are in a QQI course are ineligible to apply. Mature Students should be highly motivated and interested in studying at an undergraduate level in their chosen area.

ALL APPLICANTS ARE INTERVIEWED FOR A PLACE ON THE ACCESS FOUNDATION DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES.

Course Content

The course content consists of two supporting elements: core subjects and academic options. Core subjects include Academic Study Skills, Academic Writing, Academic Technology, and Engage- Skills for College and Career.

Academic Options: provide students with introductory university courses as a prelude to continuing their studies to a higher level within the colleges at University of Galway. Students generally study four options from the following subjects:

- College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies: Philosophy, Sociology, History, English, Mathematics, Geography
- College of Science: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology
- College of Engineering & Informatics: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology
- College of Business, Public Policy and Law: Economics/ Mathematics

Assessment

The requirement for successful completion of the Access Course involve an 85% attendance and performance in all elements of the programme, which include semester examinations written / oral assignments and essays.

Award

Participants who successfully complete the Access Programmes will receive a Diploma in Foundation Studies award from University of Galway and will be eligible to apply for direct entry (via the CAO) to full-time University undenominated degree courses in the College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies; College of Science; College of Engineering & Informatics; College of Business, Public Policy and Law and the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences.

Application to denominated degrees are not guaranteed and are ranked according to grades and possibly other criteria.

Find out more:

www.universityofgalway.ie/access/school-leavers

www.universityofgalway.ie/access/mature-students

Tuam Access Foundation Diploma Programme

for School Leavers and Mature Students

This Outreach Access Course delivered in Tuam is a 1-year free part-time daytime/evening course that aims to provide school leavers (22 and under) mature students, aged 23 or over, with the opportunity to prepare, personally and academically, for an undergraduate course of full-time study of at least three years duration at University of Galway have a real desire to study at third level but are unable due to financial or social reasons. This scheme facilitates mature students resident 1 year or more in the Border Midlands and Western (BMW) region and County Clare.

ALL APPLICANTS ARE INTERVIEWED FOR A PLACE ON THE ACCESS FOUNDATION DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES.

Course Content

The course content consists of two supporting elements: core subjects and academic options. Core subjects include Academic Study Skills, Academic Writing, Academic Technology, and Engage- Skills for College and Career.

Academic Options: provide students with introductory university courses as a prelude to continuing their studies to a higher level within the colleges at University of Galway. Students generally study four options (two per semester) from the following subjects:

- College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies: Philosophy, Sociology, History, English, Mathematics, Geography
- *College of Science: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology
- *College of Engineering & Informatics: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology
- College of Business, Public Policy and Law: Economics/ Mathematics

*Depending on demand

Assessment

The requirement for successful completion of the Access Course involve 85% attendance and performance in all elements of the programme, which include semester examinations, written / oral assignments and essays.

Award

Participants who successfully complete the Access Course will receive a Diploma in Foundation Studies from University of Galway and will be eligible to apply for direct entry (via the CAO) to full-time undenominated University degree courses in the College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies; College of Science; College of Engineering & Informatics; College of Business, Public Policy and Law and the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences. Application to denominated degrees are not guaranteed and are ranked according to grades and possibly other criteria.

Find out more:

www.universityofgalway.ie/access

An Cheathrú Rua Access Foundation Diploma Programme

for School Leavers and Mature Students

This Outreach Access Course delivered in An Cheathrú Rua is a 1-year free bi-lingual part-time daytime/evening course that aims to provide school leavers (22 and under) mature students (23 or over), with the opportunity to prepare, personally and academically, for an undergraduate course of full-time study of at least three years duration at University of Galway have a real desire to study at third level but are unable due to financial or social reasons. This scheme facilitates mature students resident 1 year or more in the Border Midlands and Western (BMW) region and County Clare.

ALL APPLICANTS ARE INTERVIEWED FOR A PLACE ON THE ACCESS FOUNDATION DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES.

Course Content

The course content consists of two supporting elements: core subjects and academic options. Core subjects include Academic Study Skills, Academic Writing, Academic Technology, and Engage- Skills for College and Career.

Academic Options: provide students with introductory university courses as a prelude to continuing their studies to a higher level within the colleges at University of Galway. Students generally study four options (two per semester) from the following subjects:

- College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies: Philosophy, Sociology, History, English, Mathematics, Geography
- *College of Science: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology
- *College of Engineering & Informatics: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology
- College of Business, Public Policy and Law: Economics/ Mathematics

*Depending on demand

Assessment

The requirement for successful completion of the Access Course involve 85% attendance and performance in all elements of the programme, which include semester examinations, written / oral assignments and essays.

Award

Participants who successfully complete the Access Course will receive a Diploma in Foundation Studies from University of Galway and will be eligible to apply for direct entry (via the CAO) to full-time undenominated University degree courses in the College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies; College of Science; College of Engineering & Informatics; College of Business, Public Policy and Law and the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences.

Application to denominated degrees are not guaranteed and are ranked according to grades and possibly other criteria.

Find out more:

www.universityofgalway.ie/access

Joint Diploma in Foundation Studies Science, Technology and Engineering University of Galway

While this programme is part of the Access Foundation Diploma Programme listings, it differs in that it is a fee-paying course jointly run with ATU and aimed at all Mature Students (22 and over) either employed or unemployed to prepare them academically for university degrees at either University of Galway or ATU.

The course is taught at University of Galway with laboratories held in ATU. The course is aimed at those interested in applying for entry to part-time or full-time Science, Engineering and I.T. degrees at either ATU or University of Galway and who need the academic subjects to meet the entry criteria. An aptitude for math's is required.

The course begins in September, on Tuesdays and Thursday evenings 7.00 pm to 10.00 pm and approximately two Saturdays a month from 10am to 5pm. The duration of the course is 26 weeks.

The course includes Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Academic Technology Skills for College and Career, Academic Study Skills and Academic Writing.

Course Fee

The fee is 380 euros for those in employment and 60 euros for those in receipt of Social Welfare.

How to Apply

Applications to Diploma in Foundation Studies Science, Technology and Engineering are completed online from April. No interviews apply.

Find out more:

www.universityofgalway.ie/access

Joint Diploma in Foundation Studies Business, Law & Arts Programme

University of Galway

While this programme is part of the Access Foundation Diploma Programme listings, it differs in that it is a fee-paying course jointly run jointly with ATU and aimed at all Mature Students (22 and over) either employed or unemployed to prepare them academically for university degrees at either University of Galway or ATU.

The course takes place on-campus in University of Galway. This intensive part-time course is for mature applicants aged 22 or over interested in applying for entry to full-time or part-time business, arts and Law courses at either ATU or University of Galway. An aptitude for maths is required.

The programme is run on the University of Galway campus on Tuesday and Thursday evenings 7 pm to 10.00 pm and approximately two Saturdays a month from 10am to 5pm.

The duration of the course is 26 weeks. The course includes Accountancy, Economics, Mathematics, Business Skills, Academic Technology, Skills for College and Career, Academic Study Skills and Academic Writing.

Course Fee

The fee is 380 euros for those in employment and 60 euros for those in receipt of Social Welfare.

How to Apply

Applications to Diploma in Foundation Studies Business, Law & Arts are completed online from April. No interviews apply.

Find out more:

www.universityofgalway.ie/mature/part-time

Caroline O'Toole

"I'm currently going into 3rd year in Biomedical Science. I started university through the Mature Students Access course in 2019 where I undertook the science programme. I have met a lot of interesting people and made lifelong friends. I found the tutors to be very helpful, approachable and always willing to help. Their commitment, enthusiasm and dedication is remarkable and enables students like myself to achieve their dream. It's never too late to pursue your education dreams. Anyone can do this."



How do I Apply for an Access Programme?

Applications to the Access Foundation Diploma Programmes are online and open in April. It would be wise to check the website regularly for updates and to start gathering required documentation to have your application submitted on time. Late applications cannot be facilitated. Application instructions and deadlines are available on the Access Centre website.

1. References

You will need two referees. A referee cannot be a family member. Preferably, your referee would be someone who knows you in an educational or work capacity, e.g. a past principal, teacher, tutor, employer, or manager. They should be able to comment knowledgeably and honestly on your academic ability. Please read through the application guidelines on the access website for more information on references.

2. Documentation

The Access Office requires a copy of your P21 (now called the Statement of Liability) for the previous calendar (tax) year as part of your application. You can request your P21 from your local Revenue Office.

If you, your spouse, or your parent(s)/ guardian(s) are self-employed, Revenue will issue a Notice of Assessment once they have received your/your spouse's/ your parent(s)/guardian(s)' tax return. This document confirms your tax position for the relevant calendar (tax) year. More information is available from Revenue.

3. Personal Statement

Find out more:

www.universityofgalway.ie/access



What Our Access Centre Students Say



The benefits of completing the Access course for me have been invaluable. I have received an amazing foundation from which I learned important skills to start an academic journey as an undergrad. I have learned how to study and write academically, to use technology and different programmes in accessing education due to the pandemic. I also benefited from the ongoing supports of the access office which assisted me, as a student to do my best. I was able to study and learn the material provided and I was able to advance my knowledge in subjects and areas that will help me in my chosen college course in the upcoming year.

Saoirse O'Connor

Access School-Leaver, Nursing

Your Support Network

Disability Support Service

Support for students with a disability, ongoing physical or mental health condition, or specific learning difficulty.

Students with a disability, ongoing health condition (physical or mental), or a specific learning difficulty, are encouraged to register with University of Galway's Disability Support Service (DSS). Approximately one in twenty students at University of Galway is registered with the DSS. You can find out more about this service and how to register at www.universityofgalway.ie/disability/.

Most of the students who register with the DSS present with one or more of the following:

- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Attention deficit disorder (ADD)/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Blind/vision impaired
- Deaf/hard of hearing
- Neurological condition, including epilepsy and brain injury
- Speech and language communication disorder
- Physical disability, including mobility issues
- Developmental coordination disorder (DCD) - Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia
- Mental health condition
- Significant ongoing illness
- Specific learning difficulty (SLD), including dyslexia or dyscalculia

Register for disability support

To register for support, you will need to complete our online registration form at www.universityofgalway.ie/disability and provide evidence of your disability, ongoing health condition, or specific learning difficulty. Once the form is submitted students will be contacted to arrange a needs assessment appointment with a Disability Advisor.

Supports and reasonable accommodations will be determined through an individual needs assessment; taking into account the nature and impact of your disability, evidence of disability, and course requirements.

For more information please visit

www.universityofgalway.ie/disability
E: disabilityservice@universityofgalway.ie
T: +353 91 492813
or visit the Access Centre,
Ground Floor Áras Uí Chathail.

Academic Supports Available

In addition to the core subjects studied on an Access Course, University of Galway runs a number of practical skills workshops throughout the academic year ranging from academic writing, research skills, and practical study skills to revision techniques and exam preparation. These are open to all students.

The SUMS Centre provides mathematical supports for all students.

The Academic Writing Centre provides practical supports with writing essays guidance on how to improve your approach to assignment writing tasks. They have a specific arrangement with Access Centre to support our Access students.

For other student supports such as Chaplaincy, Counselling, Creche and others please see www.universityofgalway.ie/student-services

Laptop Loan Scheme

Access students, full-time and part-time, are eligible to apply to receive a laptop on long-term loan (for the duration of their studies with University of Galway), in order to assist with online learning, providing eligibility criteria has been met.

If you are in need of a laptop and you meet the eligibility criteria and can provide the accepted supporting financial documents, you may apply for this scheme. The allocation of devices will be based on the target groups identified in the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education.

For full details of the scheme please see www.universityofgalway.ie/accesscentre/laptoploanscheme



Financial Support

Financial Assistance Fund

Some students may find themselves experiencing financial difficulties despite being careful with money during their time at university. All full-time students who attend a course of at least one year's duration leading to an undergraduate qualification are eligible to apply for the Financial Aid Fund. Applicants are means tested (taking financial situation and family circumstances into account). The application forms are usually available online from late September/early October.

For more information, go to www.universityofgalway.ie/student_services/financialaidfund.html

Scholarships and bursaries can be applied for on successful completion of the Access Programme.

1916 Bursary Fund

The 1916 Bursary is a financial award to encourage the participation and success of students from sections of society that are significantly under-represented in higher education.

The 1916 Bursary is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) and aims to encourage participation and success by students who are most socio-economically disadvantaged and from groups most under-represented in higher education.

To be eligible for a 1916 Bursary, all applicants must meet, Financial, Priority Group and College Entry eligibility criteria.

Full details available at www.universityofgalway.ie/accesscentre/scholarships/1916bursary-fund

The University of Sanctuary Scholarship

The University of Sanctuary Initiative at University of Galway aims to increase public awareness of International Protection and Traveller-specific topics across campus, in order to address the low levels of participation of International Protection Applicants, refugees, vulnerable immigrant groups, and Irish Travellers in third level education. These groups are too frequently excluded from education due to inequitable societal barriers, and we feel that through our actions we can make University of Galway a much more inclusive and equitable campus.

Full details available at www.universityofgalway.ie/sanctuary or email uni.sanctuary@universityofgalway.ie

Mature Student Entrance Scholarship

The University awards a number of Entrance Scholarships annually to mature students based on grades. Full details available at this link: www.universityofgalway.ie/mature/scholarships/.

For full details of scholarships please visit www.universityofgalway.ie/accesscentre/scholarships/



Contacts

Access Programmes

University of Galway Access Centre
www.universityofgalway.ie/access
access@universityofgalway.ie

Disability Support Service

University of Galway Access Centre
www.universityofgalway.ie/disability
disabilityservice@universityofgalway.ie

Mature Students Office

University of Galway Access Centre
Áras Uí Chathail
www.universityofgalway.ie/mature
maturestudents@universityofgalway.ie

Traveller Education Officer

Access Centre Áras Uí Chathail
access@universityofgalway.ie

Main University of Galway Switchboard

T: +353 91 524 411
F: +353 91 494521
www.universityofgalway.ie
www.oegaillimh.ie

Student Registry Helpdesk (General Student Enquiries)

Áras Uí Chathail University of Galway
T: +353 91 495 999
<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/student-registry-helpdesk/>
askregistry@universityofgalway.ie

Admissions Office – Undergraduate (EU Applicants)

Áras Uí Chathail University of Galway
T: +353 91 492 401
T: +353 91 494 024
T: +353 91 493 878
www.universityofgalway.ie/admissions
admissions@universityofgalway.ie

Fees Office

Áras Uí Chathail University of Galway
T: +353 91 492 386
F: +353 91 495 553
fees@universityofgalway.ie

Accommodation and Welfare Office

Áras Uí Chathail University of Galway
Accommodation and Welfare Office
Áras Uí Chathail University of Galway
T: +353 91 492760/493540
accommodation@universityofgalway.ie

International Affairs Office – (Non-EU Applicants)

University of Galway
T: +353 91 495 277
www.universityofgalway.ie/international
international@universityofgalway.ie

Sports Scholarships

University of Galway
T: +353 91 493 475
www.universityofgalway.ie/sports
sports@universityofgalway.ie
For all other entrance scholarships, contact the Admissions Office at www.universityofgalway.ie/admissions/scholarships





Access Centre

Áras Uí Chathail University of Galway
www.universityofgalway.ie/accesscentre
The University of Galway Access Centre provides support for students participating on access programmes, students with disabilities and mature students.

Access Diploma *Programmes Guide*

2025

Connect with University of Galway
Access Centre

-  facebook.com/UniOfGalwayAccess
-  X.com/galwayaccess
-  linkedin.com/company/uni-of-galway-access-centre
-  instagram.com/uniofgalwayaccess/

Access Programmes

University of Galway Access Centre
www.universityofgalway.ie/access
access@universityofgalway.ie

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