

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Sometimes a full-time Bachelors or Masters degree isn't the right option for you right now. Cork is a UNESCO Learning City (<https://www.corklearningcity.ie/>) which means that there are always options to maximise your learning opportunities here, whether it's through a Level 5 or 6 QQI course, or just learning for interest and enjoyment through events, public libraries, or Ireland's many historical and cultural locations.

In UCC, Adult Continuing Education (ACE) courses are designed for lifelong learning. They have a range of levels from Certificate of Attendance to postgraduate programmes, and are usually offered in the evening or on weekends to suit people working.

In some cases, ACE can also offer fully-funded Sanctuary scholarships for their courses. Further information is available at their website: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ace/>



ENTRY REQUIREMENT EQUIVALENCIES

If you're applying using an Irish Leaving Cert, finding out whether you're likely to be eligible for the course can be easy. If you did your school leaving exams elsewhere, you're going to need to do a little more calculation.

Step 1) Look at the course page (both points and subject requirements). These usually reflect the Irish Leaving Cert (or in some cases, mature entry requirements).

Step 2) Map your own qualification results to the Irish results to assess your own eligibility. Many institutes will have guidance on this – for UCC, you can use the Qualifications Comparison webpages (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/comparison/>)

Step 3) If your first language isn't English, you will be required to provide acceptable evidence of your English ability. This is often done through your Leaving Cert (or other EU school leaving exams), but if not, you will need a recognised English language test. Those that are recognised by UCC are outlined at <https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryreqs/eunonirish/#english-language-requirements-for-non-irish-eu-applicants>, but please check directly with the different universities you are interested in attending.

Step 4) Determine whether you have any exemptions. For example, students who were born and educated outside of the Republic of Ireland will usually be automatically exempt from Irish. Students with a recognised/diagnosed learning difficulty may also be able to apply for exemptions from Irish/Third Language.

Postgraduate

Have you already completed your Bachelors degree, and want to apply for a Masters or PhD? UCC has a wide range of postgraduate programmes. (<http://www.ucc.ie/apply>)

There are different closing dates depending on the type of student and the programme, but we would generally advise students to apply as early as possible (applications open in November for the following year's intake).

You do need to consider funding for postgrad programmes; they don't always have the same funding opportunities for students as undergraduate programmes do.



Start from the beginning

Welcome to University College Cork. Although we would love for you to make us your first choice in your college journey, this booklet will hopefully help guide you through many different paths in higher education in Ireland as a refugee or asylum seeker. It contains information on different education options, how to figure out your fees and funding, where to find entry requirements and how to apply for an undergraduate course.



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College Road,
Cork, Ireland
[ucc.ie/en/study/
ask.ucc.ie](http://ucc.ie/en/study/ask.ucc.ie)



Design: www.kunnetandtierney.com



REFUGEES ASYLUM SEEKERS

GUIDE

GLOSSARY



What we mean when we say...

- **Central Applications Office (CAO)** – the applications engine for Undergraduate EU/Irish students. <http://www.cao.ie/>. CAO will offer discounts for applications made from mid-November to mid/late January
- **Postgraduate Applications** – the applications engine for Postgraduate EU/Irish students: <http://www.ucc.ie/apply>
- **Part-time** – Determined at university level. This is usually available on the course page. Courses like ACE and some postgraduates can be offered part-time. Not available to International (non-EU) applicants, and funding through SUSI is not available for part-time courses
- **Full-time** – Determined at university level. This is usually available on the course page. Generally, Undergraduate courses in UCC are full-time
- **PLC/QQI/FE** – Not offered at UCC. QQI level 5 and 6, often more vocational/job-oriented programmes. They can be used as an entry mechanism into UCC (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/fetac/>)
- **Undergraduate** – courses at Honours Bachelor Degree (Level 8), QQI/FE Level 5/6, Ordinary Bachelor Degree (Level 7). UCC only offer Level 8

- **Postgraduate** – Higher Diploma (Level 8), Masters and PG Dip (Level 9), and doctorate (Level 10). Usually more expensive and less funded by FFI*
- **Levels – NFQ** (<https://nfq.qqi.ie/>)
- **Points** – Leaving Certificate or equivalent, competitive entry to courses which vary each year depending on competition and the standard of applicants
- **Asylum seeker** – waiting for asylum application to be processed. Cannot avail of FFI* or EU fees, but may apply for Sanctuary scholarships (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/edi/universityofsanctuary/sanctuaryscholarships/>)
- **Refugee** – application has been processed and granted refugee status. Right to stay indefinitely
- **Mature** – A person who is over 23 years of age by 1st January in the year of entry (e.g. if applying for September 2021, need to be 23 by 1st January 2021)

*FFI – Free Fees Initiative

WHAT KIND OF COURSE DO YOU WANT TO DO?

Think about the kind of subjects you're interested in what goals you have for the course, what you've done before, and what time you can give to the course. There are a lot of options out there!

Part-time

If you're working full-time and can't take up a full-time course, investigate part-time programmes. These have less commitment but can take longer to complete. The amount of time you spend on campus can vary from course to course, so check out the timetables and make sure they fit your schedule. **Non-EU students and asylum seekers are not eligible for part-time study.**

Language Courses

If you're worried about your level of English, you might want to look at doing an "English for Speakers of Other Languages" course before you start your college journey. UCC's Language Centre (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/esol/>) has a range of programmes for different levels of English, from our adult Summer School to full-time, year-long preparation courses.

As university courses require students to have acceptable proof of their level of English, you should consider taking a course which prepares you for a test like IELTS/TOEFL.

FEES

One of the most important things you need to find out before university is whether you will be categorised as “EU” or “International (non-EU)”. This impacts your fees, what scholarships and grants you can apply for, and in UCC, how you apply for your course.

Asylum Seekers

In general, asylum seekers are International students, regardless of how long you’ve been in Ireland. This usually means the fees will be more expensive, so consider your choices carefully and check out the Sanctuary Scholarships below. You should apply for your course through the International Office at <https://ucc360.ucc.ie/>

Refugees

If you’re a refugee, you may be classed as an EU student, depending on how long you/your family have been in Ireland. You can find full information at https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/financeoffice/fees/CriteriaforDeterminingEU_Non-EUstatusofanApplicant.pdf

EU students apply for undergraduate courses through the CAO, whether they’re coming from Leaving Cert, through a QQI course, or as a mature student. Check out the Glossary for the link.

If you start as an asylum seeker, but are granted Official Refugee Status in the middle of your studies at UCC, contact the Fees Office as soon as you receive official confirmation of your refugee status. We may be able to amend your fees status to EU from the start of the following academic year.

Please note that these are general guidelines; you should always check with the universities that you’re interested in to confirm your status before applying.

Free Fees Initiative

Under the Free Fees Initiative, the Irish government pays tuition fees to the university on behalf of **eligible students** registered for full-time undergraduate programmes in UCC. Please follow the link below for details of the eligibility criteria. <https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/funding/student-finance/course-fees/>

Back to Education Allowance

The Department of Social Protection provides funding for second and third level education through the Back To Education Allowance (BTEA) scheme. Age restrictions may apply and courses must lead to a QQI qualification (for example, a Bachelors degree in UCC). <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/418e3f-back-to-education-allowance/>

You must secure a full-time course place before applying for BTEA, but you should check the requirements and process with your local Social Welfare Office in the first instance. To be eligible for 3rd level allowance, you need to be in receipt of qualifying social welfare payments for 9 months (234 days) before the application.

Social welfare payments received while in Direct Provision are not considered a qualifying payment.



ACCOMMODATION

Whether you live at home or away is a big decision when looking at third level education. You may want to consider the price, how far away you live from the college, living with other students, and how your choice will impact your study.

On-campus accommodation is very popular in all higher education institutions. UCC holds a lottery for places each year in February/March, so keep an eye on the accommodations pages for the universities you’re interested in and apply on time. Don’t panic if you don’t get a place; have a look at private accommodation such as house shares, digs, or apartment complexes. <https://www.ucc.ie/en/accommodation/>

If you live near to the university (we usually say within 45km), consider commuting from home if possible. Contribute to UCC’s Green Campus thinking by walking or cycling. <https://www.ucc.ie/en/build/commuting/>

Don’t forget that as a student, you can get a Student Leap Card for cheaper travel and student discounts. Registered students can purchase one of these from the Students’ Union office. <https://www.studentleapcard.ie/#about-3>

SCHOLARSHIPS AND FUNDING

There are several funding options to support students in achieving their third level education both in UCC and from public organisations. You can find all our scholarships at <https://www.ucc.ie/en/scholarships/>, and we’ve included information on a range of common options below.

Many students work part-time during their degree. You can use online job boards like MyStudentJob (same link) or visit shops/restaurants in the area to see if they are hiring.

Please remember to check any visa, immigration, or social welfare requirements to make sure that working is an option for you.

Sanctuary Scholarships

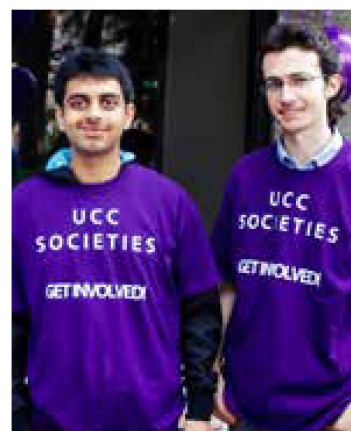
All 5 cities and many towns across Ireland are Places of Sanctuary, which aim to provide a positive, safe and welcoming experience for asylum seekers/refugees. Many universities now offer financial support to asylum seekers through yearly Sanctuary Scholarships. You’re not guaranteed a place, so you should consider making your application early.

Irish Refugee Council Education Fund

The Irish Refugee Council provides support where possible to students taking level 5 or 6 courses, such as the Leaving Cert or a Post-Leaving Cert course. They do try to assist with two undergraduate courses (such as an Ordinary or Honours Bachelor degree) each year, so check out their website (<https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/listing/category/education>) and contact their Education Officer for further details.

Socialising

One of the best things about university is meeting new people and getting involved in new activities. UCC has a huge range of societies – why not get in touch with one like Fáilte Refugees (failterefugees@uccsocieties.ie)?



If you’re coming to UCC and choose to drive, we need to let you know that there is no student parking on campus. However, we do have Park & Ride facilities in Pouladuff and Dennehy’s Cross which are open free of charge to all students. Consider organising a car pool with other students to keep your carbon footprint low!



UCC’s Sanctuary Scholarships are run by the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Unit. Applicants must:

- (1)** Be an asylum seeker or a refugee who is not eligible for the state Free Fees scheme, SUSI grants and/or the state pilot support scheme (documentation of status will be required)
- (2)** Meet the eligibility criteria for their chosen UCC degree course through the CAO application process (including the Mature Student Entry route, which closes for applications on February 1st)
- (3)** Be living in the Republic of Ireland, and
- (4)** Be able to live in commuting distance to Cork during their studies

- The scheme is targeted at people who have not had the opportunity to study at (or complete) undergraduate education**
- The scheme does not include accommodation support. For queries please contact ediunit@ucc.ie**

SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland)

SUSI provides tuition fee and maintenance assistance to Irish, EU, and refugee students at third level with low levels of income. You will normally have to meet EU/FFI Fees status (see above) to be eligible to apply.

The course must be a full-time, approved course (all Bachelors degrees at UCC are SUSI-approved courses), and the levels of help are different depending on the type of course and how much you/your parents earn. Visit the SUSI website for full details, and check out their eligibility reckoner (<https://susi.ie/>)

Student Support Scheme

If you’re still in the asylum application process and can’t apply for SUSI for this reason, you may need to look at the Student Support Scheme (<https://www.education.ie/en/Learners/Services/PilotSupport-Scheme/>) instead. This provides financial assistance in a similar way to SUSI.

- You must have spent at least 3 years in secondary school in Ireland
- You must be at least 3 years in the asylum process
- You cannot be on a deportation order