National Learning Network
Think *Possible*

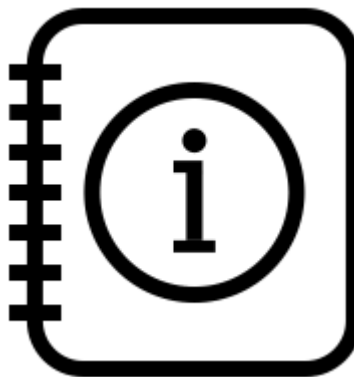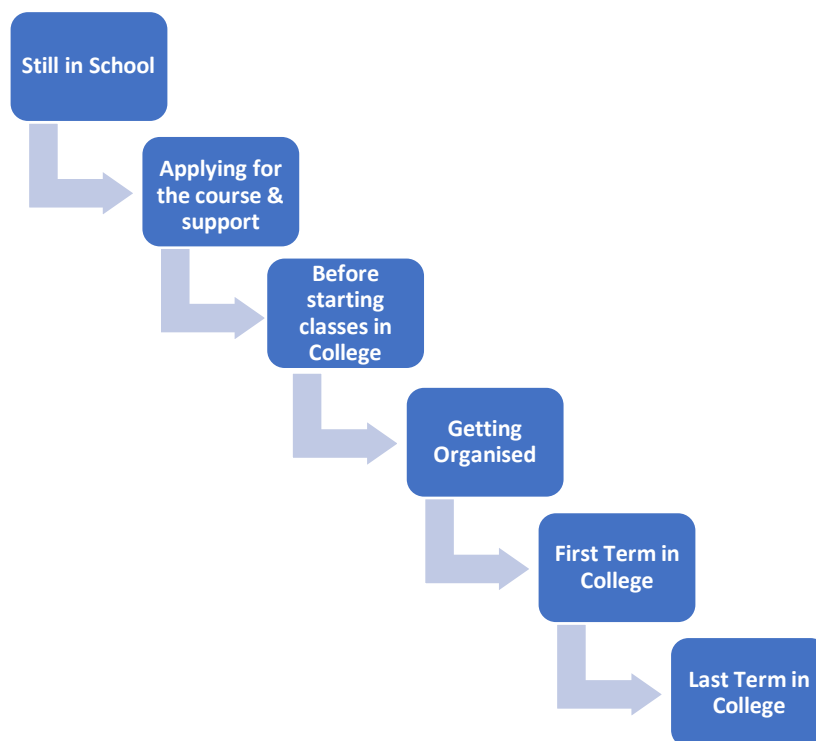# A Guide

for Students moving

from School to College

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Introduction

This Guide is designed to help prepare students and parents/guardians for the transition from secondary school to college. This information will also help students and parents/guardians navigate all the various stages of college life.

The information is set out in a timeline from when students are still in secondary school until the end of their first year in college. The checklists are prompts for students and parents/guardians to ensure they are on track during all the various stages.

- Still in School
- Applying for the course & support
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Still in School

Do plenty of research into the courses you are interested in.

The college website has information about each course: [Cathal Brugha FET College](#)

The website details course content, duration, and certification. Check beyond the course name and look at the modules (subjects) on the course. Try and explore if studying these modules will suit you: is it practical, does it require a lot of writing & reading, is it very *Mathsy* (numbers, formulas, etc.), do you need a foundation knowledge for this subject (studied in school), is the course level suitable, are you interested in this subject/module, etc.

The college offers Open Day information sessions. These can be in-person or virtual meetings. They are usually held from February onwards, please check the website for exact details. Staff members from the college courses are present at these information sessions to answer course-specific questions. The Student Support Office are represented at all these meetings and are available to speak to students and parents/guardians about the support available in the college.

Start gathering all your paperwork now so that you are prepared for college:

- ➢ If students declare a disability/learning support needs (difficulty) they will be asked to supply evidence. This is generally a letter/report by an appropriately qualified professional diagnosing a disability/learning difficulty.

- ➢ Check at home that you have copies of evidence of disability/learning difficulty & exam accommodations letters.

- ➢ Before you leave school request copies of any documentation that you do not have.

Checklist:
- ✓ *Do plenty of research.*
- ✓ *Read the course information on the college website – what I will study (modules)*
- ✓ *Talk to your School Guidance about the suitability of the course for you*
- ✓ *Check the college website for details about the Open Days*
- ✓ *Attend the Open Day information session with your questions prepared*
- ✓ *Check that you know where all your paperwork is*
- ✓ *Check - do I need copies of any documentation from my school?*

Applying for the course and support

➤ Applications to courses are made via our website using the **Apply Now** button found in the top right-hand corner of the website.

➤ When a student applies for a course at Cathal Brugha College they do so using our MIT system. This system will generate an MIT account for the student. To progress their application a username and password is sent to the student's email account automatically from our MIT system.

➤ This MIT account will be used at stages of their application and throughout the college term. e.g., to pay fees, to upload Leaving Results, to correspond with student

➤ There is a section on the MIT application form to declare a disability or learning support need. If a student has a high support need (physical disability or serious medical condition requiring support staff or transport), please apply early, giving as much information as possible on the application form.

➤ Students will be requested to meet with the SSO, at this meeting we will discuss the students' support needs. A Recommendations for Educational Support (RES) document will be written up by the SSO and agreed with the student. This RES document will be shared with the course team with advice on the students' difficulty and recommendations on how best to support this student.

Checklist:

✓ *Has the student applied for the course?*
✓ *Has the student kept a secure record of their MIT username and password?*
✓ *Has the student declared their disability/learning difficulty?*
✓ *Has the student an appointment to meet with the SSO*
   (Parents are welcome to attend the meeting if the student agrees)

Before starting classes in College

College visits for <u>some</u> students

Students with disabilities can request to visit the college before starting their course. These visits are extremely useful for students, course staff, and parents to discuss the student's support need in the classroom. Parents are welcome to attend also if the student agrees. Please contact the SSO directly to request a visit. Visits can be done during the summer or school term holidays if required.

Course Induction for <u>ALL</u> students

Course Induction. Before classes start, students will have course induction sessions.

These induction sessions are designed to explain how the course will run and introduce students to the course, their classmates, the building, and staff. Students will get a timetable and explanation of the modules.

Getting Organized

Formal classes will usually start mid-to-late September.

The first class will explain the format of the module, assignment schedule and equipment list (if any) and health and safety points. **It is important to attend all classes, especially at the start of the course**

Things to Consider

This is a full-time course and there is an expectation that you will **attend all classes** and **allocate time for study and assignment writing**. Students who have a lot of other commitments may struggle to complete their coursework.

Checklist:
- ✓ *Does the student want to request a campus tour before classes start?*
- ✓ *When is the course induction: day & time*
- ✓ *It is important for students to attend course induction*
- ✓ *What is the start date for the first class?*
- ✓ *Put the timetable on display in the house.*
- ✓ *Can the student commit to the demands of a full-time course & study schedule?*

First Term in College

Assessment Methods:

Each course is unique in its timetable, modules, and assignments. This will be explained in the first weeks of the course. Each module has different assessment methods which may be:

➢ Lab Reports
➢ Learner Records
➢ Skill Demonstrations
➢ Written Assignments
➢ Presentations: group or individual
➢ Projects
➢ Portfolios
➢ Completed practical component
➢ Written exams

Students should be aware of their submission dates and take **personal responsibility** for organizing themselves **to submit work on time.** Students can use the organizational chart to help stay on track with coursework throughout the year. This chart can be downloaded from the Student Support Home page.

Support – there are two main type of learning support in college:

- Assistant Psychologist Support: which is a holistic service that supports students' overall college journey. These sessions focus on promoting skills in the following areas: study, organizational, social and well-being. This service is available **to student with a diagnosed difficulty through the SSO.**

- Learning Support: which offer academic support; students generally use this service for help with all aspects of completing assignments and general learning. This is a drop in service available to **all students, there is no need to book or have a diagnosed difficulty.**

Checklist:

✓ *Has the student a good understanding of their assessment methods?*
✓ *Is the student using their organizational chart?*
✓ *Are assignments being completed and submitted on time?*
✓ *Does the student need help with organization or proofreading assignment work?*
  - *Can anyone at home help with this?*
✓ *Is the student attending all classes and availing of support sessions?*

Last Term in College

Assessments & Exams

Assessments: This is an important time of year; students really need to stay focused until the **very end** of the last term. Students need to keep on track with all their assessments and ensure they are submitting everything on time. Check the Organizational Chart to make sure you are not forgetting any course work for **all** the modules.

Exam: Does the student need exam accommodations? Did the student request these during the NA meetings and given the correct paperwork to the SSO? Students will receive emails from the SSO regarding exam accommodation usually 2/3 weeks prior to exams.

Next Year's Plan

It is important at this stage that students spend some time planning for next year.

➢ If the student is applying to the **CAO/DARE route**, make sure to check all the deadline dates for CAO and DARE. It is the responsibility of the student/parent/guardian to make these applications. The Guidance Office can offer some support in these circumstances.

➢ If the student is doing a **two-year course**, they need to successfully complete year one of their course to gain entry to year two.

➢ If the student is applying to **this college for another course**, then repeat the course application process that you did at the start of the year. Declare your disability/learning difficulty on your application.

➢ If the student is applying to **another College**, then the student should do as much research as possible, like the research done at the start of this course: Website, Open Days, College Prospectus, etc. The Student Support Officer can offer some support in these circumstances.

    Checklist
- ✓ *Is the student submitting all their assessments on time?*
- ✓ *Is the Organizational Chart up to date with <u>all</u> the modules?*
- ✓ *Has the student applied for exam accommodations?*
- ✓ *Has the students a plan for next year?*
- ✓ *Has the student applied for CAO or DARE – Check the deadline dates!*
- ✓ *Does the student need to make an appointment with the Guidance Office to discuss: courses, course requirements, using QQI qualifications as access route to college?*
- ✓ *If the student is applying for another college, when should they apply*
- ✓ *Does the student need to make an appointment with the Student Support Office (SSO) to discuss?*
- ✓ *next year's plan?*