

Candidate Brief for 2017/18

DT6522 Access Foundation Programme

Qualification awarded: Foundation Certificate in Higher Education (Access Foundation Programme).
Minor Award Level 6 – National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

Duration of programme: 1 academic year (September to May)

Location: DIT Mountjoy Square

Closing Date for Applications: 1st of May 2017

Frequently asked questions

| | | |
|-----|--|--------|
| 1. | What is the Access Foundation Programme? | Page 2 |
| 2. | What are the entry requirements? | Page 2 |
| 3. | What do I study on the Programme? | Page 3 |
| 4. | What happens after I complete the programme? | Page 4 |
| 5. | How many places are available? | Page 4 |
| 6. | Are there any fees for the programme? | Page 4 |
| 7. | What is the time commitment? | Page 5 |
| 8. | What expectations should students be aware of? | Page 5 |
| 9. | How do I apply? | Page 5 |
| 10. | What are the closing dates for applying? | Page 6 |
| 11. | Who should I contact for more information? | Page 7 |
| 12. | What our students say? | Page 7 |

1. What is the Access Foundation Programme?

The Access Foundation Programme is a preparation for higher education programme. The programme prepares students personally and academically to pursue undergraduate programmes across a range of disciplines in DIT, including Science & Health, Engineering & Built Environment, Business and Arts & Tourism.

The programme is designed to provide an entry route into DIT for (i) mature students and (ii) young adults who have experienced socio-economic and educational disadvantage.

Students who have successfully completed the programme are guaranteed an offer of one of their DIT CAO undergraduate course choices.

2. What are the entry requirements?

Mature Students (22 years of age or older on the 1st of January 2017)

There are no standard educational requirements, such as the Leaving Certificate or an aptitude test, but all applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be a mature student. Applicants who are 22 years of age or over on the 1st of January on the year of entry are considered mature students.
- Be able to demonstrate a desire to pursue third level programmes and a level of learning ability suitable to do so.
- Demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively in English at level suitable to commencing the programme.
- Candidates who already hold a higher education qualification (level 6 Higher Certificate award or above), with no evidence of deterioration in academic ability, are ineligible.
- Non-EEA candidates must be ordinarily resident in Ireland and hold a Visa / GNIB status permitting participation in full-time education.
- Be ordinarily resident within the EU/EEA/Swiss Confederation for 2 out of the last 4 years.

Young Adults (21 years of age or younger on the 1st of January 2017)

This programme offers opportunities to young adults who have experienced socio-economic disadvantage. To be considered eligible applicants must satisfy three of the following SED indicators.

1. Parents have not gone to college (higher education).
2. Applicant has attended a DEIS school for at least 2 years.
3. Family income thresholds for 2015 are below the following:

| | | |
|---|--|---------|
| Less than 4 | | €45,790 |
| 4-7 | | €50,325 |
| More than 8 | | €54,630 |
| Add €4,670 to the total income for every sibling/parent enrolled in a full time college, university or post leaving certificate further education course. | | |

4. Be from a socio economic group underrepresented in higher education.
5. Live in an area of urban or rural disadvantage.
6. Family received a means tested payment from the Department of Social Protection for at least 26 weeks in the tax year two years prior to the year of application. For example, applicants for 2017 must submit financial documentation for 2015.

Special consideration is given to applicants from the Traveller Community and applicants who are/were in the care of the state.

There are no standard educational requirements, such as the Leaving Certificate or an aptitude test, but all applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be able to demonstrate a desire to pursue third level programmes and a level of learning ability suitable to do so.
- Demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively in English at level suitable to commencing the programme.
- Candidates who already hold a higher education qualification (level 6 Higher Certificate award or above), with no evidence of deterioration in academic ability, are ineligible.
- Non-EEA candidates must be ordinarily resident in Ireland and hold a Visa / GNIB status permitting participation in full-time education.
- Be ordinarily resident within the EU/EEA/Swiss Confederation for 2 out of the last 4 years.

3. What do I study on the Programme?

Students study 8 modules each semester (6 core modules + 2 option modules). The core modules include Applied Writing, Maths, Study Skills and Research Skills, Information Technology, Communication Skills and Introduction to Higher Education. The programme offers 3 levels of maths modules. Students choose one of Fundamental Maths or Intermediate Maths or Advanced Maths.

Through the core modules students will learn how to research and write academic work, improve their communication, study skills and information technology skills.

Additionally students choose two modules designed to familiarise students in the academic disciplines

they are interested in pursuing. These are:

| Programme optional modules: students choose 2 each semester | |
|---|---|
| Semester 1 | Semester 2 |
| Introduction to Humanities | Approaches to Humanities |
| Introduction to Social Science | Applied Social Science |
| Introduction to Marketing | Introduction to Management |
| Introduction to Financial Accounting | Introduction to Economics |
| Computer Science Fundamentals (Networking Technologies) | Computer Science Fundamentals 2 (Programming) |
| Engineering (Electronic and Electrical) | Cultural Tourism |
| Introduction to Chemistry | Applied Chemistry |
| Fundamental Physics | Applied Physics |
| Human Biology | Cell Biology and Genetics |
| Art Portfolio Preparation (year long) | Art Portfolio Preparation (year long) |
| | Mechanical Engineering |

4. What happens after I complete the programme?

Students who successfully completed the programme are guaranteed an offer of one of their DIT CAO undergraduate course choices. Students receive career guidance and CAO advice throughout the programme to help them make informed decisions. Offers of undergraduate places are made to students by an Admissions Board chaired by the DIT Head of Admissions and Enrollment Planning. The Admissions Board makes decisions based on students academic performance on the programme.

Students may also apply as a mature student to other colleges after completing the programme.

5. How many places are available?

There are 150 places available. 15% of places are ordinarily reserved for young adult applicants.

6. Are there any fees for the programme?

The programme is free of charge. However students on the course are not eligible to apply for a Further Education / Higher Education grant. Students may be eligible for the Back to Education Allowance (see <http://www.welfare.ie> for more information).

7. What is the time commitment?

The programme is full-time with approximately 22 hours of class time per week and a further 20 hours of independent study. The programme runs from September to May each year. Classes take place between the hours of 9am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

8. What expectations should students be aware of?

This programme requires a high degree of participation. Regular attendance at lectures, tutorials and student support sessions is expected. Showing up to classes prepared and participating in in-class discussion and debate are an important part of being successful on the programme.

Time Management: students will develop their time management and planning skills in the Study Skills module. Students are expected to manage their workload across all modules and to meet assessment deadlines as they arise. Students are provided with an Assessment Schedule, detailing the dates of all assessment, at the beginning of each semester.

Students are assessed through a variety of methods including essays and reports, online multiple choice assessments, in-class presentations and assessments, formal exams and group work activities. Much of this work is done outside of class and requires an ability to work independently.

Where appropriate students are expected engage with programme and college supports including one-to-one and group support meetings with the programme coordinator.

Stay connected: students should regularly check their email and Webcourses. We will help set you up and get you started using DIT email and other online resources in the Information Technology module.

Students are required to pass all modules they take to successfully complete the programme.

We work to promote a positive teaching and learning environment based on respect for the individual learner and the diversity of the student body. Students are expected to respect their fellow peers and college staff.

9. How do I apply?

Applications are made directly to DIT by way of a paper application form. You do not apply through the CAO.

There are separate application forms for Mature students and young adults. Make sure you complete the correct form.

The application form requires the following:

- a. A personal statement outlining your motivation for going to college and the reasons for choosing the Access Foundation Programme.
- b. A hand-written essay. Essay titles are listed on the application form
- c. A copy of your qualifications
- d. Proof of identity and a copy of your GNIB card if you are an Non-EE / EEA citizen.

Applications are made to the Admissions Office in DIT. Applicants are then assessed for eligibility and suitability. Applicants successful at this stage are called for interview. Offers are made to candidates based on the application form and interview.

You can find applications on DIT's website at:

<http://dit.ie/studyatdit/undergraduate/programmescourses/allcourses/accessfoundationprogrammedt6522.html>

Alternatively email bobby.maher@dit.ie .

10. What are the closing dates for applying?

The closing date for applications is the 1st of May 2017. Interviews are expected to take place in early June.

11. Who should I contact for more information?

You may contact the Programme Coordinator, Bobby Maher at:

Email: bobby.maher@dit.ie / access@dit.ie

Phone: 01-402 7611 / 087 2904609

Or the Admissions Office at:

Email: admissions@dit.ie

Phone: 01-402 3445

If you are interested in the programme we recommend that you join the programme mailing list. Information about programme events and the application process are communicated to the mailing list. To be added to the mailing list please contact Bobby Maher at bobby.maher@dit.ie

Watch a video about our students and programme at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPXzJO94M-c>

To download an application form click on the link below:

<http://dit.ie/studyatdit/undergraduate/programmescourses/allcourses/accessfoundationprogrammedt6522.html>

12. What our former students say

“It was one of the best experiences of my life. All the students were in “the same boat” so to speak, really nervous starting out, not knowing what was ahead or how we would cope. We became like one big family, helping and supporting each other” - Karen, 4th year of DT491 Environmental Health

“The programme removed that fear and anxiety of the unknown. By the time I started my first year in Clinical Measurement I had a pretty good idea of what lay ahead and how to deal with it. The programme is the most effective way of preparing someone for third level. Now that I am nearly a qualified clinical physiologist, the sky is the limit. I intend to go places so to speak” – Tendai, Graduated in DT229 Clinical Measurement Science in 2014/15.

“I cannot speak highly enough of the team at the Access Foundation Programme. The work and passion they put into our year was one which I know will remain with me for many years. My year on the programme was extremely rewarding – it’s as simple as that! You will find strengths inside you that you did not think you had” – Paul, Graduated in DT565 Chinese and International Business in 2014/15

“From the first day of attending the programme to the very last, one word captures that experience, it was the opening and the last word of my reflective journal, WOW! I can’t begin to explain completely the effect the Access Foundation Programme has had on me and the confidence it has instilled in me. I’ve never been happier in myself and with the significant difference it has made in my relationships with my wife and our children” – John, Graduated in DT571 Social Care 2014/15