



# PATHFINDERS

## Second-Level Schools Access Programme

### Information for Participants and Schools



This initiative is funded under the NDP Plan 2007-2013 and the E.U. in association with Kerry Access Network which comprises of:



## **Pathfinders Second-Level Schools Access Programme 2008-09**

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The Institute of Technology, Tralee (IT Tralee) is strongly committed to ensuring a significant increase in participation at third level of those whose socio-economic circumstances and/or educational experiences may prevent them from realising their full educational aspirations and potential.

### **Introduction:**

The Pathfinders Programme at IT Tralee offers 105 new places each year to students from nine participating schools in Co. Kerry. It targets fifth and sixth year secondary school students who have the potential to achieve at third-level and who would benefit from participation in an access programme. Participants are nominated by their respective schools in consultation with Study Support Groups and Home School Liaison Officers.

The Pathfinders Programme originated in 2001 in collaboration with Partnership Trá Lí and initially targeted second-level schools within the partnership area. In 2006, IT Tralee with the support of the Kerry Access Network revised and extended the programme to include all schools in Co. Kerry which are designated by the Department of Education and Science under the School Support Programme.

### **Aims and Objectives of the Pathfinders Programme:**

- To support fifth and sixth year secondary school students to achieve their potential.
- Support positive attitudes to education in the community as a whole and raise awareness about third level.
- To increase the number of students from affiliated schools who proceed to third-level education.
- To increase the number of students who have been traditionally under-represented at third level.
- To raise students' awareness and expectations regarding their own ability to progress to third-level.
- To profile the learning opportunities available at IT Tralee to assist students to make more informed school choices.
- To increase parental involvement in the educational careers of young people.
- To continue to establish links with community based organisations working to combat educational disadvantage.

### **Pathfinders Second Level School Partners are:**

County Kerry Schools designated by the Department of Education and Science under the School Support Programme and schools who have participated in the Pathfinders Programme in previous years – 9 schools. Each school designated under the DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) initiative is offered 15 places for eligible 5<sup>th</sup> years each year. The remaining schools are allocated 5 places for eligible 5<sup>th</sup> years each year.

### **Programme Activities - 5<sup>th</sup> Year**

- Attendance at the Institute for three consecutive Wednesdays. This includes three one-hour lectures, one day per week for three weeks on Engineering, Science, Business and Career Development – e.g.

10.00am	To	10.50am	Engineering Lecture
11.10am	To	12.00pm	Science Lab
12.00pm	To	1.00pm	Break with Lunch provided at 12.15pm
1.00pm	To	2.00pm	Business
2.00pm	To	3.00pm	Career Development

- School Liaison Visits by IT Tralee to promote the range of programmes and supports available at the Institute. School Liaison Visits are particularly recommended for 6<sup>th</sup> year students but where schools don't permit 6<sup>th</sup> year events, this visit may be arranged for 5<sup>th</sup> years.

## **Parents Information Evening**

The participants' parents are invited to an Information Evening which includes:

- Pathfinders Programme – Background and Aims
- CAO Points
- CAO application process
- Direct entry route explained
- Courses available
- Costs associated with third-level
- Student Maintenance Grant
- Other Financial Supports
- Demands of third-level study
- Student Support Services on Campus
- One to one access for parents who have any queries

## **Programme Activities -6th Year**

### **Planning for Progression Workshop**

10.00am to 2.00pm – school day (Lunch included)

- Grant/CAO information
- Applying for the Direct Entry route
- Study skills
- Learning diagnostics
- Career Guidance and Interview Skills

### **School Liaison Visits and Open Day**

- Schools Liaison Officer to make presentations on study options at IT Tralee to all sixth years
- Pathfinder students must attend open day at IT Tralee as part of the Pathfinder Programme – **Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> November**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Entry to the Institute of Technology, Tralee via the Pathfinders programme</b></p>
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I.T. Tralee reserves a minimum of 5% of places on all programmes with the exception of the nursing programmes i.e. the Bsc Hons in General Nursing and the Bsc Hons in Mental Health Nursing. Applicants have to meet the cut off points set down by CAO for these programmes.

The General entry requirements to the Institute of Technology Tralee are as follows:

1. Apply to CAO (as a Leaving Certificate and Category D applicant) and the Admissions Office IT Tralee (**Application form attached**) before 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010
2. Complete and return Curriculum Vitae with the ITT application form
3. Attend and successfully complete an interview with the ITT.

The Detailed entry requirements are as follows:

Applicants must meet the minimum entry requirements for all other programmes. These are as follows:

**Higher Certificate:**

Applicants must achieve a pass in the Leaving Certificate or equivalent examinations and must obtain the following results:

A minimum grade OD3 in English or Gaeilge; OD3 in Mathematics or a minimum grade of B2 in Foundation Level Mathematics; OD3 in three other subjects.

Please note: Foundation Level Mathematics does not meet the minimum entry requirements for the following programmes:

- All Higher Certificate Programmes offered in the School of Engineering & Construction Studies
- Higher Certificate in Business (Advanced Business)

## Honours Degree:

Applicants must achieve a pass in the Leaving Certificate or equivalent examinations obtaining:

Two HC3s and four OD3s. Candidates are required to obtain a minimum of OD3 in English or Gaeilge and Mathematics.

Please note: that a minimum grade of B2 in Foundation Level Mathematics fulfils the minimum entry requirements in Mathematics for the following programmes:

- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Performing Arts (Folk Theatre)
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Performing Arts
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Care and Education
- Bachelor of Business (Honours)

In addition, applicants must also successfully complete and pass an interview which will be held in the Institute. Dates have yet to be confirmed for these interviews but they are due to take place in spring 2010.

*It is essential that applicants have done preparatory work for the interview. They will need to be aware of the duration of the course, have a general idea of the subjects being offered, the progression opportunities and the career opportunities. The interview board will consist of either 2 or 3 people from the Institute and the interview itself will not be difficult, if the candidate is familiar with the course. In order to familiarize themselves with the details, applicants should read and understand the relevant details of the course in the Institute prospectus.*

In addition, students must also prepare a Curriculum Vita which must be forwarded to the Institute in advance of the interview.

**Students whose attendance on the Pathfinders Programme drops below 75% may not be eligible to be considered for the Pathfinders Direct Entry Route to IT Tralee. Attendance requirements may be negotiated, for example, in the case of Travellers and Migrant Students who would have been nominated to participate but joined their respective school after the programme commenced.**

### **CAO Applications**

Pathfinder candidates who are applying through the CAO must apply under ***Category D: Further Education*** when completing their CAO application form.

### **Student Support Programme**

Pathfinders registering at the Institute of Technology, Tralee for a full-time programme of study at third-level are eligible to receive a number of supports. These may include:

- Transition support - from time of entry
- Orientation programme for first year students
- Access to financial bursary and book allowance
- On-going personal support and guidance from Student Support Services
- Careers advice/opportunities
- Social activities
- Academic support where required

**For further information on the Pathfinders Programme please contact:**

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