

TRINITY COLLEGE, THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN

MATURE STUDENT GUIDE



www.tcd.ie



PEER SUPPORT NETWORK

Web: www.tcd.ie/student/peer_support
Email: peer@tcd.ie
Phone: (01) 896 2438

SENIOR TUTOR'S OFFICE

Web: www.tcd.ie/Senior_Tutor/index.php
Email: stosec@tcd.ie
Phone: (01) 896 2551

STUDENTS' UNION

Web: www.tcdsu.tcdlife.ie/
Education Officer
Email: education@tcdsu.org
Phone: (01) 646 8439

TCD DISABILITY SERVICE

Web: www.tcd.ie/disability/
Phone: (01) 896 3111
By Text/SMS (for Deaf Students): 086 344 2322
Email: disab@tcd.ie

TRINITY ACCESS PROGRAMME:

FOUNDATION COURSE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION MATURE STUDENTS

Web: www.tcd.ie/Trinity_Access/courses/mature_students.php
Email: iboydell@tcd.ie
Phone: (01) 896 2754

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WELCOME FROM THE DEAN OF STUDENTS

Dear mature student,

On behalf of Trinity College Dublin and on my own behalf, I would like to welcome you to our College community.

Trinity College places great value in having a diverse student population, evidenced by the fact that the third headline of College's Strategic Plan commits the university to improve access, inclusiveness and diversity. In particular, we place great store on encouraging mature students to become part of our community. Given their motivation and life experiences, mature students have much to contribute to College generally and to their fellow students in particular.

As Dean of Students, my role is to coordinate policy development related to student affairs in order to promote the student experience at Trinity in an integrated way. To that end, I hope to work closely with College's Mature Students Officer and the Mature Student Society in order to support mature students at Trinity and to ensure that they realise to the full their ambitions when joining our College community.

G.F. Whyte

Dean of Students



MATURE STUDENTS OFFICER

A full-time Mature Students Officer provides advice and support to both prospective and current mature students. From providing guidance and advice on the application process to supporting current students, the Mature Students Officer is there to assist.

To contact the Mature Students Officer phone (01) 896 1386 or email mature.student.officer@tcd.ie



TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

Trinity College Dublin is the only Irish university ranked in the top 100 world universities by *The Times Higher Education Supplement's* world rankings in 78th place and the only Irish university ranked in the top 25 European universities. With over 400 undergraduate programmes to choose from as well as opportunities for students to study outside their primary specialisation through the Broad Curriculum initiative, Trinity offers a unique educational experience across a range of disciplines.



Education at Trinity is distinctive in being student centred and research-led. The importance placed on research has ensured that undergraduate course are continuously revised.

The accessibility of a Trinity education to all students of ability is also important. Through such programmes as the Trinity Access Programme it coordinates initiatives to facilitate increased participation at third level for students who, for socio-economic reasons, have not yet realised their full educational potential.

The Trinity experience for students is enhanced by the exciting international mix of its student body where 14% of our students are from outside of Ireland. TCD students also have opportunities to study abroad in other leading European universities through Trinity's partnership agreements.

Founded in 1592 Trinity College is the oldest university in Ireland and one of the older universities of Western Europe. Famous alumni include writers such as Dean Swift and Samuel Beckett; scientist and mathematician, William Rowan Hamilton and Ernst Walton who won the Nobel Prize for his work on the atom.

On today's campus, state-of-the-art libraries, laboratories and IT facilities stand alongside historic buildings on a compact city-centre 47-acre campus. With 50 clubs and 100 student societies, the Trinity Experience extends beyond the curriculum to this rich tapestry of student clubs and societies that equip students for a life of civic participation.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is considered a mature student?

A mature student is a person over 23 years of age on the 1st January in the year of application. There is no upper age limit. To be considered as a mature student you must also be an EU applicant.

What is meant by an EU applicant?

An EU applicant is a person:

- a. who is ordinarily resident in the EU and who will have received full-time post primary education in the EU for three of the five years immediately preceding admission OR
- b. who is ordinarily resident in the EU and has worked full-time in the EU for three years of the five years immediately preceding admission OR
- c. who holds a passport from an EU State and has received full-time education in the EU for three of the five years immediately preceding admission OR
- d. who has been granted humanitarian leave to remain in the State and has been resident in the EU for three of the five years immediately preceding admission.

Please visit the admissions website for more information:
www.tcd.ie/Admissions

Do I need my Leaving Certificate to apply?

The Leaving Certificate is not a requirement for mature student entry to TCD. However, some courses, for example Engineering, request specific subject requirements (honours maths grade C or higher, or equivalent). Please consult the Mature Student Application Guidelines for more information. This is available at: www.tcd.ie/Admissions/admissions_info/mature.html

Can I study part time in TCD?

A wide range of extramural courses take place in TCD throughout the year. Information on these courses can be found on the Admissions Office website: www.tcd.ie/Admissions. Currently, there is only one degree programme available on a part-time basis in the evening (B.Sc. in Information Systems). All other honors degree programmes are four years full-time day courses. There is no option to study these courses in a part-time capacity.

How do I make an application as a mature student?

Mature students who wish to be considered for a place in TCD must submit **two** application forms: one to the Central Applications Office (www.cao.ie) and the other directly to TCD (www.tcd.ie/Admissions). Both applications must be submitted by the 1st February. Late applications will not be accepted. Please see www.tcd.ie/maturestudents for more details.

What are my chances of being offered a place?

There is great competition for places in TCD. Therefore not everyone who applies will be offered a place. It is important in your application to demonstrate that you have a keen interest in the course and, if possible, relevant work or study in the area. Applicants will be short listed on the basis of the information contained in the application form and, in most cases, will be called for an interview. In the interview you will be required to demonstrate your passion for and knowledge of the course. The interviews take place from March to May each year. Applicants will be notified of all decisions by the Admissions Office and if you are successful an offer will be made by the CAO.

How many mature students are there in TCD at present?

Approximately 10% of each course allocation is made up of mature students, but this varies from course to course.

How many hours a week will I spend in lectures?

This depends on the course you are undertaking. For example a course in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences may only have 12 contact hours per week while a course in the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science may have up to 26 hours. However, it is important to point out that although a degree may not be 9 am to 5 pm, five days per week, it is still classified as a full-time degree and should be treated as such. You will be required to study outside the contact hours and to keep up with reading and assignments. Therefore, consideration must be given as to whether or not working during term time will be possible.

Are there childcare facilities available in TCD?

Yes, TCD has a day nursery on campus. It caters for children from three months to four and a half years. There is considerable demand for places and you are advised to book early. For more information call the day nursery on (01) 896 1938 or (01) 896 2277.

Is there accommodation available on campus?

Yes, campus accommodation is available although due to the large volume of students it is limited. First year student accommodation is located in Trinity Hall, Rathmines. You are advised to contact the TCD Accommodation Office upon acceptance of your CAO offer. You can contact them on (01) 896 1177 or email residences@tcd.ie.

Will I have to pay fees?

The Government Free Fees Initiative means that tuition is free for all full-time, non-repeat students from Ireland and European Union countries who do not already hold a degree.

Students who are not eligible for inclusion in the Free Fees Initiative will be required to pay EU tuition fees. These are available at www.tcd.ie/Treasurers_office/fees1.htm

Are there any financial supports available?

The County Council or Local Authority Higher Education Grant is the primary grant available to mature students. It is means tested. You can only apply after you have been offered and accepted your CAO offer. Contact your local office for further information.

There may be other grants available locally. For further information please contact your local Citizens Information Office or visit www.citizensinformation.ie

Will I fit into the university and student life?

At Trinity College Dublin we provide services that enable students returning to study to settle into college life as quickly as possible. We run a Welcome Programme for incoming Junior Freshman (first year) students in September; provide a successful Peer Mentoring Programme and have an active Mature Student Society. These are just some of the supports you can rely on to make your transition to college a smooth one.

What other supports are available to me when I enter college?

All students entering TCD are allocated a tutor, a member of academic staff, to support them during the year. In addition TCD has a student counselling service, a careers office, a disability office, college chaplains and of course, a Mature Students Officer to look after your needs.



MATURE STUDENT RESOURCE CENTRE

The Mature Student Resource Centre is located in the former Allied Irish Banks Branch, at 2-4 Foster Place, Dublin 2. It is located in Room 0.15 on the ground floor, just off the Grand Banking Hall. This quiet, spacious room, with pc and internet access, can be booked by registered mature students for private or group study. Please see the mature student website for details on the booking process (www.tcd.ie/maturestudents/). The room is available from 8.30 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Friday. The Mature Students Officer is available for drop-in-sessions from 9.30 am to 11.30 am on Tuesdays and from 11am to 1.00 pm on Wednesdays, during term time. Mature students with any issues, queries, or just looking for a chat are invited to attend.

FAMILY SUPPORT

The importance of family support for mature students returning to full-time education cannot be underestimated. Attending college with the encouragement and support of your family will make the experience a more rewarding and harmonious one. Discuss your desire to attend third level education with family from the outset and include them in the decision making process. Studying full-time does place demands on family life but open discussion can help to diffuse pressures. We encourage family involvement throughout the academic year by inviting partners and children to a reception on the first day of our Welcome Programme and by hosting a "Family Day" during the year.



FINANCIAL/GRANT INFORMATION

Research into financial matters, grants and entitlements is an important part of the preparation for college. Before making a college application you should look into how you will support yourself financially throughout the academic year. As everyone's financial situation is different it is difficult to generalise about what you will or will not be eligible to apply for. Therefore the information below should be viewed as a guide to assist you through the research process.

FREE FEES INITIATIVE

The Department of Education and Science determines the criteria by which students are eligible for inclusion in the Free Fees initiative. At present, tuition fees will be paid in respect of EU nationals who have been ordinarily resident in an EU Member State for at least three of the five years preceding their entry to their third level course. The Department of Education and Science will not pay fees for someone completing a second undergraduate degree. There are a number of other conditions and you are advised to contact the Department of Education and Science directly for more information. Phone them on (01) 873 4700 or visit www.education.ie.

TUITION FEES AND TAX RELIEF

If you are not eligible for inclusion in the Free Fees Initiative you will be required to pay EU tuition fees. These are available from the Treasurer's Office www.tcd.ie/Treasurers_Office/Fees1.htm. Tax relief is currently available on third level tuition fees on approved courses in approved colleges. Please contact your local Revenue Office for further information or visit www.revenue.ie.

HIGHER EDUCATION GRANTS SCHEME

The Higher Education Grants Scheme is a means tested grant administered by the local authority for students studying approved third level courses in approved colleges. Please visit www.education.ie for a full list of these courses.

To be eligible for a grant under this scheme, you must also fulfill conditions regarding residence and nationality.

Application forms and rates for the maintenance grant are usually available by the end of June of the year you are applying for the grant.

For more information on higher education grant scheme please contact your local authority, in Dublin this is Dublin City Council. Phone (01) 672 2161 or visit www.dublincity.ie.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE FUND

This fund assists students who, having commenced their third-level course, experience financial hardship. Applications for funding should be made by the individual student to the Senior Tutor's Office in TCD. The Fund is administered on a confidential, discretionary basis. Please phone (01) 896 2551 or email stosec@tcd.ie for more information.

THE MILLENNIUM PARTNERSHIP FUND

The fund supports students from disadvantaged areas attending further or higher education courses. Area-based and Community Partnership Companies manage the fund locally. Students should apply to their local Partnership Company. Phone Pobal on (01) 240 0700 or visit www.pobal.ie for details of a Partnership close to you.

BACK TO EDUCATION ALLOWANCE

The Back to Education Allowance Scheme is aimed at assisting those who are unemployed, are lone parents or have a disability, to pursue approved second- or third-level education courses. Contact your local Social Welfare Office to establish your eligibility for this allowance. Alternatively you can phone the Department of Social and Family Affairs on (01) 874 8444 or visit www.welfare.ie.

MONEY ADVICE AND BUDGETING SERVICE

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) offer a free, confidential and independent service to those looking for advice on money matters and financial supports. Please phone (01) 812 9500 or visit www.mabs.ie for an information on an office close to you.

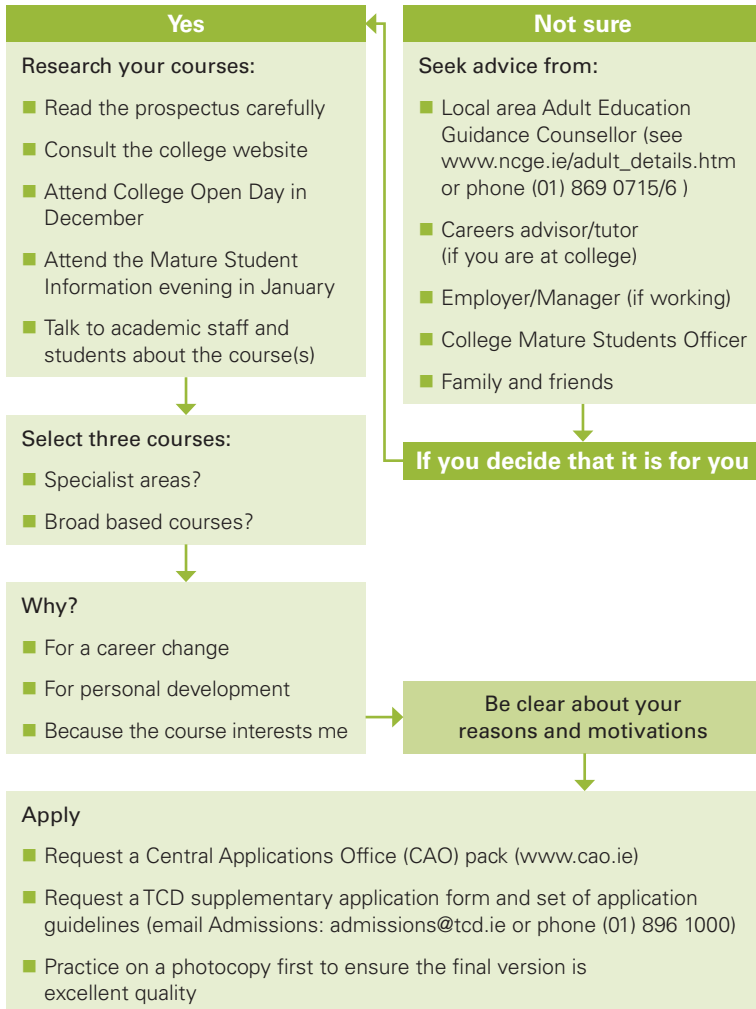
USEFUL WEBSITES:

www.citizensinformation.ie – provides a wealth of information on financial grants and scholarships for third-level students.



CHOOSING A COURSE/ MAKING AN APPLICATION

Trinity College Dublin – Is it definitely for you?



Apply before application deadline of 1st February

Late applications will not be accepted

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

1st February

Your application is received by the CAO and TCD (you are encouraged to submit your CAO and TCD supplementary application form prior to this date to facilitate the administration of your application. The CAO suggests the 15th December deadline for mature applicants)

February to March

TCD Supplementary Application Form – shortlisting of applicants takes place

March to May

Shortlisted applicants are called for interviews (where interviews take place). All psychology applicants will be called for an aptitude test

April to June

Offers made by TCD

July

Offers made by CAO

Consider the following practical issues

Get as much information as you can as early as you can

Finance

Childcare

Accommodation

Additional Needs

When you start in TCD the following are available to you

- Mature Students Officer
- Mature Student Welcome Programme
- Mature Student Resource Centre
- Student's Union
- Mature Student Society
- Counselling Service
- Personal Tutor
- Disability Service
- Peer Support Network
- Careers Office
- Chaplaincy Service
- Writing Resource Centre
- Maths Help Centre



DAVID CULVER – PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT

Walking through the main gate of Trinity College as a student for the first time was a strange experience for me, I found myself looking around at all the buildings wondering what went on in them and I almost felt dizzy as I tried to get my bearings. I certainly doubted whether I would be able to complete four years of study here but I resolved to get stuck in, ask questions and use the skills that I had acquired during my life to do my best.

I have to say that doing a degree in Trinity has been one of the most challenging things I have ever done in my life, looking back over the last three years though it has been one of the most satisfying. As well as having learned a lot about a subject that I love, I have also had to study other subjects such as statistics that I am less interested in, this is a part of many courses and I suggest that all students should be ready for it as it's often compulsory. I am not sure if being older makes this easier, but in my case at least it made it possible!

There are perhaps a number of things that have helped me get through the last three years; the most important of these has been the support of other mature students and the lecturers. Talking to other students about family, children and just general day to day challenges has been immeasurably beneficial, particularly in finding ways to meet those challenges. The support and advice of the lecturers in my department has also been extremely valuable. It was also a great relief to discover that they actually want you to pass the exams and they are often only too willing to give you time and advice to help you do so.

It has been a privilege to be part of the Mature Student's Society in particular and I would definitely urge those beginning their degree to get involved with the society (if only for the free lunches). Their support and encouragement has been invaluable in helping me to feel a part of the fabric of the college, when you feel a part of the place it's definitely easier to find help when you need it. On a final note, I am always saying to other mature students if you get behind with the work talk to someone, your tutor, the lecturer or anyone who you feel might be able to help you. That's what I have done and it's been the key to getting this far. I look forward to my final year with some excitement.

PAULINE MCMAHON – 2007 DIPLOMA IN ISL/ENGLISH INTERPRETING

I have really enjoyed my experience here at Centre for Deaf Studies. I learned a huge amount, not just about Irish Sign Language but also the Irish Deaf community. It's been a very rewarding experience that I'll be sure to recommend to anyone in a position to apply for it in the future. I have found it wonderful to be in a Deaf environment with total access to staff support. I have been involved in voluntary activities in the Deaf community and made friends and have decided Interpreting is the career future for me.

GERARD MCGRANAGHAN – ENGINEERING GRADUATE 2007

As a boy I was fascinated by cars, engines and all sorts of mechanical gadgetry. I loved finding out how things worked and got into trouble a few times for taking things apart. I knew I had to end up in some sort of engineering job or profession. I left school at 17 to take up a mechanical apprenticeship with the ESB. I subsequently worked as a volunteer in Nepal where I met several Engineers, and I admired the ingenuity and capability they exercised when carrying out their field work. At this stage I decided I wanted to be an engineer.

When I returned to Ireland I took a job as a Technician with Trinity College and began a course of study with the Open University. After 7 years of part time study I was accepted into year three of the Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering Degree course in Trinity College.

Third year was challenging but very enjoyable. Studying with the Open University had given me good study and time management skills. I found that my practical experience helped greatly and my classmates often asked me to explain things which they hadn't seen. Conversely, they helped me a lot when I had difficulty with maths or computing problems.

In Final year, we could select from a range of specialised modules. A project formed a major part of the course and I chose a “design and build project” which gave me a chance to use my practical skills and apply my new theoretical knowledge. I had to design a novel heat exchanging device, build it, and then test it in the laboratory to prove it would work. This was one of the most rewarding aspects of the course.

I had initially planned to enter industry on completion of the degree, however several lecturers suggested I consider further study, that my practical experience would be of great benefit in research. I realised that I always had an inquisitive side, and really enjoyed the blend of theory and practice throughout my final year project. Although I hadn't given it much previous thought, I began to think more about being a graduate student and that I would enjoy being involved in research. So I applied for postgraduate funding, got it, and I'm now beginning a PhD in a very new and exciting area of Thermodynamics.

Going back to full time education was a big decision, but was well worth it. I enjoyed the coursework, the College clubs and societies, and received great support from lecturers and fellow students. It brought me to a new point in terms of outlook and career, and I can certainly recommend it to others.



MAUREEN LOWNDES – SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY GRADUATE 2007

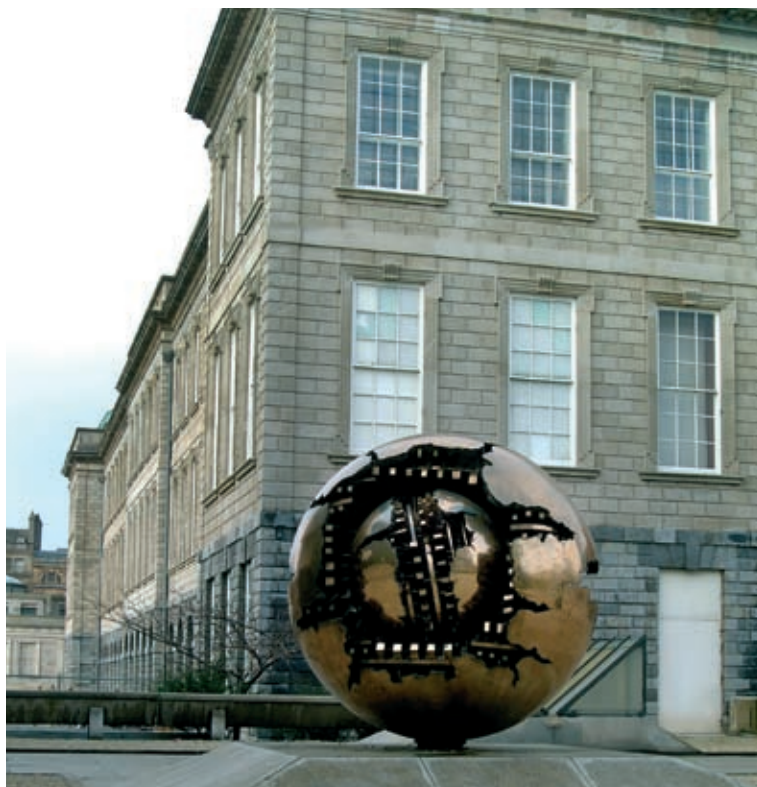
Education is a necessity for life, just like food, water and shelter. It often happens that when one becomes a mature student one's confidence is very low, especially if the student came from a disadvantaged background. The access programmes do marvellous work by bringing the disadvantaged into education. I was a TAP student and from TAP I went on to study sociology and social policy and I now have my degree.

When one becomes a mature student it is a huge life change. It also means spending a large chunk of one's time with young students. I got on very well with the young students and some of them are now good friends. It is important to be young at heart. Many older people condemn the youth but well educated young people are wonderful. Becoming a mature student in a large Institution like Trinity gives one a great opportunity to make friends young and older. It also gives one the opportunity to mix with people from other cultures thus broadening one's horizons. Many guest speakers come to Trinity; I enjoyed Bob Geldof and Cynthia Enloe Professor from Clark University amongst others.

It is important to travel and sometimes the mature student's society holds tours. I went to Prague with them once and I managed to travel a few other places as well.

From the beginning it is important to attend all classes and stick to deadlines with essays. I never asked for an extension on an essay because if you fall behind once you will fall behind again and again. When examination time comes you need to keep focused and not bother with a social life and it is worth the sacrifice when the results come out. It is important to avoid having to take supplemental examinations. Passing everything first time is a great boost to confidence and means one can enjoy summer instead of slogging at the books.

The day you find out that you have your degree is a great day. It means you have achieved what you set out to achieve. It means you now have the knowledge and can be open minded and see the big picture. It means you will have confidence. You will have learned great life skills in decision making and problem solving. So my advice is keep going be determined to pass all your exams and graduate. Four years may seem like a long time but it is not. The terms go so fast that from year to year the exams come up before you know it. Keep going, never give up, follow your dream and you will never regret it. I am so thankful to Trinity for giving me a great education and great skills.



INFORMATION EVENING/ OPEN DAY/MATURE STUDENT OFFICE INITIATIVES

OPEN DAY

The TCD Open Day runs in December each year. On that day the college is open to prospective students to explore the campus and courses on offer. Open Day is an excellent opportunity to talk to lecturers and students about course choices and the student experience. The Mature Students Officer will be available on the day and will make a presentation on the TCD mature student application process. Please visit www.tcd.ie/Admissions in early December for more information.

MATURE STUDENT INFORMATION EVENING

A Mature Student Information Evening takes place in the Exam Hall in January each year. On that evening there will be course information stands and student support services available in addition to staff and students to help with queries. The Mature Students Officer will give presentations throughout the evening on the application process. It is recommended that you attend this event. Details will be posted on www.tcd.ie/maturestudents/ in December.

MATURE STUDENT WELCOME PROGRAMME

The Mature Student Welcome Programme takes place in September each year. All successful mature applicants are invited to attend. The Welcome Programme aims to familiarise students with the TCD campus, the support services available in college while equipping them with the essential skills to succeed in their studies. Students undertake IT classes, study skills sessions and library and campus tours. The Mature Student Welcome Programme is a great way to get to meet other mature students and college staff prior to the start of term. During the programme students are invited to a Book of Kells tour and a welcome reception. This programme runs in conjunction with the college orientation programme which takes place in October.

FAMILY DAY FOR REGISTERED STUDENTS

TCD recognises the importance that family support makes to the third level experience for mature students. Therefore we offer registered students the opportunity to invite your family into TCD for a day. Workshops, lectures and tours will intrigue all ages and allow your family to experience TCD first hand. Information on the event will be posted on our website: www.tcd.ie/maturestudents/

TRINITY ACCESS PROGRAMME (TAP) FOUNDATION COURSE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: MATURE STUDENTS

This course prepares mature students for entry to undergraduate studies at Trinity College and other third level colleges. The course aims to increase the participation rates of mature students who because of socio-economic reasons are underrepresented at third level. This is a full-time course and there are no fees for participation. For further information please contact the course co-ordinator Irena Boydell on (01) 896 2754 or email iboydell@tcd.ie



CONTACT INFORMATION

AONTAS (NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ADULT EDUCATION)

Web: www.aontas.com
Email: mail@aontas.com
Phone: (01) 406 8220

CHAPLAINCY

Web: www.tcd.ie/Chaplaincy/
Email: chaplaincy@tcd.ie
Phone: (01) 896 1260

COUNSELLING SERVICE

Web: www.tcd.ie/Student_Counselling/
Email: student-counselling@tcd.ie
Phone: (01) 896 1407

MATURE STUDENTS OFFICER

Web: www.tcd.ie/maturestudents
Email: mature.student.officer@tcd.ie
Phone: (01) 896 1386

MATURE STUDENT SOCIETY

Web: <http://societies.csc.tcd.ie/~mature/>
Email: mature@csc.tcd.ie

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR GUIDANCE IN EDUCATION (ADULT EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE INITIATIVE)

Web: www.ncge.ie
Phone: (01) 869 0715/6

