Achieving full equality of access to higher education is a national priority, for people with disabilities, mature students who previously had not the opportunity to access higher education, those facing social and economic barriers, and minority groups, including the Traveller community.

To help make progress on this equality goal, your college gathers Equal Access information each year at registration on students' socio-economic background, disability and ethnicity and returns it to the Higher Education Authority.

With the information, the HEA is able to measure equality of access to higher education and allocate the resources needed to support students of all backgrounds and abilities.

The information gathered during registration is protected by robust data protection policies in your college and in the HEA, in full compliance with data protection legislation, and subject to audit by the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner.

Equal Access information is stored alongside other student data in the HEA (including nationality, age, course details) but no data includes names or addresses. Anonymised equal access data may be analysed by the HEA for the purposes of developing evidence based policy in the area of equity of access to higher education, including analysis of the student experience and graduate outcomes. Only summary data is published in this case and no individuals or small groups can be identified in this analysis.

All students are encouraged to respond to the Equal Access questions, however they are not mandatory and non-response will not prevent your registration at college or affect your eligibility for financial support.

Non-response may, however, have implications for the amount of State funding that is allocated to your college, and to the supports available to students who need them.

If you would like further information please contact: National Access Policy Office, HEA, Brooklawn House, Shelbourne Road, Dublin 4
E: access@hea.ie

The HEA promotes equality of access to higher education for people with disabilities, mature students who previously had not the opportunity to access higher education, those facing social and economic barriers and minority groups, including the Traveller community. The HEA also administers the Fund for Students with a Disability, the Student Assistance Fund and the Springboard Initiative.