



Cláir Rochtana Choláiste na Tríonóide
Trinity Access Programmes

Application Guidebook 2026

The Foundation Courses for Higher Education –
Young Adults

Trinity College Dublin and CDETБ Liberties College



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

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1. What are the Foundation Courses for Higher Education?

The Foundation Courses are an academic and personal preparation for students who may not otherwise have the opportunity to undertake degree course studies for socio-economic reasons.

There are two courses:

1. The Trinity Access Programmes Foundation Course for Higher Education
2. The Liberties College University Access Course (run in partnership with Trinity College, Dublin)

For more detailed information on the course content and structure, please refer to our website at:

www.tcd.ie/trinityaccess/alternative-entry-routes/young-adults/foundation-course/

2. Who should make an application for the Foundation Courses?

To be considered for these courses, you need to meet the following criteria:

- **Age:** You must be 21 years of age or under on 1st January 2026.
- **Fees:** You must be eligible for the Government Free Fees Scheme or EU fees.
If you are in any doubt about your eligibility for free fees please consult the Admissions Office website: <https://www.tcd.ie/academicregistry/fees-payments/free-fees> .
- **Academic Criteria:** Achieve a minimum of 5 Ordinary grade 6s/Higher 7s and at least one Higher grade 5 in the Leaving Certificate. Applicants must pass English and Mathematics. A pass means grade O6/H7 or above on ordinary or higher papers in the Leaving Certificate. A pass in foundation level Mathematics is acceptable for minimum entry requirements.
You may alternatively present results from the Leaving Certificate Applied (distinction required), or QQI-FET level 5.
It is important to note that preference is given to students with clear academic ability in academic subjects and to those who achieve more than one Higher grade 5.
You must have taken the Leaving Certificate in the year of application or not more than two years prior to application.
- **School:** You must attend a second level school in the Greater Dublin area which is linked to an access service and /or has DEIS status (this criteria only applies if you wish to be considered for the Foundation Course in Trinity College Dublin, not in Liberties).

- **Financial, social and cultural indicators:** Applicants must also meet a range of financial, social and cultural indicators to be considered for the courses. Here is a list of the indicators:
1. **Income:** Your family income falls on or below the Income Limit for the year 2024 (see below). All applicants must meet this requirement.
 2. **Medical Card / GP Visit Card:** Your family has a Medical/GP Visit card this was in date on 31 December 2025.
 3. **Means Tested Social Welfare:** Your family received a means-tested payment from the Department of Social Protection (formally Department of Social Welfare) for at least 26 weeks in 2024.
 4. **Area Profile:** You live in an area where there is a concentrated disadvantage – in other words in an area where, for example, there is high unemployment and poverty and where only a small proportion of adults have attained third level education.
To meet this indicator your address must be in an area classified as **disadvantaged**, **very disadvantaged** or **extremely disadvantaged**. You can check the status of your area on [Pobal Maps](#).
Applicants who experienced homelessness during their post-primary education and are registered on the Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS) will meet the Area Profile criteria.
 5. **DEIS School Attendance:** You completed five years in a secondary school that is part of the DEIS initiative run by the Department of Education and Skills or a school that is linked to TAP. If you don't know if your school is linked, ask your Guidance Counsellor or School Principal.
 6. **HEAR Priority Groups:** Applicants who wish to be considered under one or more of the following categories:
 - **Care-Experienced**
 - **Member of the Travelling Community**
 - **Member of the Roma Community**
 - **Young Parent**
 - **HEAR and DARE Eligible Applicant.**

You must meet **Indicator 1**, the Income Limit, plus a minimum score of 2.5 to be eligible. The combinations are:

Indicator	Score
INDICATOR 1: Income – all applicants must meet this income	0
INDICATOR 2: Medical card in date on 31st December 2025	Yes = 1
INDICATOR 3: Means-Tested Social Welfare Benefits	Yes = 2
INDICATOR 4: Area (Deprivation Index Score)	Extremely Disadvantaged = 2.5 Very Disadvantaged = 2.5 Experienced homelessness = 2.5 Disadvantaged = 1.5 Marginally Below Average or higher = 0
INDICATOR 5: DEIS School Status	Yes = 1.5
INDICATOR 6: HEAR Priority Groups	Applicants who wish to be considered under one or more of the following categories: • <i>Care-Experienced</i> • <i>Member of the Travelling Community</i> • <i>Member of the Roma Community</i> • <i>Young Parent</i> • <i>HEAR and DARE Eligible Applicant</i> Yes = 7

Indicator 1, the Income Limit, is calculated by:

- How many children are in your family
- How many people in your family are in full-time education
- How much your parent(s)/guardian(s) earned in income during the year ending 31 December 2024.

Use the table to estimate if your family's income is less than the Income Limit.

Number of dependent children* in your family	Income Limit
Less than 4	€ 46,790
4 – 7	€ 51,325
8 or more	€ 55,630
Add € 4,785 to the total income for every sibling/parent enrolled in a full-time college, university or post leaving certificate further education course.	

* A dependent includes:

- A sibling or foster child under the age of 16 years on 1st October 2025.
- A sibling over 16 years on 1st October 2025 who is either attending post primary education, attending a full-time course in FET or higher education, or is medically certified as permanently unfit for work.
- A parent who is attending a full-time course in FET or higher education.

One place is reserved on the TAP Foundation Course for Young Adults each year for an applicant from the Travelling or Roma Community who meets the course criteria and who scores 25 or over at interview.

One place is reserved on the TAP Foundation Course for Young Adults each year for an applicant who is in the care of the State/is a care leaver, who meets the course criteria and who scores 25 or over at interview.

3. How do I apply for the Foundation Course?

You **must apply online**. You can apply using the link below:

my.tcd.ie/urld/sits.urld/run/siw_ipp_lgn.login?process=siw_ipp_app&code1=DFCMF-HEYA-1F09&code2=0017

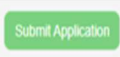
If you are unsure if you should apply or want to check if you are eligible for the course, please consult Question 1 and 2 above.

4. What are the closing dates for applying?

- The closing date for completing the application form online is **February 27th 2026**.
- Applicants have until **March 28th 2026** to submit their supporting documents online.
- Referees have until **March 28th 2026** to submit the online reference forms to TAP.

5. Do I have to complete my application all in one go?

No*. Once you have created a *my.tcd.ie* account and entered your personal details, you can save your application and return to it as often as you like until **February 27th 2026**. Applications must be submitted by **February 27th 2026**.

*Please note: To complete your application you must select  on the Declaration page of the application form after you have done this, you cannot amend the application form.

6. How do I create a *my.tcd.ie* account?

When you go to the website to make an application (as described in Question 1 above) you will be invited to create a *my.tcd.ie* account and instructed how to do so. You must create an account to be able to apply for the Foundation Course. You will need to provide the following to create a *my.tcd.ie* account:

- Your Name
- Your Date of Birth
- A functioning e-mail address (one which you use and can access regularly)
- A password (which you should keep private)

7. How long will it take me to complete the application?

The form itself should take **approximately 30 minutes** to complete. Please remember you also have to include the following which will take additional time:

- Write an Essay (no more than 700 words)
- Get 2 referees to complete the online reference form.
- Gather and include your supporting documents (see Question 10 if you are unsure of what documents you need)

8. What do I write the essay on?

The essay should outline why you want to do the Foundation Course and go to college. It cannot be more than 700 words.

Full details on what the essay should include are given in the **Personal Statement** Section of the application form. Please consult the application form for further details.

You can write your essay outside the form and save this separately. Once you are finished your essay, you can copy and paste this into the online form.

9. Who should I ask to be a referee?

You should get two suitable academic referees to complete the online reference forms (such as a teacher or principal).

Reference forms must be completed online. Please share the reference link with your referees:

[FCYA REFERENCE FORM 2026 - 27 Foundation Course for Higher Education - Young Adults – Fill out form](#)

10. How do I know what I need to include with my application?

All applicants must do the following:

1. Complete all relevant sections of the online application form (By February 27th 2026).
2. Complete the **Personal Statement** Section of the form (By February 27th 2026).
3. Ask two referees to complete the online reference form by March 28th 2026.

Online Reference Form: [FCYA REFERENCE FORM 2026 - 27 Foundation Course for Higher Education - Young Adults – Fill out form](#)

NB *Don't forget to submit your application.

Submit Application

For advice on uploading documents please see Question 16 below.

You may also need the following:

- **If you or your parent/guardian has a Medical/GP Visit card:**

If you / your parent(s)/guardian(s) have a HSE Medical Card/ GP Visit Card that is in date as of 31st December 2025 you must fill in the Medical Card/GP Visit Card Form. This is available for you to download in the **Additional Information** Section of the application form and on our website: www.tcd.ie/trinityaccess/alternative-entry-routes/young-adults/foundation-course/

You must complete Part 1 of the Medical/ GP Visit Card Form. Then ask your local HSE Office that issued your card to complete and stamp Part 2 of the same form.

The Medical Card/ GP Visit Card Form must be uploaded to your application by March 28th, 2026 (for advice on uploading, please see Question 17 below). It is your responsibility to ensure this form has been completed correctly by the HSE officials.

- **If your parent/guardian receives Social Welfare Payments:**

You will need to submit the Social Welfare Form. This is available for you to download in the **Additional Information** Section of the application form and on our website: www.tcd.ie/trinityaccess/alternative-entry-routes/young-adults/foundation-course/ .

Once you complete Part 1, your parents/guardians will need to bring or post the form to their Local DEASP /Intreo Centre and a representative from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DSP) must complete the rest of the Social Welfare Form. The completed Social Welfare Form must be uploaded to your application by March 28th 2026. Late or incomplete forms will not be accepted (for advice on uploading please see Question 16 below).

▪ **If you are eligible for EU Fees:**

If you are eligible for EU fees (see Question 2 above) you should upload the following documents to verify your fees status: a copy of your (EU) **passport** OR **national identity card** OR **the original letter** issued by the Department of Equality, Justice and Law Reform confirming your **EU or refugee status**.

▪ **If you are a member of a HEAR Priority Groups:**

If you who wish to be considered under one or more of the following categories please upload one or more of the following supporting documents:

- **Care-Experienced** – a letter from Tusla on Tusla headed stationery detailing the date you were taken into care. You can get the Tusla letter from your social worker or project worker. See www.tusla.ie or call 01-7718500
- **Member of the Travelling Community** – This is a reference letter for your school or community group to support your application to TAP.
- **Member of the Roma Community** – This is a reference letter for your school or community group to support your application to TAP.
- **Young Parent** – This is for a person who has become a young parent while in post-primary education and who is currently in receipt of child benefit payment for the year 2025. A young parent needs to fill out Part 1 and Part 2 of a Young Parent Request for Information Form. A Department of Social Protection Official must complete Part 3 of this form.
- **HEAR and DARE Eligible Applicant** – If you are deemed eligible for both HEAR and DARE, please upload your eligibility Letters from the CAO (these will be available in June 2026).

▪ **Applicants Who Experienced Homelessness**

This section is for applicants who have experienced homelessness or became homeless while in second-level education from January 1st, 2024, to March 1st, 2026. To meet this indicator, you or the parent/guardian that you live with must be registered on The Pathway Accommodation and Support System and you must provide a letter from PASS on PASS headed paper to verify this. PASS is an online homeless database used by all Local Authorities (LA) and homeless services in Ireland.

11. What financial documents do I need for my application?

Please see the table below to find out what financial documents are required.

TYPE OF INCOME	DOCUMENTS REQUIRED	HOW DO I GET THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS?
My parent/guardian was in paid employment in 2024 on a full, part time or temporary basis?	Statement of Liability for 2024 from Revenue Commissioners	www.revenue.ie
My parent/guardian was self-employed, engaged in farming, or receiving rent from rental properties in 2024.	Self Assessment – Chapter 4 for 2024 from Revenue Commissioners or Tax Exemption Letter	www.revenue.ie
My parent/guardian received social welfare payments in 2024, other than child benefit.	See Question 10 above	Department of Social Protection (DSP) Form or DSP Statement for 2024 Local DSP Intreo Office
My parent/guardian received lump sum payment(s) in 2024 from his/her former employer as a result of being made redundant.	All pages of Form RP50 Notification of Redundancy or Letter from Employer	www.revenue.ie
My parent/guardian retired in 2024	Retirement lump sum letter from employer and/or Statement of Liability for 2024 /Self Assessment – Chapter 4 for 2024 and/or DSP Form for 2024 signed and stamped.	Contact last employer or body administering pension www.revenue.ie DSP Intreo Office

PLEASE NOTE:

- Request financial documents early as it can take up to 8 weeks to issue documents.
- If your parents/guardians received income from more than one source, make sure you provide all relevant documents.
- All financial documents must be uploaded to your application **March 28th, 2026**.
- For advice on uploading documents please see Question 16 below.

12. Where do I get the forms I need to accompany my application?

The following forms should be downloaded directly from the online application form:

- Medical /GP Visit Card Form
- Social Welfare Form
- Young Parent Form

Financial Documents:

Your parents/guardians may not automatically receive a Statement of Liability for 2024. They may need to apply for this online or by contacting their local Revenue Office. Please check www.revenue.ie to find your local Revenue Office.

13. What if I have applied to HEAR, do I still need to include supporting documents with my application?

Applicants who are applying for HEAR and the Foundation Course should submit supporting documents (HEAR Social Welfare form, Statement of Liability for 2024 etc) directly to the CAO. In such circumstances, it is not necessary to upload the documents to your application form.

Please remember to tick that you have applied to HEAR in the **Education & Qualifications** section of the application form. You will also need to forward your HEAR eligibility email from HEAR/CAO to foundationcourse@tcd.ie as soon as you receive it.

Applicants who have applied to HEAR and who are **eligible for EU fees**, must upload documents to verify their fees status alongside the rest of their application for the Foundation Course (see question 10 above).

Please note that applicants for the Foundation Course/Liberties partnership course who also receive a HEAR offer at degree level in Trinity College Dublin, will not normally be considered for offers for the Foundation Course/Liberties partnership Course. Applicants who have received a HEAR offer for Trinity College who also wish to be considered for the Foundation Course/Liberties partnership Course, will have to outline in writing to the course coordinator their reasons for being considered for a place on the Foundation Course. Further details will be sent to all applicants in August.

14. What do I do with my supporting documents once they are completed?

Once you have all your documents fully completed, stamped and signed by the relevant office, you need to create an electronic copy of the document to upload to your application form.

15. How do I get electronic copies of my documents?

If you have a hard copy or print out of the document (such as Social Welfare Form or Medical Card/GP Visit Card Form or Letter from the HSE) you can create an electronic copy in some of the following ways:

- Scan the document and save the file. Scanners may be available to you in your school, at a local library or in a copy centre.
- Take an image of the document and save the file.

Revenue will provide documents such as the Statement of Liability form etc. in electronic format.

Please note:

All documents uploaded must be of high quality. All parts of the form, official stamps and signatures must be clearly legible otherwise documents will not be accepted.

Please retain all of your original hard copy documents as you may be asked to produce these to verify your application.

16. How do I upload documents to my application?

Uploading documents to your application form is the same as adding attachments to an e-mail. You simply follow the instruction on the application form and attach the relevant file from your computer. This will add the document to your application.

17. What if I am not sure what financial documents to include?

Please see Question 11 above. If you are still not sure contact TAP (foundationcourse@tcd.ie).

18. What if I experience difficulty accessing my *my.tcd.ie* account?

If you have any problems accessing your account, please follow the Help instructions on *my.tcd.ie*.

19. What if I still have questions about my application?

Talk to your guidance counsellor who can help you with your application. If you still have questions about your application, please contact TAP directly.

20. Privacy Statement

This is a statement of the practices of Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin (the "University") of College Green, Dublin 2, Ireland in connection with the capture and the use of personal data and the steps taken by the University to protect your personal data and respect your right to privacy.

The University fully respects your right to privacy and actively seeks to preserve the privacy rights of those who share information with the University. Any personal information which you volunteer to the University will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, in accordance with Irish and European Data Protection legislation. The University shall process your personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

The privacy notice explains the following:

- How we collect and use personal data
- The purpose and legal basis for collecting personal data
- How we store and secure personal data
- How we obtain your data
- How and why we use your data
- Details of third parties with whom we share personal data
- What are your rights

For further information please see <https://www.tcd.ie/courses/application-privacy-statement/>