

# Preparation for attending the event

THE IRISH TIMES  
Higher Options



## There are three stages to participation in Higher Options – before, during and after the event

### Before

- Read through this worksheet for information on what you will find at the event.
- Plan out which career talks you want to attend.
- Choose which stands you're interested in visiting and look at where they are on the floorplan.

### During

- Keep an eye on your timetable and try to make it to the talks you're interested in.
- Tick off the universities and college representatives you want to speak with on your list.
- Be open to opportunities you may never have considered by speaking with representatives from colleges and career areas that 'catch your eye'.

### Why attend Higher Options?

**It is a great opportunity to engage with and gather information from people in the following:**

- Universities from Ireland, the UK and Europe
- Post-Leaving Cert Colleges of Further Education
- Technological Universities
- Apprenticeship and Training Organisations
- Career Options information providers
- Guidance and study skills professionals
- Information providers such as CAO, AHEAD, HEA, This is FET, etc.
- An Cheathrú Ghaeltachta – dedicated zone focused on careers in Irish

### It is your opportunity to hear talks on:

- Important processes such as CAO and college applications
- Careers and courses in which you have some interest
- Career areas you may have not considered before - broadening your knowledge and giving you new ideas.



**Your opportunity to attend lecture sessions covering topics such as:**

- How to apply to the Irish CAO admissions system
- Studying in Europe
- Alternative routes to third level through Further Education
- How to choose a career and how to cope with college life
- Pursuing a career in Irish

**It's your opportunity to ask questions and get answers.**

Representatives from universities and colleges will be able to answer questions and advise you where to look online or in their literature for more in-depth investigation after Higher Options. Larger universities will have staff from different faculties attending so you can speak with someone from the subject area you are interested in. Some will have student ambassadors on their stands who can answer questions about university life.

Higher Options is a great opportunity to find out what is really being offered by a third level college over and above what is written in the prospectus and on the website, even if you already have some prior knowledge about the college. While you may not be able to attend open days at all of the colleges that interest you, Higher Options provides the opportunity to engage with many universities and education providers under one roof. With the chance to speak with representatives one-to-one, you can put your own questions. Picking the right college is a big decision - one of the most important you'll ever make.

Higher Options will help you to concentrate your mind on where you want to go and what goals to set yourself for study at the beginning of your Leaving Cert year.

It's a good opportunity to gather your own personal copies of brochures and prospectuses of the colleges you are interested in. Please make sure you bring your own bag as, for sustainability reasons, we will not provide plastic bags.

**After the event**

- Look through any prospectuses, brochures, literature or college contacts you gathered.
- Take time to focus your thoughts on what you found interesting and on some of the ideas that attending the event suggested to consider for future studies.
- Discuss what you learned with your parents, friends, teachers and guidance counsellor to help you make some decisions that will help you when CAO and other choices need to be made.
- Check your email for any correspondence from colleges you spoke with at the event.



# Starting to prepare for Higher Options

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## 1. Research your future options

It's definitely a good idea to spend some time researching your future options before attending the event. This means you'll be able to really benefit from the knowledge of the college representatives and advisers on the day.

## 2. Prepare some questions

As part of your research, write down a few questions or issues you'd like to discuss. These might be very specific, or simply a check list of topics, such as course structure, maths level on course, entry requirements, career opportunities, etc. Don't make this too long, or you'll never get through it; aim for no more than five key points, focusing on the issues most important to you.

## 3. Check the schedule beforehand

A few days before the event, check the final schedule for the day at [irishtimes.com/higheroptions](https://irishtimes.com/higheroptions). Write down the start times of any talks you want to attend, as well as any you're at least partly interested in. You will receive a timetable when you arrive and signs around the event will remind you when talks start but have a plan in place.

## 4. Keep an open mind

While it is useful to be prepared and have a clear focus, try to balance this out by also still being open to new study options and possibilities. You might find your ideal course exists in a form you didn't previously know about.

## 5. Keep an eye on the time

Make sure you don't get too caught up in one conversation and miss out on other opportunities. Make sure you know the start time of the talks you would like to attend.

## 6. Make notes

Make a note of anything you want to follow up later. You might think you'll remember, but there will be a lot to take in.

Issues other than course choice to find answers to.

### **Accommodation**

This is generally the most expensive part of going to college for those who cannot live at home. If you have found some colleges that are strong possibilities for you then for each of them find out:

- Is there university/college owned accommodation available? Can everyone who applies get a place? How do you apply for it?
- Can you see the accommodation when you go to visit on an open day?
- What about accommodation outside the college, do they help with finding this?
- How much is accommodation likely to cost?

Remember that you will have to pay for food, electricity, gas, heating, telephone, Wi-Fi, etc.

**Ask when accommodation bookings start – for some colleges it is months ahead of CAO offers! Colleges differ in their approach to this, so don't get caught out.**

### **Transport**

If you are living at home and hoping to commute to the college, what are the transport options available? Is it public or private? If you drive to college, what is the car parking availability and cost? If you cycle, are there secure bike parking options?

### **Scholarships**

Check if there are any scholarships available in the college. These could be academic, sporting, performance or community based. If you think you may be eligible find out when you should apply for them. Are there points awarded for them?

### **Social Life**

You will be in the place for at least three years and the friends you make will be with you for life, so, apart from bars and nightclubs (which are usually in great abundance anyway), what clubs/societies are available? What entertainment venues – theatres, cinema, music venues etc. - are close by? Is the college's social life based in a town/city or within the college?

### **Sports Facilities**

If sports is important for you, find out what sports are available in the college, how many teams there are and what the facilities are like. Is there a gym on site, swimming pool, pitches, competitions, etc?

### **Student Support**

What sort of support does the college offer?

- Medical – on campus doctor/nurse
- Mental Health – Is there a counselling service?
- Academic - Is there a mentor system available? Maths support?
- Disability - If you have a specific learning difficulty or disability what support will be available?

**Use the checklist we have provided to help map out the best way**



# On the day: What to do and expect

## What I want to gain from Higher Options

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

## During the event ensure you get answers to all your questions such as:

- Types of assessment used on course?
- Leaving Cert. subjects & levels required/desirable for this course?
- What tutoring is provided?
- You will also have your own queries – record them here and the answers you get.

## Questions I would like answered during my attendance at the event:

Q1	<input type="text"/>
A1	<input type="text"/>
Q2	<input type="text"/>
A2	<input type="text"/>
Q3	<input type="text"/>
A3	<input type="text"/>
Q4	<input type="text"/>
A4	<input type="text"/>
Q5	<input type="text"/>
A5	<input type="text"/>

## Courses that interest me, and the college(s) offering such courses

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Lectures that I will attend (choose from list on website)

	Venue	Time
Talks & Lectures 1		
Talks & Lectures 2		
Talks & Lectures 3		
Talks & Lectures 4		

Notes



Know yourself. Know your options.  
Make a good decision.