Dear Referee,

The above candidate has put your name forward as a referee on his/her application form for the Diploma in Foundation Studies: Access Course for Mature Students. As the Access programme is a preparation course for entry to a full-time degree programme, the information you provide us with will be of great assistance in our selection of suitable candidates.

Your candid and honest assessment of the applicant, particularly in relation to academic suitability, self-motivation and determination would therefore be greatly appreciated. Should you feel unable to comment on any issue, simply indicate accordingly. All information will be treated in strict confidence.

Please see below information on the Access course for your perusal, and would appreciate if you could complete the short online reference Reference Link, on behalf of the applicant at your earliest convenience.

Should you require any clarification or further information regarding the application, please email access@nuigalway.ie

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

Yours sincerely,

Imelda Byrne
Head of Access Centre

Completed forms to be returned at your earliest convenience to:

DIPLOMA IN FOUNDATION STUDIES

ACCESS COURSE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

MATURE STUDENTS
from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds

The Access Course is a 1 year course that aims to provide mature students with the opportunity to prepare personally and academically, for an undergraduate course of full-time study of at least 3 years duration at NUI Galway. The course is designed to meet the learning needs of the adult student and provide individual attention and assistance.

WHO IS THE COURSE FOR?
The Access Course for Mature Students is designed for those who may not have the conventional educational requirements and who come from socio-economic backgrounds that are under-represented in third level. The course is designed to meet the learning needs of the adult student and provide individual attention and assistance where appropriate. Participants who successfully complete the Access Course receive a Diploma in Foundation Studies (Level 6 30 ECTs) from NUI Galway and are eligible to apply for direct entry via the CAO to full-time University degree courses.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS
There are no specific entry requirements, such as Leaving Certificate or aptitude tests, but typically candidates have a keen interest in reading and learning in general and aspire to continue their education to degree level and/or beyond. Applicants must be 22 years of age or over on January 1st in the year of application.

WHAT ARE THE CONSIDERED SOCIO-ECONOMIC REASONS?
- Long-term unemployment
- Low family income
- Little or no family tradition of progression onto higher education
- Limited study facilities at home
- Family stresses (particularly those related to family finance)

This programme is also suitable for students with disabilities, whose background education has been affected by long-term absenteeism due to their illness.

Access Centre, NUI Galway  access@nuigalway.ie  091 493 553  nuigalway.ie/accesscentre
ACCESS COURSE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

COURSE OUTLINE

The course content consists of core subjects and academic options. The core subjects include:
- Academic Study Skills
- Academic Writing
- Academic Technology
- Engage – Skills for College and Career

The academic options provide students with introductory University courses as a prelude to continuing their studies at a higher level. The exact subjects on offer in a given year may vary, depending on the availability of specialist tutors. Students generally study four academic options, from the following subjects:
- Arts: Philosophy, Sociology, English, Mathematics, Economics, History, Geography
- Science/Engineering/IT/Health Sciences: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology
- Business/Public Policy and Law: Economics, Mathematics (H)

KEY COURSE FACTS

- ECTS Weighting: 30 ECTS
- Award (NFQ Level): 6
- Duration of course: The course runs over the academic year, September to May. Part-time students should note that this programme may be delivered on a day or evening basis and includes one Saturday per month.
- Mode of Study: Classroom-based
- EU & non-EU fees per annum: Course costs for those selected to attend the course are borne by the University, subject to sufficient funding being available.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The Access programme prepares students for re-entry to either full-time or part-time education and prepares students for future employment through its educational guidance, study skills and information technology modules. Participants who successfully complete an Access Course will be eligible to apply for direct entry to full-time University Degree courses. However, places on certain courses are awarded on competitive academic performance. The criteria for successful completion of the Access Course involve an 85% attendance record and academic performance in all elements of the programme.

REQUIREMENTS & ASSESSMENT

Students’ academic progress is measured through a process of written and oral continuous assessment and examinations held at the end of each semester. Self-directed learning is an integral and important part of the course. Students also have the opportunity to attend some undergraduate lectures on campus, by arrangement.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications are made online via an online application from April at www.nuigalway.ie/accesscentre. Documentation will be required regarding your financial circumstances, in addition to identification and educational records, for example:
- Passport/Driver’s License
- Department of Social Protection Statement
- Disability Evidence if relevant

Interviews will be held for this course. Places are generally offered to students 2/3 weeks after the interviews. Once a place is offered, the student is given a number of days to accept the offer. Students who accept an offer are required to attend a full-time Access Course in NUI Galway.