



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHÉ
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Prepare: *Entry Guide.*

Transition information for higher education



University
of Galway.ie



Welcome to University of Galway.

The information in this guide has been designed to support you as you transition into the higher education learning environment. This information is just to get you started. The Disability Support Service in the Access Centre is available with any additional information that you may need.

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The New Learning Environment: *What to Expect*



Learning at college is very different to secondary school. You are expected to do more for yourself and there is less structure and less follow-up from teaching staff. As a higher education student, you will be expected to become more independent in managing and organising your studies.

Here are some examples of the differences.

You will be expected to

- Prepare for classes by reading class notes, textbooks & recommended materials.
- Attend lectures and classes.
- Take relevant notes or record information from lectures.
- Find your own resources from the library or internet to complete your assignments.
- Make sure you complete and submit assignments by the due date.
- Discuss your required supports with each of your lectures.
- Ask for help when you need it.

Learning Activity

1. Highlight the above points that you think you will find the easiest to manage.
2. In a different colour, highlight the ones that you think that you will find most challenging.

Further information regarding what is expected of you as a student at University of Galway is available on the University of Galway website - [What's expected of you - University of Galway](#)

The New Physical Environment: *Getting Prepared*



When you can it would be a good idea to familiarise yourself with the college campus. This will help you to know what to expect in a new environment. Ideally you could visit campus to do this.

To get prepared you could

- Download the University of Galway App on your phone - [Campus App - University of Galway](#).
- Download a map of campus.
- Find the areas that you will use for example, lectures rooms, library, canteen, shop, bus stop and toilets.
- Research and plan how you will get to campus.
- Find the location of support services, such as the Disability Support Service, The Student Enquiry Centre, The Student Union and the Student Registry Helpdesk.

Learning Activity

Look up your Department on the Campus Map

Campus maps can be found on the University of Galway website. Use the search function by typing campus maps in the search box on the top right of the page.

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Food Options on Campus: *What to Expect*



There are many options for purchasing food on campus. The best-known places are The Bialann (Main canteen), Smokies (Cafe) and The Student Union shop, all based at the concourse/library area of campus. SULT (The student bar) is situated in Aras na Mac Leinn. These all serve a variety of hot and cold food options. During lunch hour all these areas can be busy.

A full list of where to eat on campus can be seen on the Campus Map. Restaurants and cafes are marked with a fork and knife symbol.



Prepare Activity

As part of getting organised for your new daily routine you could plan what to eat and where you will eat and drink during your breaks. Below are some planning questions.

- Will I bring my own food or buy food on campus?
- If I bring my own food where will I eat?
- If I find it too noisy or overwhelming where will I go on my break?
- Check opening times of food outlets if you plan to have breakfast on campus.
- Discuss your required supports with each of your lecturers.
- Ask for help when you need it.

What if I don't want to buy food?

You do not have to buy food at the Bialann to use the seating area. The HUB is located in Áras na Mac Léinn and has basic kitchen facilities and a common room.



Communication at College: *What to Expect*



Higher education uses online systems for sharing information and learning. Much of the communication with your lecturers and staff will be by email or your online learning environment/app, Canvas. It is important to check your email and Blackboard Learn regularly. For example, changes to assignments or times of classes in person or online will be communicated by these systems.

Examples of information on Blackboard Learn and/or Email

- Lecture or class notes and handouts.
- Recordings of lectures.
- Details of assessment tasks.
- Assignment submission links.
- Class discussion boards and blogs.
- Email communication with lectures and student services.
- Links to readings held in the library.
- Links to related websites and online articles.

Learning *Activity*

1. Highlight the above points that you think you will find the easiest to manage.
2. In a different colour, highlight the ones that you think that you will find most challenging.

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Communicating with Lecturers: *What to Expect*



College courses usually involve attending lectures.

They are often held in a variety of settings including classrooms, large rooms and lecture halls. They are usually attended by many students. Often a presentation is given by academic staff. Mostly there is little or no interaction with students during the presentation. There is normally an opportunity to ask any questions or make comments after the presentation has concluded, or if the lecturer asks, “Any Questions?”.

Lecturers at college often have other work to do along with lecturing.

Some of the other work that they may be involved with includes conducting research, supervising higher degree students, maintaining equipment, doing field work and presenting at conferences. This additional work can mean that they are quite busy and may not be able to respond immediately.

Lecturers may have different ways they offer one to one support for students.

Some may schedule student consultation times available every week where students can ask questions about lecture material or assessments. Others may ask you to email them any questions you have, and they will reply when they have time.

If you feel comfortable, you can go to their office to speak to them during the allocated times. If you are not comfortable doing this or the times do not suit you, you can send an email asking your question or asking for a time for a meeting.

Remember that they are busy, so *be patient*.



This guide has an example of *an email* you can send to your lectures to get you started.

Communication by Email *Example*



Much of the communication with your lecturers and college staff will be by email. For example, changes to assignments or times of classes in person or online are often communicated by email. It is okay to email or contact a lecturer directly with a question. **It is important to check your email daily.**

Here is an *example* of an email to a lecturer

Email Address:

If you don't know your lecturers email addresses you can ask for it at the end of your lecture. Alternatively, If you know your lecturers full name, you can type their name into the 'To' field and their email address will come up, click on this to input it.

Subject Title:

Question on Assignment for Biological Sciences, Module Code MATH6056.

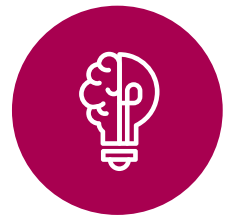
Dear Ms XXXX

I am a first-year student on the BSc in Biological Science course. I have a question about the Maths assignment for the module code MATH6056. I am finding it difficult to understand the assignment question. I think more detail on the assignment question would support me to begin my assignment.

Regards

Cate O' Cork

Neurodivergent *Society*



University of Galway's Neurodivergent Society was founded in 2021 as a space for neurodivergent people to connect, share ideas and experiences and be proud of our identities. We welcome all neurodivergent people and allies.

Neurodiversity is the idea that there is a natural variation in human neurological functioning. Neurodivergent people have brains that work in ways that are seen as different. Neurodiversity fits within the social model of disability in recognising that these differences are not disabling but rather the interaction between these differences and a world that isn't designed to accommodate us.

We embrace self-identification – if you identify as neurodivergent, *you are welcome.*

We organise regular social events online and in-person and will continue to facilitate both forms of events. Accessibility and inclusivity are important to us, and we recognise that an in-person event can sometimes be a bit overwhelming.

We have an active Discord server where members share their interests, ask questions and share experiences, good and bad (which is totally optional – if you just want to share pictures of your pets, we have a channel for that too!)



ND Society is about embracing who you are and fostering a neurodiversity-affirmative community at University of Galway. University can be challenging for everyone, but particular difficulties come with being neurodivergent and being in college. ND Society is here to help you meet similar people who understand and have experience navigating sensory challenges, mental health issues and executive functioning difficulties. It's about understanding, acceptance and inclusivity – while also having some fun!

The Disability Support Service



In order to avail of disability supports students must register with the Disability Support Service. You can find instructions on how to register [on our website](#). Supports may include:

- Academic support such as leniency with deadlines.
- Exam support such as extra time for exams.
- Assistive technology.
- Placement planning support.
- Specialised support such as Occupational Therapy.

Students must complete a short meeting called a Needs Assessment to determine what supports they require. You can read more about the Needs Assessment process on page 10. Your supports are recorded on a document called a **Leaning and Educational Needs Summary**, which is often abbreviated to 'LENS'.

Disability Advisor

When you register with the Disability Support Service, a Disability Advisor will be assigned to you. Your Disability Advisor is the person that completes your needs assessment with you. They will be your point of contact in the Disability Support Service for the duration of your studies.

Contacting the Disability Support Service

If you have not yet completed your Needs Assessment or you don't know the name of your Disability Advisor, please email disabilityservice@UniversityofGalway.ie. The name and contact details of your Disability Advisor are listed in the final section of your LENS report. Email is the most efficient way to make contact with the service.

Needs Assessment Meeting *Explained*



A Needs Assessment is the process that the University uses to confirm your learning, teaching and exam accommodations or supports.

These supports may be different to your previous learning environment.

What to Expect at your Needs Assessment Appointment?

Your meeting will be for approximately 30 minutes. The Disability Support Service (DSS) staff member will speak with you about your needs based on the information you submitted in your DSS application and the documents you provided.

- This appointment is private and confidential, and you choose how much information you would like to share with your department and lecturing staff.
- If you would like a parent or guardian present at your meeting, please email the DSS staff member in advance.
- Your Disability Advisor will discuss with you what supports they are recommending for you and why.
- They will document these supports in a report known as your Learning and Educational Needs Summary (LENS). Your Lens Report is broken into sections: Personal info, Exam Accommodations, Potential Challenges your experience, In Class-Supports and Other Supports available to you.

Preparing for this Meeting

Think about what supports you have found helpful in previous learning environments.

You could write a list of questions you want to ask in your Needs Assessment meeting.

What happens next?

Once you have had your needs assessment meeting you will receive your LENS Report by email.

This email will also give you detailed instructions on how to access the supports recommended in your LENS Report.

We suggest that you take the time to read this email in full. We are happy to support with this if you're feeling overwhelmed.

Planning your week: *What you can do*



- Check your timetable for the week
- Check your emails daily in case of any changes to times or venues and for any other communications from staff.
- Check blackboard to see when your assignments are due
- Allocate time for revision and assignments in a study plan
- Make sure you understand assignments and if anything is unclear check with person who assigned it.
- Check out your YourSpace Account for events that the Clubs and Societies are running.
- Take time for relaxation and recreation that you enjoy.

Help is available if you need *support* or you wish to develop your planning skills.

Email your Disability Advisor or disabilityservice@UniversityofGalway.ie to enquire about support options.

Cate has started studying Science at University of Galway...

Cate noticed that they were not feeling prepared for some assignment deadlines and began to feel overwhelmed. Cate decided to meet with their Disability Advisor and discuss how they were feeling. As a result of this meeting, Cate decided to write up a weekly activity plan. This included study, assignment work and relaxing activities like exercise, video games and attending their college society. This plan was reviewed monthly to make sure they were staying on track with college work and including fun as well as work in their weekly plans.





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We acknowledge with thanks that this information was based on resources developed by Julie Donovan of Munster Technical University <https://www.mycit.ie/prepare> and the Australian Disability Clearing House on Education and Training. www.adcet.edu.au/students-with-disability/autism-transition

Contact details:

Disability Support Service
Access Centre
Áras Uí Chathail,
University of Galway

www.universityofgalway.ie/accesscentre

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