ACCESS COURSE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Online Application Guidebook

Access Centre

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What is the Access Course for Higher Education?

The Access Course provides students with the opportunity to prepare, personally and academically, for an undergraduate course of full-time study of at least three years duration at NUI, Galway. The course is designed to meet the learning needs of the adult student and to provide individual attention and assistance where appropriate.

Who is the Access Course for?

The Access course is designed specifically for people who may not have the conventional educational requirements and/or who come from socio-economic backgrounds that are underrepresented at third level. The aim of the course is to enable students to acquire the skills, knowledge and confidence to compete on an equal footing with those students who enter NUI, Galway through the conventional entry channels. Currently, there are programmes running at three Access centres:

1. Galway (Campus, NUI Galway)

2. Ballinasloe

3. An Cheathrú Rua (Outreach bi-lingual programme)

4. Sligo (St. Angela's College, Lough Gill)

What can I Study on the Access Course?

The course content consists of two supporting elements: **core subjects** and **academic options**.

Core subjects include Study Skills, Applied Writing, Information Technology, and Educational Guidance.

Academic options provide students with introductory university courses as a prelude to continuing their studies to a higher level. Students generally study four options (two per semester) from the following subjects:

- **College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies:** Philosophy, Sociology, History, Irish, English, Mathematics, Legal Science, and Spanish.

- **College of Science:** Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology

- **College of Engineering & Informatics:** Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology

- **College of Business, Public Policy and Law:** Economics/Accountancy, Mathematics

What is the time commitment?

The Access Course is a 20 week full-time or part-time course over a full academic year, normally September – May. Private (home) study is an integral and important part of the course, and students have the opportunity to attend some undergraduate lectures on campus (by arrangement).

What happens when I complete the Access Course?

Participants who successfully complete the Access Course will receive a Diploma in Foundation Studies from NUI, Galway, and will be eligible to apply for direct entry (via the CAO) to full-time University degree courses* in the faculties of **College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies; College of Science; College of Engineering & Informatics; College of Business, Public Policy and Law**: (* in certain instances, interviews with the Department/College Head may also be required).

How can I apply?

All applicants **must** apply online.

Do I have to complete the online application all in one go?

No. Once you have created a *New Account* and entered your personal details, you can save your application and return to it as often as you like until the closing date.
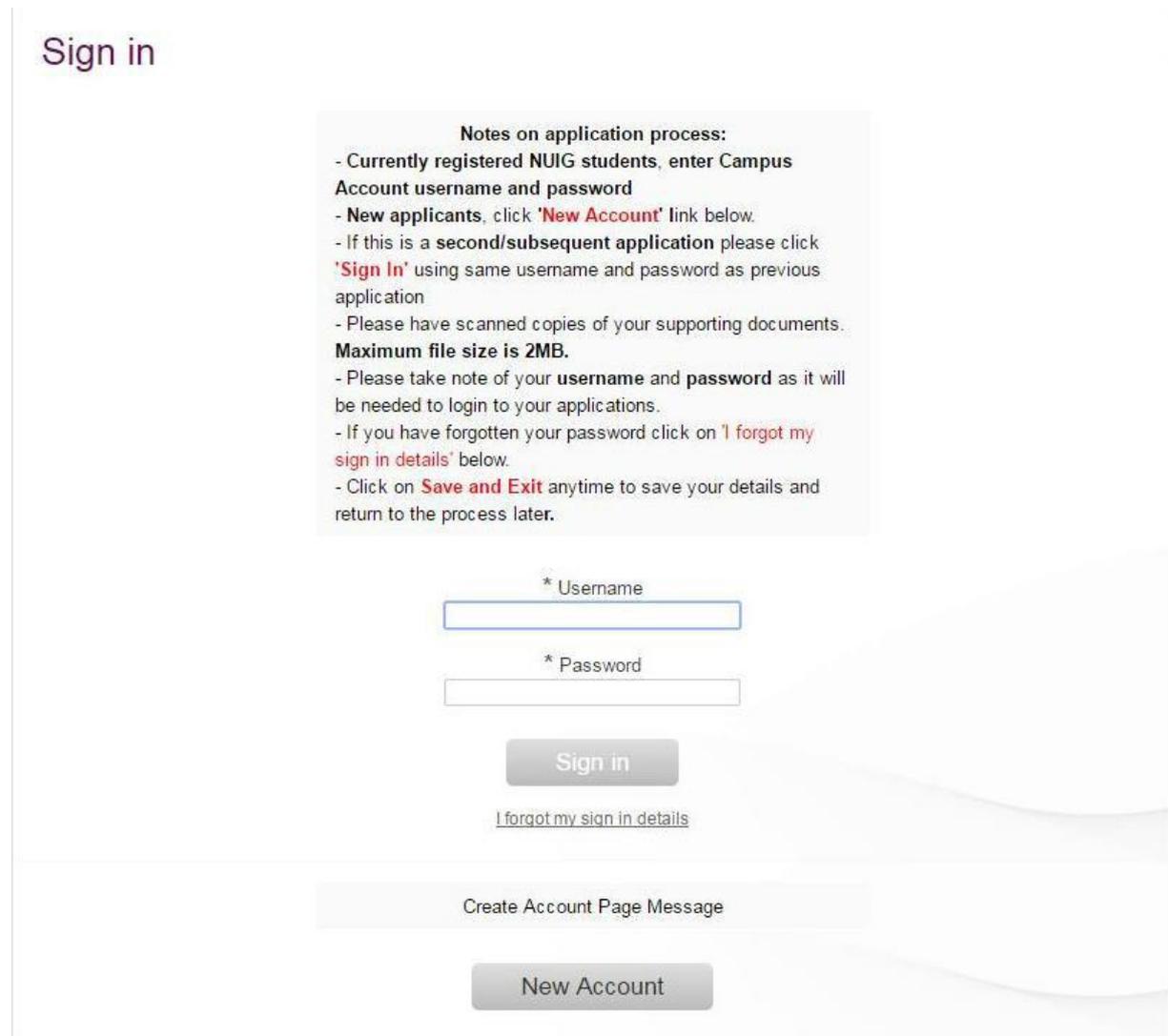
Sign in

Notes on application process:
- **Currently registered NUIG students,** enter Campus Account username and password
- **New applicants,** click '**New Account**' link below.
- If this is a **second/subsequent application** please click '**Sign In**' using same username and password as previous application
- Please have scanned copies of your supporting documents. **Maximum file size is 2MB.**
- Please take note of your **username** and **password** as it will be needed to login to your applications.
- If you have forgotten your password click on '**I forgot my sign in details**' below.
- Click on **Save and Exit** anytime to save your details and return to the process later.

* Username

* Password

Sign in

I forgot my sign in details

Create Account Page Message

New Account

How do I create my *New Account*?

When you go to the website to make an application, you will be invited to create a *New Account*. You must create a New Account to be able to apply for the Access Course. You will need to provide the following details to create a *New Account*:

- Your Name

- Date of Birth

- Email address

3

- Password

Create Account

Create Account Page Message

* First Name

* Last Name

* Email Address

New Account

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Sign In

How long will it take me to complete my application?

Your online application should take you approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Who should I ask to be a referee?

Referees should not be family related and should be one of the following:

- A tutor/teacher from a course you have attended, e.g. part-time day courses, literacy scheme, VTOS, evening course, etc.

- A supervisor from a place of work, e.g. full-time, part-time, CE scheme, etc.

- An employee of a local Resource/Information/Unemployed Centre who has been working with you on your career and educational options.

- Chairperson or Committee member of a local community/voluntary organisation with which you are involved, e.g. Credit Union, Parents Association, Unemployed Centre, Parish Activities, etc.

Where can I find the personal statement form?

The personal statement form can be downloaded directly from our website.

What should I include in my personal statement?

The Personal Statement form provides each applicant with the opportunity to outline the nature of any disadvantage which may have hindered their progressing to third level education. You will be asked to provide information to this effect, as well as any other information you believe is not captured in the rest of the application.

What do I include with my application?

In order to be considered for a place on the Access course, you must attach the following financial documentation to your application.

- A copy of your Passport/Drivers License

- A copy of your birth certificate

- A copy of your Medical card

- Disability Evidence (if relevant)

- Evidence of Refugee Status (if relevant)

- If English is not your first language, please provide evidence of your fluency to the required IELTS standard

- Please attach a copy of your highest educational qualification (leaving certificate, FETAC, GCSE etc.) to date

Please attach a copy of the following (Household) financial documents:

 (a)   <u>P.A.Y.E Employee:</u>

Copy of Form P21 for the previous calendar year (available from your local Revenue Commissioner's office).

(b)   **<u>Self-employed and Persons engaged in Farming Activities:</u>**

Where a person is self-employed, a copy of Notice of Assessment in respect of the previous calendar year (available from your local Revenue Commissioner's office).

<u>AND</u>

Copy of Accounts (i.e. Trading/Profit and Loss Account, Capital Account & Balance Sheet) for each business for the previous calendar year.

(c)   **<u>Social Welfare Recipient:</u>**

Where you, the candidate, are in receipt of a payment from the Department of Social Protection, a statement from your local Social Welfare Office showing the total amounts received for the previous calendar year.

<u>AND</u>

Copy of Form P21 for the previous calendar year (available from your local Revenue Commissioner's office; low-call 1890 777425; http://www.revenue.ie).

(d)   **Any other financial documentation which will assist your eligibility for the programme.**

This information is strictly confidential and will be used for the purpose of ascertaining eligibility for the Access Programme. Under no circumstances will it be disclosed to any other agency or body.

Where do I get the forms I need for my application?

The following forms are available from the following locations:

- P.A.Y.E (Revenue.ie)
- P21 (Revenue.ie)
- P60 (employer)
- Proof of Social welfare (welfare.ie)
- Notice of Assessment (revenue.ie)

What do I do with these forms once they are completed?

If they are not electronic copies, you need to convert them from hard copies to electronic copies. To do this, see next step.

How do I get electronic copies of my supporting documents?

If you have a hard copy of the document (such as a birth certificate) you can create an electronic copy in the following ways:

- Take an image of the document with your phone/camera and save the file to as a jpeg file to your computer/laptop. Right click on the file and click 'convert to PDF'
- Scan the document and save the file. Scanners may be available to you at a local library, in an education/jobs centre or in a copy centre.

How do I upload my documents to my application?

The procedure for uploading documents to your application is similar to adding an attachment to an email. Just click the Choose File icon and select the relevant file from your computer/laptop. Add a Description for the file and click Upload when you are finished. This will add the file to your application.

Document Upload

Scanned copies of the following documents should be uploaded in order to process your application.
Please do not use photographs:

1. Copy of **Birth Certificate**
2. Copy of P21/ dept. of social protection forms/ notice of assessment.
3. If you are in receipt of a **medical card**, please upload a copy here
4. If you have a disability, please upload your supporting documentation here.
5. Please uploads **any additional supporting documentation** here

For helpful advice on how to upload documents and a checklist of what has to be uploaded please consult <u>Access</u>

* Attach File   Choose File   No file chosen

Description   [   ]   Upload

Previous   Save & Exit   Next

What if I am unsure as to what documents I should Include?

The online application process will prompt you to submit the relevant forms. Feel free to submit scanned copies of any additional information, if you feel that it will strengthen your application.

What can I do if I experience difficulty accessing my *New Account*?

If you experience difficulty accessing your *New Account*, click the *'I forgot my sign in details'* on the main screen.

If this does not resolve your issue, contact the NUI, Galway Access Office directly.