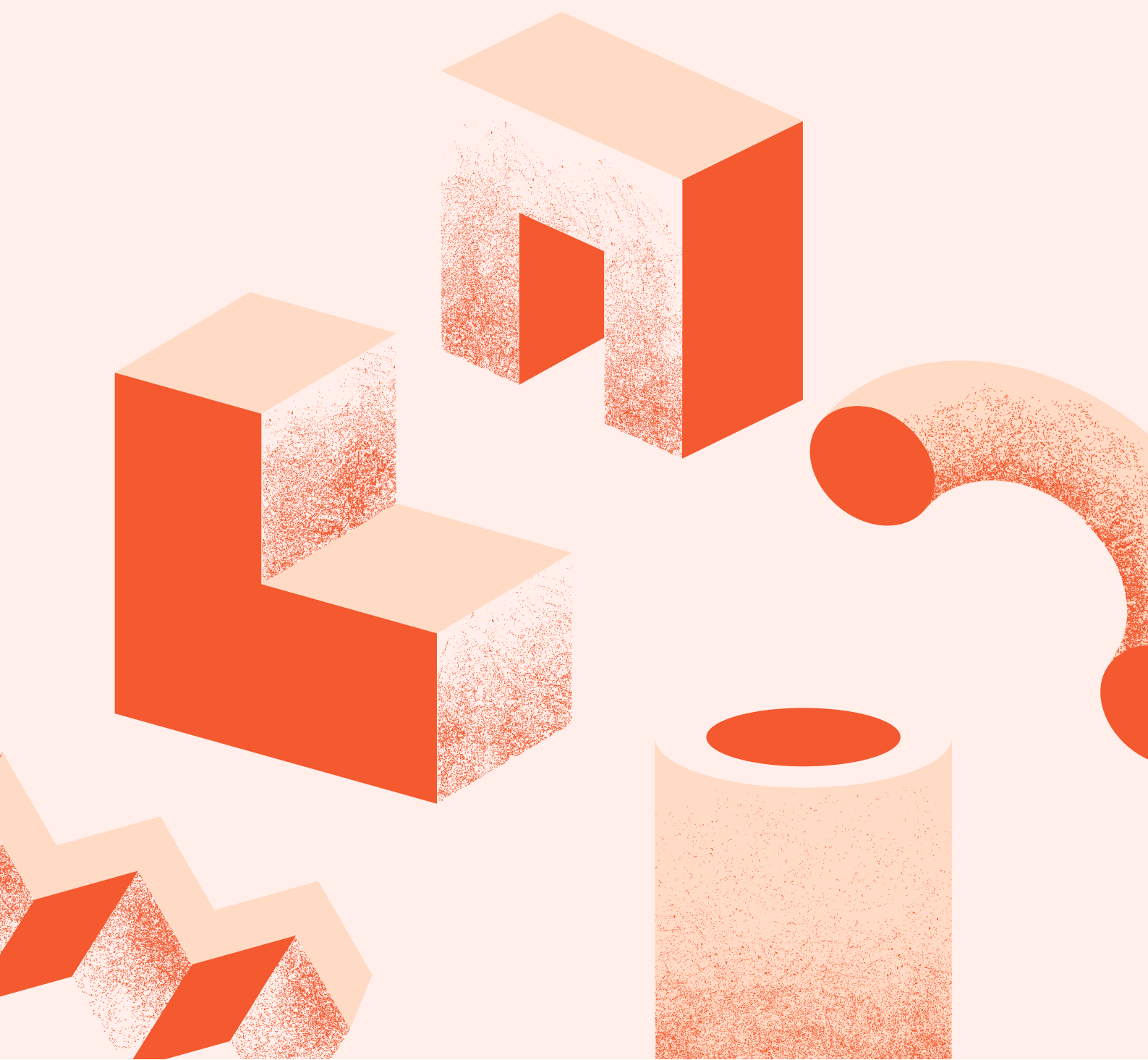


# Further and Higher Education Access Information



# Table of Contents

1	Introduction	page 1
2	Post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLC)	page 2
3	Undergraduate Degrees	page 3
4	Fees and Grants	page 4 - 5
5	UCC Scholarship Opportunity	page 6
6	Student Assistance Fund	page 7
7	Helpful Websites	page 8
8	Bibliography	page 9

\*Please note that while all effort was made to make sure the information in this document is correct, all information is for guidance purposes only. Please refer to the relevant websites mentioned throughout the document and in the bibliography for official information.

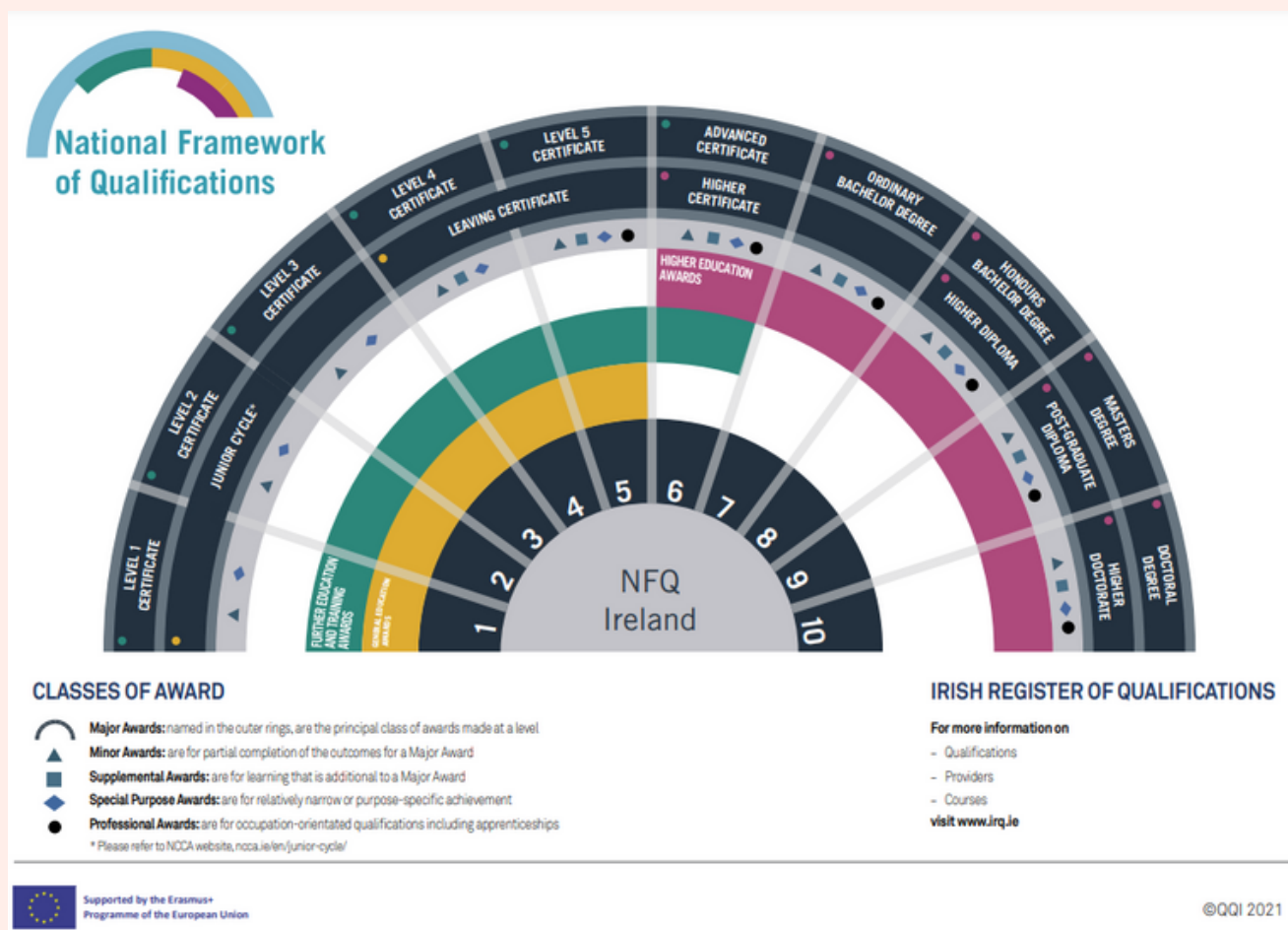
# Introduction

Third Level Education is made up of universities, technological universities or institutions and colleges of education.

Further and adult education is education and training that happens after second level schooling but is not part of the third level education system. It includes PLC courses (Post-Leaving Certificate) and VTOS courses (Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme).

The National Framework of Qualification measures the levels of education. Once you complete one level, you can move on to the next.

For example Leaving Certificate is Level 5 and an Undergraduate Degree is Level 7 or 8. If you do not have a Leaving Certificate, PLC courses offer Level 5 and 6 that can then lead the pathway to University.



# Post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLC)

PLC courses are full-time programmes for young people who have completed their Leaving Certificate (LC) and adults returning to education.

However, if you have not completed your LC you may still be able to apply by providing relevant work experience or relevant ability in the area of the course that is of interest to you. You should write to the college and ask to meet the co-ordinator of the course.

PLC courses are usually either one or two years in length and are given Level 5 or Level 6 award.

## Costs

- Since September 2022, you do not have to pay a participant contribution fee for a PLC course.
- However, 'course charges' still apply. These charges cover things like uniform, books, student services, professional registration and exam fees. This fee varies depending on the college.

Protection Applicants with a work permit\* are not required to pay the international fees. If you are in Ireland for more than 3 years you may be able to apply for "Student Support Scheme" from the government. You apply for this via the government website:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/e786a-student-support-scheme-for-asylum-seekers/>. Currently not yet updated for 2022.

Use [qualifax.ie](https://qualifax.ie) to find the course most suitable for you!

\*You can apply for a work permit after being 6 months in Ireland.

## Undergraduate Degrees

People with refugee status or subsidiary protection and those with humanitarian leave to remain are entitled to free third-level (university or college) education if they have been living in Ireland for 3 years or more. If you have lived in Ireland for less than 3 years you are treated as an International Student with fees starting at €16,400+.

To enter a University or Institute of Technology you must get an offer for a course from the university/institute of your choice. Firstly you must apply through the Central Applications Office (CAO).

CAO applications open in November (the year before the starting date of your desired course) and February 1st is the closing date for applications. However, if you wish to apply late you often still can until 1st of May but should contact the university admissions office first. Late applications are also subject to a higher fee (€60 compared to €30 for normal). More information can be found on their website at <http://www.cao.ie/index.php>.

# Fees and Grants

## Free Fees Initiative

The government of Ireland pays a portion (€3,000) of the tuition fee, the student then pays another portion called 'Student Contribution' fee (€3,000).

To qualify for the Free Fees Initiative (so that the government pays for a half of your fees) you must be:

- a resident for 3 out of 5 last years in Ireland, the EU, EEA, the UK or Swizerland.
- Have official refugee status (or be a family member of a refugee with permission to live in Ireland) OR have Permission to Remain OR have Humanitarian Leave to Remain in Ireland.
- You must be a first time full-time undergraduate.
- You must not be repeating a year because you failed your exams or are changing course, unless it is due to serious illness.
- You must be applying for a course in one of the qualifying institutions listed here:

<https://hea.ie/higher-education-institutions/?v=l>

Please note that Free Fees Initiative does NOT apply to private institutions.

# Fees and Grants

## SUSI

SUSI grant helps you pay the 'Student Contribution' fee of €3,000.

It can also help with living costs, this part of the grant is called 'Maintenance Grant'.

To qualify for SUSI:

- you have refugee status OR have subsidiary protection status OR are the family member of an EU/EEA citizen OR were granted 'Leave to Remain' OR granted 'Humanitarian Leave to Remain' OR you qualify for Student Support Scheme for Asylum Seekers.
- you must have been resident in Ireland for 3 out of the last 5 years before the start date of your course.
- You must be applying to an approved institution (you can check here: <https://susi.ie/undergraduate-student/approved-institutionscourses-for-undergraduate-students/> ).
- Your income (and your parent's income) must be under a certain amount.

You have to reapply for the grant for each year of your degree.

Please check [SUSI.ie](https://susi.ie) for further information such as how to apply and deadline dates for applications.

You can also find many useful videos to help with the application:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeVRgFcxjMq8FBKpJG5LYVw/videos> .

# UCC Scholarship Opportunity

## University College Cork

UCC offers Sanctuary Scholarships to Asylum Seekers and Refugees who are not eligible for Free Fees Initiative, SUSI, and/or Student Support Scheme etc.

You must also be living within a commutable distance from UCC.

The scholarship covers tuition fees, student contribution fee and provides the student with a monthly maintenance payment.

You cannot apply if you already hold a college/university degree.

Application is in 2 parts. Deadline for Part 1 is 1st of June 2022.

Please find all the information on the UCC website here:

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/scholarships/all/alluccsch/alluccschsanctuary/> .



# Student Assistance Fund

The SAF provides financial support for full time higher education students who are having financial difficulties while attending college or university.

This fund applies when you are already in college and can help with buying books and materials, food, medical expenses, cost of essential travel to name a few.

To apply you must contact the access or student services office in your college. Your college will advise what documentation you will need and any relevant deadlines.

Please find more information here, including the list of participating colleges and universities, :

<https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/funding/student-finance/student-assistance-fund/>.

# Helpful Websites

- [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)
- [www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie](http://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie)
- [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie)
- [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie)
- [www.corketb.ie](http://www.corketb.ie)
- [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)
- [www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie)
- [www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)

## Main Cork Universities and Colleges:

- [www.ucc.ie](http://www.ucc.ie)
- [www.mtu.ie](http://www.mtu.ie)
- [www.corkcollegeofcommerce.ie](http://www.corkcollegeofcommerce.ie)
- [www.stjohnscollege.ie](http://www.stjohnscollege.ie)
- [www.csn.ie](http://www.csn.ie)
- [www.citynorthcollege.ie](http://www.citynorthcollege.ie)

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