

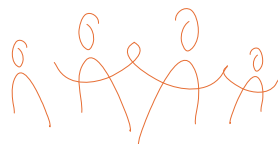
hadd

Family Support Group

## 3rd Level Guide for Students with ADHD



HADD Family Support Group  
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HADD exists to make life better for people with ADHD and their families



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# HADD

## 3rd Level Guide for Students with ADHD



## HADD 3rd Level Guide for Students with ADHD:

Written and edited by Declan Reilly (TCD) in conjunction with HADD  
Graphic Design by Deirdre Gilthorpe and Martin Penrose  
Printed by Gemini International Ltd  
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# Foreword

Every year an increasing number of students with disabilities are going on to 3rd level education. School leavers with disabilities have expectations of taking part in all aspects of college life, in gaining qualifications and making their careers in the modern knowledge economy. Supports for students with disabilities in 3rd level education have improved significantly in recent years. But there is still some way to go before the numbers of students with disabilities in 3rd level is representative of the numbers of people with disabilities in the general population. Not only is there a need to provide broader access to 3rd level education, there is also a need to improve teaching and learning provision, inclusive services and employability for students with disabilities. Students with ADHD are entering and succeeding at 3rd level and this guide aims to assist them. Students with ADHD have contributed to this guide and given detailed personal accounts of the challenges they have faced and dealt with on a daily basis. They have succeeded despite the difficulties, and demonstrate clearly that students with ability, irrespective of their disability, will do well in education and in the world of work.

Ann Heelan, Executive Director, AHEAD

## Acknowledgements

At one of our parents' evenings the question of whether children with ADHD could go on to 3rd level education arose. We asked the parents there how many of them thought that their children would go on to do so and sadly only three parents felt they would. The rest of the parents felt that they were as likely to go to the moon as go to 3rd level.

HADD endeavours to ensure that children and young people with ADHD reach their potential and for some moving onto 3rd level education is a step in that direction. So, in the knowledge that some students with ADHD had successfully navigated 3rd level education and mindful of all the supports available to them we decided to produce a guide that would make it easier for those with ADHD to access college.

HADD had already produced a book in relation to primary and secondary education entitled "ADHD and Education, a Resource for Teachers" which we sent to every primary and secondary school in the country. We were therefore delighted when Declan Reilly approached us with his proposal for a 3rd level book.

We would like to thank Declan for his hard work, dedication and perseverance with our never ending suggestions and amendments. We would also like to thank AHEAD for their financial support and to thank all those who provided input.

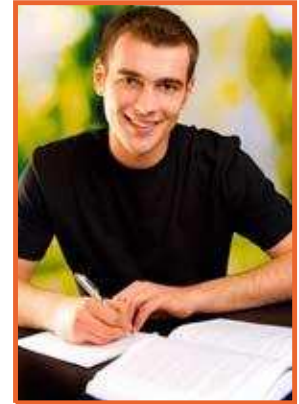
Finally we hope that this book will help students attending 3rd level and encourage more to do so. There should be no reason why students with ADHD should not reach their full potential.

Stephanie Mahony, Chairperson, HADD

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# Section 1:

## Introduction



### Who is the guide for?

If you are a student with ADHD this guide is primarily for you. It aims to act as a resource for anyone with ADHD who is attending or is considering entering 3rd level education in Ireland. This guide is written with your success in mind. Recognising that you may need help and using the resources available to you is a first step in achieving success.

### Self Advocacy

A central aspect of this guide is the idea of self advocacy. Developing self advocacy is about learning to speak up for yourself. It is also about learning to know what you want, how to get it and using the help available, should you need it. If you are a school leaver and are thinking of applying to 3rd level, you may want to consider the supports you have at present, either at home or at school. How did they come about? Did you arrange these or did you have help? When you come to 3rd level education, what supports will you need and who will arrange for these? If you have seen your parents as your main advocate up to now, do you see the need for them to continue in this role?

**This guide is also for parents and family members and those who provide support in 3rd level college for students with ADHD.**

While increased student responsibility and independent learning is a primary objective of 3rd level education, it should also be remembered that one of the impacts of ADHD is delayed maturity. HADD is very aware that parents who have advocated for their children throughout primary and secondary education will have done so from necessity. To step back at third level and expect their son or daughter to negotiate their own supports and be self advocates is not only unrealistic but also a likely recipe for the insufficient provision of supports at third level. The reality is that colleges are very busy places and if a student routinely fails to make or attend appointments it is unreasonable that a support service will continue to be provided for them! From this point of view, HADD encourages students with ADHD and their parents to discuss specific support needs with the college disability service so that clear and practical arrangements can be agreed in advance of courses starting.

In general, colleges see students as adults and expect students to self manage. This is for both practical and legal reasons. However, as the nature of ADHD is becoming more recognised in 3rd level education, particularly in the student support services, there is greater flexibility for parents of students with ADHD to be an advocate for their son or daughter. A college's main concern will be that the involvement of parents must at all times be with the consent of the student. Provided this is established and agreed there should be no difficulty.

HADD recommends, if at all possible, for students and parents to meet support services prior to application to find out what is available. College Open Days, where many 5th and 6th year students visit colleges from school, are a good opportunity for this.

## How to use this guide

From a student's perspective, certain sections of this guide will be more relevant depending on what stage you are at in the education system. For secondary school students with ADHD, especially those who are in 5th or 6th year, the most relevant sections are likely to be 3 & 4. If you are a mature student (over 23 on January 1st in the year of entry) you may wish to start with Section 2. If you are a parent, guidance counsellor or working in a supporting role with students with ADHD in secondary education you may be most interested in sections 5 & 6.

The information in this guide is intended as a guide and is no substitute for professional educational or medical advice given to you personally. Each person with ADHD presents differently and as such has individual needs. This guide is produced as both a handbook and a web resource. HADD welcomes comments and feedback from readers; email us at [info@hadd.ie](mailto:info@hadd.ie)





## Section 2: Students with ADHD

### In recent years, students with ADHD have been an emerging group in third level education

DAWN (Disability Advisors Working Network) recognises ADHD as a Specific Learning Difficulty in that it impacts significantly on learning and in the learning environment of 3rd level education. While almost all students with ADHD will exhibit symptoms of inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity, experience has shown that students with ADHD who are supported are more likely to be better organised, less distractible and in general more likely to meet the challenges of 3rd level. For the purpose of this guide, ADHD refers to both ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).

### How many people in Ireland have ADHD?

Internationally the prevalence of ADHD in the childhood population is considered to be between 3% and 5% when using the criteria from the DSM IV and 1% to 2% when using criteria from the ICD 10.

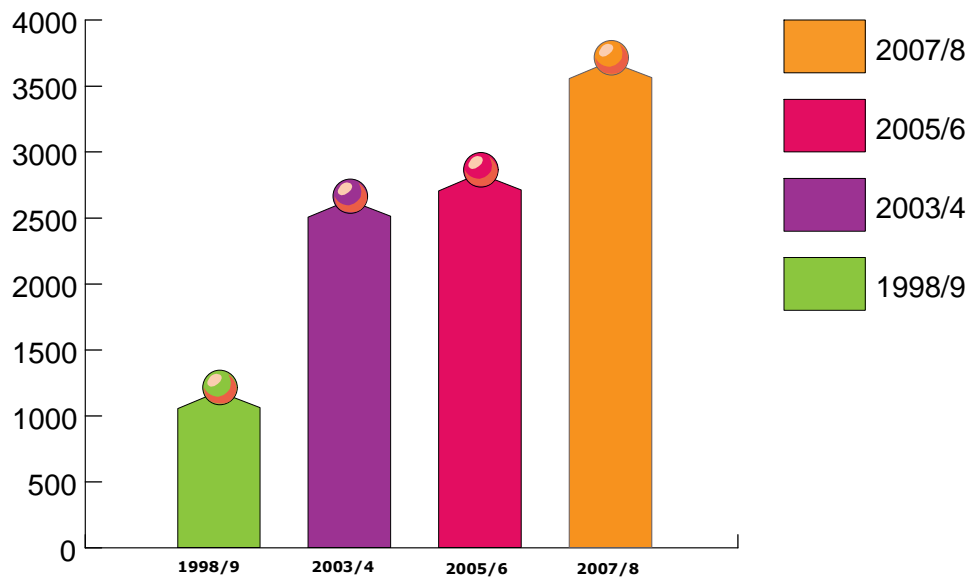
Going by these figures this would mean that the number of children under 14 with ADHD would be somewhere between 8,000 and 43,000. In 15 to 24 year olds the figures would be somewhere between 6,000 and 31,000.

About 30%-50% of children referred to child psychiatry clinics have ADHD. It is diagnosed in boys 3-4 times more often than in girls. ADHD symptoms persist for up to 60% of individuals into adolescence and adulthood (although the symptom profile may change). The prevalence in adults is estimated at about 2%.



## How many students in 3rd level education have a disability?

AHEAD research indicates a dramatic increase in students with disabilities attending 3rd level education, from 1,350 in 1998 to almost 4,000 in 2007.



**Fig 1: Students with disabilities in 3rd level education**

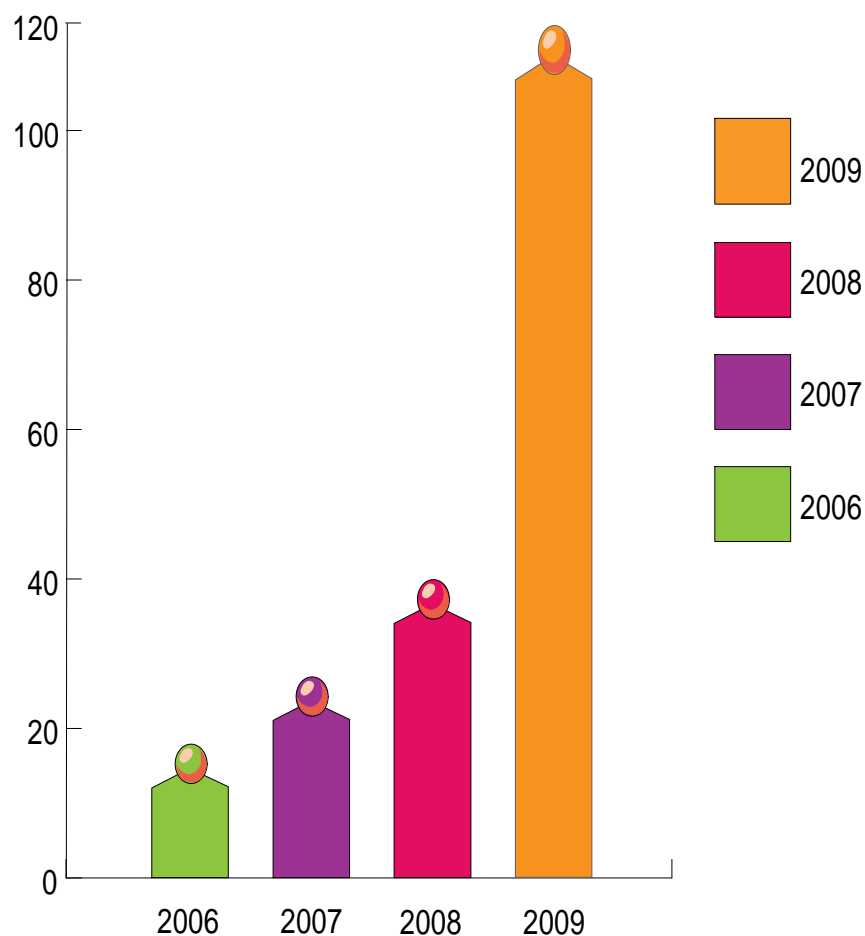
Fig 1: Students with disabilities in 3rd level education

The prevalence of ADHD in the student population at 3rd level education in Ireland is only recently emerging. Figures gathered from 10 Higher Education Institutions in 2008 found that approximately 50 students who attend these colleges are registered with disability services as having ADHD. Undoubtedly this figure is considerably lower than the number of students who are undiagnosed or who have not disclosed their ADHD. According to the 2006 census there were 143,000 students in 3rd level in the academic year 04/05. Just 1% of this is 1,430 and 5% is 7,177.

Applicants to 3rd level education from students with ADHD have significantly increased over the last 4 years. In 2006, 18 students disclosed ADHD on their CAO application. In 2007 this figure increased to 27 students and in 2008, 40 disclosed ADHD on their CAO application. The figures for 2009 indicate that 107 students have disclosed ADHD through their CAO application.

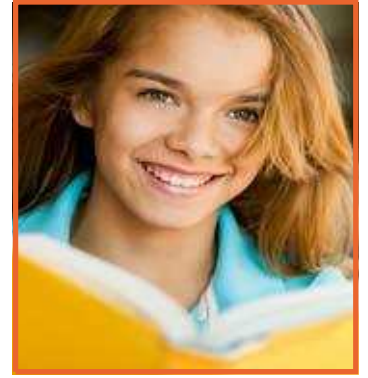
## Students with ADHD attending 3rd level education 2006 to 2009

In January 2008 there were approximately 50 students in 3rd level education registered with disability services in the 10 HEIs listed on page 24 of this guide. There are several suggested reasons why so few students are officially registered as having ADHD. No doubt it is an under-diagnosed condition. But it is also likely that students with ADHD are presenting with other difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, depression and other mental health difficulties. Sadly, it is also likely that many children with ADHD have had a negative experience in their secondary education, are insufficiently supported and have less opportunity to gain access to higher education as a result.



**Fig 2: Students Disclosing ADHD in 3rd level education via the CAO 2006 to 2009**

## The views of students with ADHD



If you don't like your course or you are falling behind, don't keep it to yourself, ask for support.

If things are not working out for you, ask for help. Learning to use what is available is what college is all about.

Use the supports available, even if you think you don't need them!

Learn to be an advocate for yourself. Know what you need and how to get it.



## Section 3: Which course and college?



For any student considering going to college the biggest decisions are often about what college to go to and what to study. If you know already exactly what you want to do, then that's great. But chances are, like many school leavers, you will probably have a better idea of what you don't want to do! The first and easiest place to start is at your school where teachers and in particular the school guidance counsellor will be able to offer you information and guidance on navigating the journey from 2nd to 3rd level education.

### How do I know what is the right course for me?

Every student will have their own set of unique strengths and weaknesses. But finding out what these are and converting that into the right course choice is not always a straightforward matter. To start with, consider what it is that you do best and what you like doing. Generally, people enjoy doing what they do well. Choosing something that you enjoy doing and that you do well is likely to be a good choice. On the other hand, choosing something that doesn't interest you or you find difficult is likely to be a poor choice. Look at what subjects you like in school, which ones motivate you and keep you interested. Be sure that it is the subject you like and not just the teacher's skill and enthusiasm! Would you like this subject even if the teacher wasn't so good? Do you read about this subject area in your spare time? Do you watch TV programmes about it? Also be clear about what subjects you don't like and the reasons for this. When you have identified the subject areas you like and don't like you can look more fundamentally at what it is about each subject that works or doesn't work for you. One way of doing this is to look at learning styles. Put simply, this is the way your mind finds it easiest to understand the world. A website such as [www.learning-styles-online.com](http://www.learning-styles-online.com) allows you to explore your preferences to identify what your learning style is.

## To give you a sense of what learning styles are about, several learning styles are listed here:

- **Visual (Spatial):** You prefer using pictures, images and an awareness of space.
- **Aural (Auditory – Musical):** You prefer using sound and music.
- **Verbal (Linguistic):** You prefer using words, both in speech and writing.
- **Physical (Kinaesthetic):** You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch.
- **Logical (Mathematical):** You prefer using symbols, logic, reasoning and systems.
- **Social (Interpersonal):** You prefer to learn in groups or with other people.
- **Solitary (Intrapersonal):** You prefer to work alone and use self study.

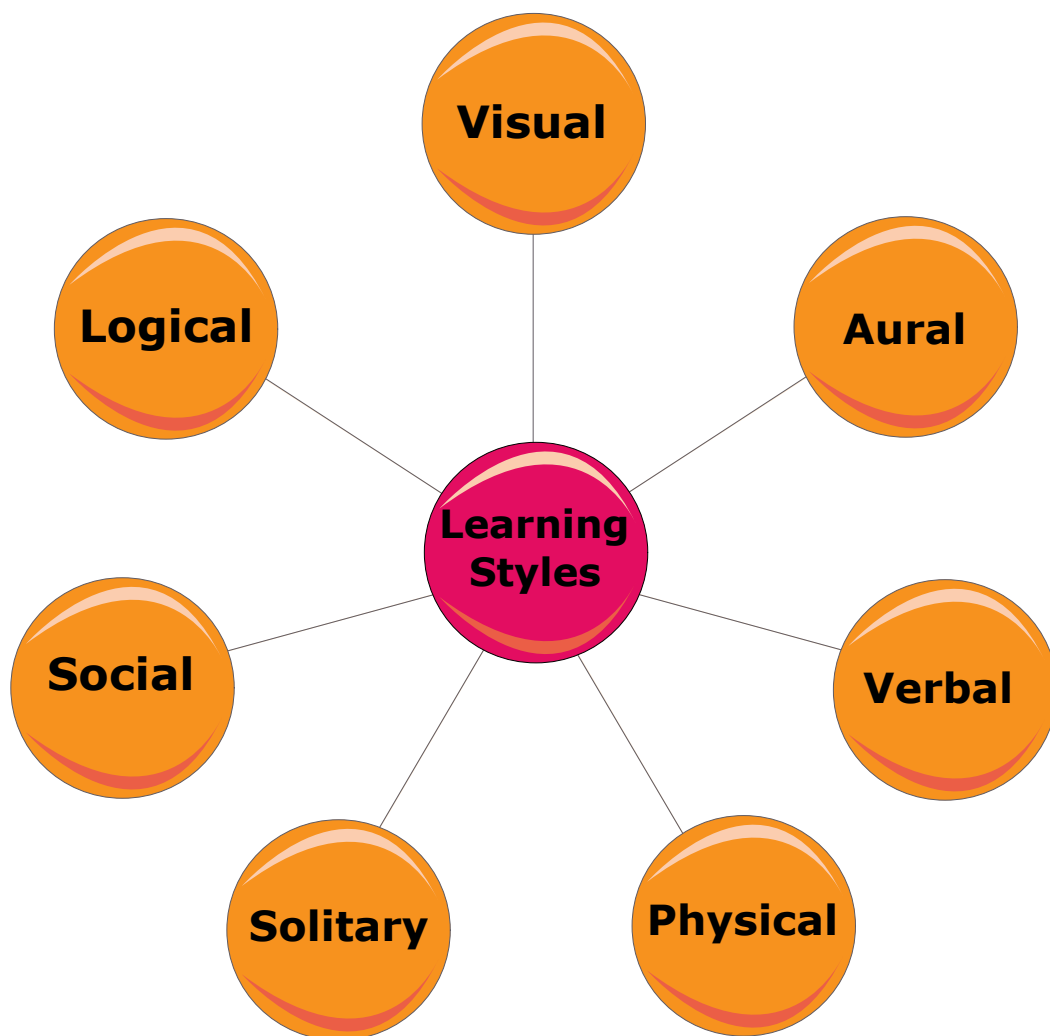
## Suggestion!

Look at the assessment and exam content of courses in making your choice. Students with ADHD frequently under perform at exams so courses with a higher percentage of marks for continuous assessments may be preferable. Look carefully at the choice of modules available in the course as there may be module options with fewer exams and more continuous assessment.





## What is my learning style?



## How do I find out more about the courses I want to study?

Every September the Higher Options event takes place in the RDS Dublin 4. This is the largest 3rd level event nationally and you can meet with staff from a vast range of colleges in relation to courses from Accountancy to Zoology.

In addition to this, every college has an Open Day in which prospective students can visit the college and speak to staff from different areas about specific courses and supports. There is also a specific event for students with disabilities called Better Options.

See [www.Ahead.ie](http://www.Ahead.ie) or [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie) for details.

Other useful information related to course choice and careers:

[www.careerdirections.ie](http://www.careerdirections.ie)

[www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)

[www.aheadweb.org/wiki/CareersInformation](http://www.aheadweb.org/wiki/CareersInformation)

**AHEAD** - Association for Higher Education Access & Disability,  
East Hall, UCD, Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin.

Email: [ahead@ahead.ie](mailto:ahead@ahead.ie)

Phone: (01) 7164396

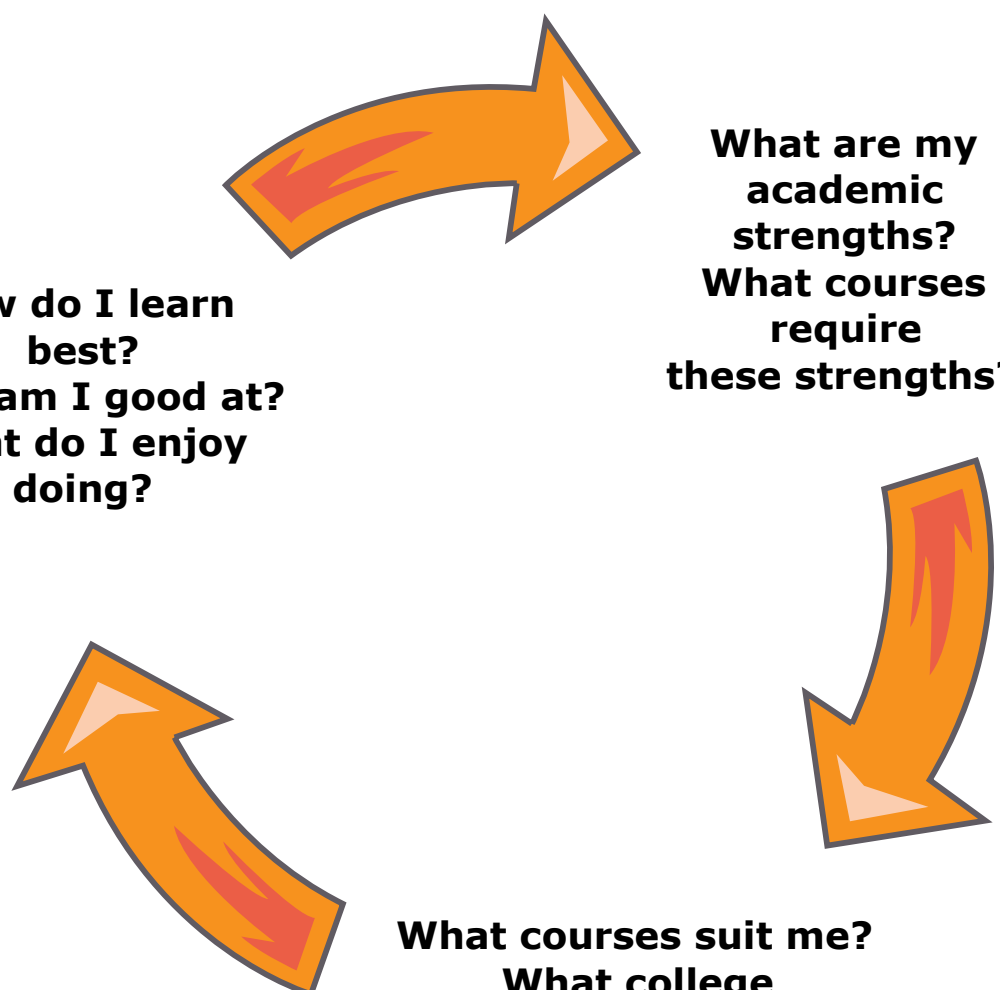


**Remember! Your school guidance counsellor will be able to provide lots of relevant information**



## What is the right course for me?

### Questions to consider:



**How do I learn best?  
What am I good at?  
What do I enjoy doing?**

**What are my academic strengths?  
What courses require these strengths?**

**What courses suit me?  
What college specialises in what I want to do?**

## Section 4

# Moving from 2nd to 3rd level

Getting through the Leaving Certificate and getting the points for a particular 3rd level course is a huge achievement in itself. If you are offered a place at college and you accept it, you could be forgiven for thinking that all the hard work is done. The truth is that the hard work continues in 3rd level education and you need to be prepared to keep up with it in order to complete the course.

For many students, this is easier said than done. The main reason for this is underestimating the amount of time it takes to develop independent study skills and complete course assignments. Often students fall behind in the first few months and think that they can catch up later. This is a common mistake and one you should try to avoid, especially if you have ADHD.

The transition from 2nd to 3rd level education comes with the added responsibility of being an adult. Being a student of higher education is your responsibility. If you applied for a course and accepted a place this implies you want to be there. If you don't show up, no one is going to phone or write to your parents.

In general, the role of any student involves attending lectures and keeping up with the course work. But you will also need to be aware of common difficulties that students experience when starting college. A difficulty could be anything that reduces your ability to manage your role as a student. These can be divided into two general areas;

### Non academic:

- Financial Problems
- Living away from home
- Finding Accommodation
- Meeting New People
- Socialising
- Employment



### Academic:

- Doubts about Course Choice
- Completing Assignments
- Attending Lectures
- Keeping up with the course material
- Using the Library
- Study skills
- Preparing for Exams



## What challenges do students experience at college?

The average student, if there is such a thing, can typically expect to face a number of difficulties during their time at 3rd level education. The adjustment to 3rd level education is a big transition and one that requires the vast majority of students considerable time to get used to. Culture shock could be the best way to describe what many students experience in the first weeks and months of attending college. Culture shock is the experience a person gets in a new environment when all or most of the things they take for granted are absent or unrecognisable. One of the biggest problems for students dealing with culture shock is that everything is so new and (potentially) exciting that they don't know they are in shock. It's a bit like being on holiday or in a foreign country because everything has a novelty value to it. The most common problem that students face in college is that they continue to behave as though they are on holiday long into the academic year and they fall behind.

## What causes culture shock?

Leaving a familiar school environment where things are predictable and ordered and entering an unfamiliar environment where things are chaotic and unstructured. Living away from home for the first time could be every school leavers dream. However, being grown up in an entirely new environment can also be very stressful.

When you start college there are a lot of new things to get to know in a short period of time. Here is a list of some of the things that will be **NEW** to your life when you start college:

- Place to live
- Surrounding area to get to know
- Shops and shopping habits
- Budget to manage
- Journey to travel everyday
- Timetable (that can change on a daily basis for the first few weeks)
- Teachers (now called lecturers)
- Class mates & room mates

Having so many new things to adapt to gives you the freedom to create a new you! This can be liberating but it also means there is no one responsible for getting things done except you. These new responsibilities can take a lot of getting used to.

## Challenges that students with ADHD may experience

Students with ADHD face all the common challenges experienced by first year students and more. The core symptoms of ADHD are inattentiveness, impulsiveness and over activity. In an educational setting these difficulties emerge in the following ways:

- Procrastination
- Losing Track of Time
- Comprehension Problems
- Disorganization
- Hypersensitivity
- Variable moods
- Motivation Difficulties
- Low Self Esteem
- Stubbornness
- Difficulty Making Friendships



Being aware of what these common problems are and preparing in advance to avoid or minimize them is the key to progressing through 3rd level education. As stated before, experience has shown that students with ADHD who are supported are more likely to be better organised, less distractible and in general more likely to meet the challenges of 3rd level.

## What can I do about reducing the impact of these challenges?

**There are three basic things that you need to focus on in order to reduce the chances of getting into difficulty.**

### 1. Know how your ADHD affects you

This needs to be detailed and include all the things that affect your attention, concentration and ability to get things done. Ask yourself what your strengths and weaknesses are? What do you learn best, when and where? What techniques and adaptations best support your learning? Other things to consider here are the affect of medication and stress. Think about your previous experiences; if you have taken or still take medication, will changes need to be made? Also, during stressful times, how have you coped with personal difficulties or exams?

## 2. Know the requirements of your course

In other words, what you have to do in order to do well as a student. Start off by reading the course description from the college webpage or prospectus. Is your course an Arts, Science or Health Sciences course? What is the difference? Will you be doing a lot of reading for your course, or will there be experiments to carry out? Perhaps your course includes clinical placements! Knowing what type of course you are taking is the first step to meeting the challenges that it will present. It is essential that you understand your timetable and be fully informed about module choices if there are any. Read the student handbook for your course. Find out if and when exams are scheduled. Keep a record of the continuous assessments that you are assigned and when they are due. The basic discipline to succeeding as a student in third level is to attend all your timetabled lectures and start your assignments on the day they are given.

## 3. Know the supports and accommodations you will need

This is the third thing you need to focus on to reduce the chances of getting into difficulty. In some ways it is the most important because it is what will ensure that you keep the first two things at the forefront of your mind! If you fail to use the supports and accommodations that you need then the chances of your ADHD distracting you from what you need to do as a student will increase. The first step to receiving supports and accommodations is to disclose your ADHD to the college access or disability officer and request a meeting. At this meeting a needs assessment will be carried out which will identify the types of supports and accommodations that will be provided. It is the responsibility of the college disability service to identify and provide these services however, it is your responsibility to use them! This means that you will need to make appointments for additional supports outside of your lecture times and keep them. See section 6 for more information about the needs assessment process.

It is recommended that you review your progress at regular intervals with support staff so that you can ensure you are keeping up with course work, assignments and the basic understanding of the key concepts. Why not join (or set up) a peer study group?

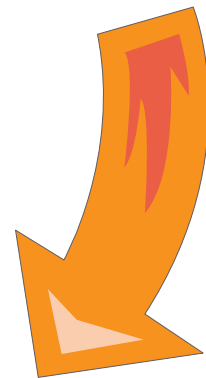


# How will I manage in college?

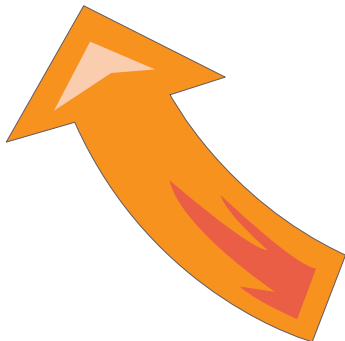


**How does ADHD affect me?**

**What will my course require me to do?**



**What supports will assist me in reaching my potential?**



## **Section 5:**

# **Entry to 3rd level education in Ireland**

## **What are the options when applying to college?**

The Central Applications Office (CAO) is the organisation responsible for administering about 60,000 applications each year. There are four ways of getting into 3rd level Colleges in Ireland and a CAO application is required for all of them.

### **1. Leaving certificate points**

This is the traditional route and the one that the majority of students use to get into College. The points system is merit based meaning that it takes only the grades you achieve in your Leaving Certificate into account. The points for 3rd level courses are determined each year by the points achieved by the applicants, so this means they can change from year to year. You can sit the Leaving Certificate more than once, however, for scoring purposes only the six highest results from one sitting will be counted. In addition to the points, many courses have specific entry requirements that applicants must also meet, such as a C1 grade in higher maths, a science subject or a language. You are advised to read the college prospectus for any college or university you wish to attend and the CAO guidelines carefully before completing your CAO application.

### **2. Mature student entry**

Applicants who are aged 23 or more on January 1st of the year of entry do not have to apply on the basis of Leaving Certificate points. However, the application process involves providing details of your previous education and work experience and may also require you to attend an interview. As well as applying through the CAO you may also have to apply to the individual college. You are advised to read the College Prospectus for any College or University you wish to attend before completing your CAO application.

### **3. Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)**

HEAR is a means of entry into third level education for applicants who are socio-economically disadvantaged. There are a number of places available in participating colleges for students who can demonstrate that socio-economic disadvantage has had a negative impact on their opportunities in education.



## HEAR participating higher education institutions:

**Dublin City University (DCU)**  
**Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)**  
**National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG)**  
**National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUIM)**  
**Trinity College Dublin (TCD)**  
**University College Cork (UCC)**  
**University College Dublin (UCD)**  
**University of Limerick (UL)**  
**Church of Ireland College of Education**  
**Froebel College of Education**  
**Colaiste Mhuire, Marino Institute of Education**  
**Mary Immaculate College, Limerick**  
**Mater Dei Institute of Education**  
**St. Angela's College, Sligo**  
**St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra**

Applicants through HEAR must meet certain criteria and entry requirements. See the HEAR website for more information: [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie)  
 FETAC operate a Higher Education Links Scheme whereby applicants with Level 5 Certificates and Level 6 Advanced Certificates can apply to Higher Education courses in colleges throughout Ireland. For further details see the FETAC website: [www.fetac.ie](http://www.fetac.ie)

## 4. Disability Access Route for Education (DARE) What is DARE?

DARE facilitates access to some higher education colleges for applicants with disabilities, who, because of the impact of their disability, may not gain the competitive CAO points for their course.

If you disclose your ADHD on the CAO application form you can complete a DARE application form online. Complete the first part yourself, making sure you identify the nature of your difficulty and the supports you need. Complete the personal statement part of this form making clear the impact your ADHD has had on your education. You will need to get a Psychiatrist, Clinical Psychologist or Neurologist with experience of diagnosing ADHD in adolescents or adults to complete the Evidence of Disability section. Make sure the form is fully completed and stamped. The final part of the form must be completed by a school principal, teacher or Guidance Counsellor. Return the form to the CAO.



## What happens when I return the form to the CAO?

The CAO sends a copy of your DARE application for assessment by all the colleges participating in the DARE process. If your application confirms that your ADHD has had a significant impact on your secondary education you will be considered eligible through the DARE process.



## What colleges participate in the DARE process?

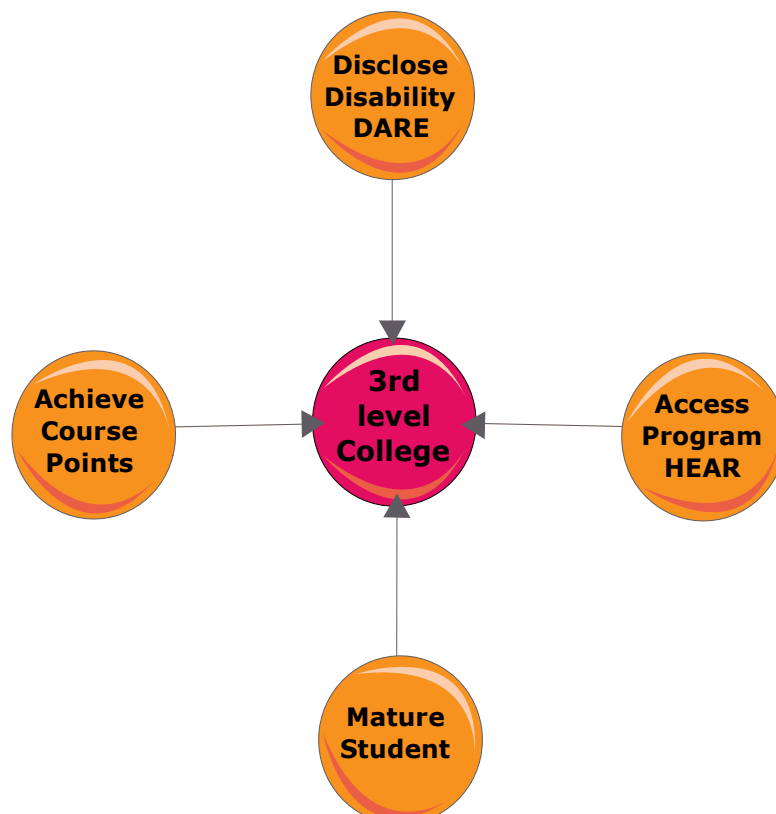
Higher Education Institution	Further details available from:
<b>Athlone Institute of Technology</b>	<a href="http://www.ait.ie/admissions/disability">www.ait.ie/admissions/disability</a> .
<b>Dublin City University</b>	<a href="http://www.dcu.ie/students/disability/index">www.dcu.ie/students/disability/index</a>
<b>Dublin Institute of Technology</b>	<a href="http://www.dit.ie/DIT/disability/index.html">www.dit.ie/DIT/disability/index.html</a>
<b>National College of Ireland</b>	<a href="http://www.ncirl.ie/Current%20Students/Student%20Support">www.ncirl.ie/Current Students/Student Support</a>
<b>National University of Ireland Galway</b>	<a href="http://www.nuigalway.ie/disability/applying.html">www.nuigalway.ie/disability/applying.html</a>
<b>National University of Ireland Maynooth</b>	<a href="http://www.nuim.ie/services">www.nuim.ie/services</a>
<b>Trinity College Dublin</b>	<a href="http://www.tcd.ie/disability">www.tcd.ie/disability</a>
<b>University College Cork</b>	<a href="http://www.ucc.ie/en/dss/Welcome">www.ucc.ie/en/dss/Welcome</a>
<b>University College Dublin</b>	<a href="http://www.ucd.ie/access/dss.htm">www.ucd.ie/access/dss.htm</a>
<b>University of Limerick</b>	<a href="http://www.ul.ie/disabilityservices/admissions.htm">www.ul.ie/disabilityservices/admissions.htm</a>

## Are there supports available in Further Education?

Students must be registered on full time Post Leaving Certificate Courses to avail of supports. Funding is available only for courses at FETAC Level 5 and 6. Students should contact the Disability Support Officer or appointed staff member in the college as early as possible to arrange an appointment to discuss his or her specific support requirements. The Disability Support Officer (DSO) or appointed staff member will carry out an Assessment of Needs with the student in order to identify how best to support the student during their time in college. The DSO will apply for funding on behalf of the student to the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Appropriate documentation must accompany all funding applications. All students With disabilities who are registered on full time courses in Post Leaving Certificate centres can apply for the funding.

The National Learning Network (NLN) and City of Dublin VEC Disability Support Service is currently available in eight colleges of Further Education in the City of Dublin VEC. Please see [www.cdvec.ie](http://www.cdvec.ie) and follow the student support link.

## There are 4 entry routes into 3rd level education:



## Section 6: Disability Services



### When do I find out if I am getting into college?

Unless you are a mature student (over 23 on January 1st in the year of entry) you will not receive any offers until after the Leaving Certificate results in mid August. If you meet the necessary entry requirements and you get above the Leaving Certificate points for the course of your choice then you are likely to receive an offer of a place. If you fall short of the points for your course you may still be offered a place through the DARE process. This will depend on several factors such as; the number of places on the course, the number of other applicants with a disability who also applied for that course and the points they got.

In either case, whether you get the points or are offered a DARE place, as soon as you accept an offer, a disability or access officer from the college you are going to will contact you and invite you to attend for a Needs Assessment.

### What is a Needs Assessment?

A needs assessment is carried out by an access or disability officer so that the college can put in place supports and accommodations for you. Ideally this is done in advance of your course starting so that you get the best possible opportunity to succeed as a student. In general, a good assessment will take account of three things; the nature of the disability, the specific impact it has on you and the way you manage with compensatory skills; and the requirements of the course you are studying.

## How is a Needs Assessment carried out?

The process has already begun to some extent before you meet because the general nature of ADHD is understood and the disability officer will have a copy of your DARE application with your personal statement, evidence of disability and academic reference. The disability officer will also have a good understanding of the requirements of the course you are taking. The purpose of the needs assessment meeting is to go into more detail in all of these areas so that your specific needs and expectations can be met as closely as possible. At the end of the needs assessment, you should have a much clearer picture of what specific supports and accommodations you will be using in the year ahead.

## What supports and accommodations are available at 3rd level?

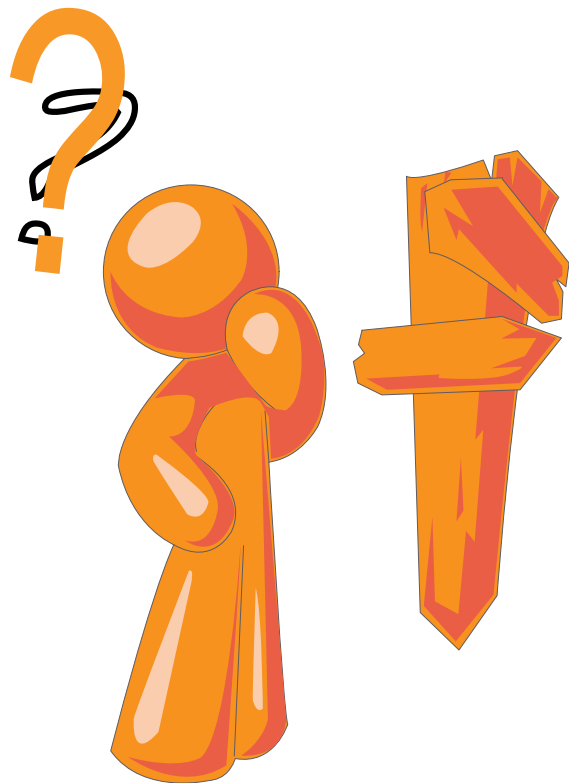
A support could be any intervention that requires the assistance of another person or the use of assistive technology. An accommodation is any change to a standard rule or procedure that takes account of a disadvantage caused by a disability. Examples of the most common supports and accommodations used by students with all types of disability are listed here:

### Supports

- Academic Support
- Academic Tuition
- Assistive Technology
- Counselling / Unilink
- Library Assistant
- Photocopy Cards

### Accommodations

- Accommodation/Housing
- Additional Time in Exams
- Extended Library Loans
- Extensions to Assignment Deadlines
- Learning Education Needs Summary
- Permission to record Lectures



# Example of good practice: The Unilink Service at TCD

## What is Unilink?

Unilink is a support service for students who may be experiencing mental health issues, stress, health difficulties or other disabilities.

Unilink offers support with the day-to-day things that students do, such as managing studying, going to lectures, socialising, getting essays and project work done on time and doing exams. Unilink focuses on the practical things that students need and want to do, both academic and social. Some of the issues that students may want to work on could include the following:

- Difficulty managing time, not having enough time to do everything or things taking longer due to disability
- Difficulty in group situations in lectures and missing tutorials
- Having difficulty accessing information
- Not really knowing what is expected in course work
- Difficulty working out study techniques to suit individual strengths and weaknesses
- Problems communicating with other students or staff
- Putting things off, finding it difficult to start things like essays and projects
- Feeling overwhelmed by the stress of college life
- Difficulty managing the effects of fatigue or chronic pain
- Feeling isolated in college
- Difficulty developing a healthy and balanced lifestyle

The service is provided on campus at hours that will suit students involved in the programme. As it is a needs-based service, the first step is working out what academic, social and lifestyle needs are, and how these can best be addressed. A personal programme is then developed in conjunction with each student, setting goals to improve their situation.



## Who provides the service?

The service is run by the academic Discipline of Occupational Therapy in partnership with the Disability Service at Trinity College Dublin. The Unilink staff are qualified and experienced occupational therapists, whose focus is on managing the day-to-day aspects of college.

## Who can use the Unilink Service?

Students can use Unilink if they are referred to the service.

They can be referred by:

- Contacting their tutor and explaining that they need additional support. A tutor may then refer students to other college services, such as the Disability Service, Counselling or Health Service. Some tutors may also refer students directly to Unilink.
- Going to the Disability Service and asking to be referred to Unilink.
- Going to the health service and asking a doctor for a referral to Unilink.
- Attending the student counseling service, where they may suggest that Unilink may be helpful.
- Students must be registered with the Disability Service to use Unilink.

## For more information

A more detailed booklet about Unilink is available for people who are interested in using the service.

## Who to contact

Clodagh Nolan,

Occupational Therapy, Trinity Centre for Health Sciences, St. James's Hospital, Dublin 8. Phone: (01) 896 3218

Current and prospective students of Trinity College can contact the Disability Service for more information:

Phone: (01) 896 3111 E-mail: [disab@tcd.ie](mailto:disab@tcd.ie)

## Section 7: Financial Supports

There are two main sources of funds for students with disabilities:

### 1. Social Welfare Benefits include:

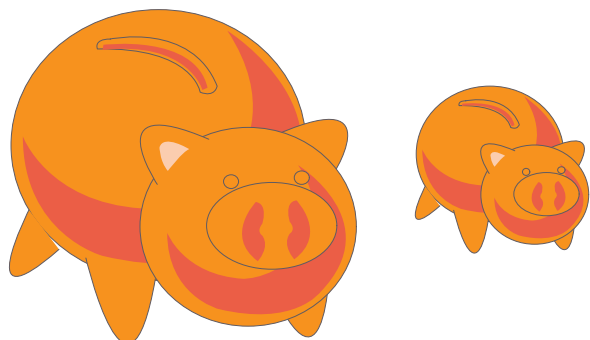
- Disability Allowance
- Back to Education Allowance
- Supplementary Benefits. See [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie) for more information.

### 2. ESF Student with Disability Fund:

Much of the study-related support for students with a disability is financed through the ESF Student with Disability Fund. The National Access Office on behalf of the Department of Education & Science pays these grants. This grant is not means-tested and is available to undergraduates and postgraduates studying in the third level sector. This fund is for a person with a specific academic support need associated with their disability.

Students can contact their disability officer to discuss funding. For more information on all funding available to students in higher education see: [www.studentfinance.ie](http://www.studentfinance.ie)

**Student Finance** is a comprehensive user friendly website that will help students and their families navigate the financial supports available.





## Appendix: List of assessment centres

### Assessment for children:

**Mater Hospital Child Guidance Clinic**, Nth Circular Rd, Dublin 7

**Temple Street Hospital**, Temple Street, Dublin 1 Ph: 8748763/ 8741751

**Tallaght Hospital**, Tallaght, Dublin 24 Ph: 4142000

**St James' Hospital**, James's Street, Dublin 8 Ph: 4103 000

Psychiatric Clinic Suite 5, Ph: 4162810

**Our Ladys' Hospital**, Crumlin, Dublin 12. Ph: 4096100

**St Joseph's, Fairview**, Adolescent and Family Service 193 Richmond Rd, D3 Ph: 8370802

**Mater Child Guidance Clinic**, Health Centre, Swords. Ph: 01 8907151

### Lucena Clinic for children and adolescents:

- 59 Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6 Ph: 01 4923596
- Exchange Hall, Belgard Square North, Tallaght, Dublin 24 Ph: 014526333
- Century Court, Dun Laoghaire Co. Dublin Ph: 01 2809809
- Sessa House, Vevay Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow Ph: 01 2866886

### National Learning Network Assessment service:

Block A  
Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown  
Blanchardstown  
Dublin 15

Ph: 01-8851386

E-mail: [assessment@nl.n.ie](mailto:assessment@nl.n.ie)

Web: [www.nln.ie](http://www.nln.ie) [www.nln.ie](http://www.nln.ie)

### The Psychological Society of Ireland:

CX House,  
2A Corn Exchange Place,  
Poolbeg Street,  
Dublin 2.

Ph: 01 4749160

Email: [info@psihq.ie](mailto:info@psihq.ie)

### Health Service Executive:

Head Office,  
Oak house, Millennium Park,  
Naas, Co. Kildare.

### Assessment for adults & children:

David J. Carey  
Owen Connolly Counselling, Therapy & Education Centre  
297 Beechwood Court, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin  
Mobile: 086 8115764  
Email: [davidcarey48@gmail.com](mailto:davidcarey48@gmail.com)

The Dean Clinic Referrals, St Patrick's Hospital,  
James's Street, Dublin 8,  
Ph: 01-2493535

Prof. M. Fitzgerald  
Email: [fitzi@iol.ie](mailto:fitzi@iol.ie)  
Ph: 01 8211796 (Secretary)  
Mobile: 086 859 75 47

### Useful websites:

[www.hadd.ie](http://www.hadd.ie)  
[www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie)  
[www.additudemag.com](http://www.additudemag.com)  
[www.adhdeurope.eu](http://www.adhdeurope.eu)  
[www.ahead.ie](http://www.ahead.ie)  
[www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)  
[www.cogmedandlearning.com](http://www.cogmedandlearning.com)  
[www.davidjcarey.com](http://www.davidjcarey.com)  
[www.lucenaclinic.ie](http://www.lucenaclinic.ie)  
[www.lumosity.com](http://www.lumosity.com)  
[www.professormichaelfitzgerald.eu](http://www.professormichaelfitzgerald.eu)  
[www.studygs.net/adhd/index](http://www.studygs.net/adhd/index)



## About HADD and this guide

HADD exists to make life better for people with ADHD and their families. We aim to ensure adequate resources are available to support their needs. HADD provides information and promotes research. We hold parent evenings, open meetings and conferences. We aim to work in partnership with statutory bodies to develop and improve health and education services for children and adults with ADHD. Following on from the success of our book in relation to primary and secondary education entitled "ADHD and Education, a Resource for Teachers" this new guide for 3rd level students aims to encourage children and adults with ADHD to reach their full potential.



Association for Higher Education Access and Disability is an independent non-profit organisation working to promote full access to and participation in further and higher education for students with disabilities and to enhance their employment prospects on graduation.



Disability Advisors Working Network is the professional organisation for Disability Officers supporting learners with disabilities in higher education in Ireland.

