



Five Steps to Choosing a Third-Level Course



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Step 1: You and Your Interests

What areas of occupation are you interested in? Do you have a flair for writing, music, sport or science? What are your leisure interests? Identify your own preferences and strengths - whatever they may be. Ask a professional such as your guidance counsellor for a test of occupational interests and preferences.

Step 2: Subjects

If you are preparing for or have sat the Leaving Certificate, there will be particular subjects that you like; (these are often the subjects you perform best at). Your list of subjects will help you to select broad areas for third level. Talk to your subject teachers and your guidance counsellor. Be realistic when you weigh up your strengths, but don't underestimate yourself.

Step 3: Get the Facts

There's a lot of reliable information available about careers and courses. You can get this from:

- handbooks, leaflets, career books and reliable websites such as Qualifax.ie
- teachers
- guidance counsellors
- parents
- talking to people working in the career
- friends and relatives whose judgement you trust
- your own work experience or summer job
- open days at colleges

Don't be slow to enquire. People know this is important to you, and they will help if you ask.

Step 4: Be Flexible

Be open minded and flexible. Look at broad careers, not narrow jobs. Many people change jobs several times during their working lives. Look at all the levels: higher certificates, degrees, and honours degrees. Remember, CIT will assist you to progress along our "Ladder of Progression" from one level to the next.

Step 5: Know the System

Most students enter third level through the CAO Points System. Talk to your parents, teachers and counsellors and with their help try to estimate your CAO points level. Once again, be realistic, but don't underestimate yourself. Remember, the CAO is just a selection mechanism based on supply and demand. If you end up with "points to spare", that's okay; what's important is to choose a course that matches what you want.

The Points System

When you are considering points levels for courses, please be cautious. Points levels change from year to year due to supply and demand for places. The points levels for the coming academic year cannot be predicted, and past points levels are given as a general guide only. Most important of all, do not judge the quality of a course or its employment value from its points level.

How to Succeed at CIT

Full-time study at CIT requires a full-time commitment from you. The combination of academic and practical subjects in many of our courses can make for a very busy timetable - usually between 20 hours and 30 hours per week. This schedule means that excellent class attendance and regular study are vital.

In other words - consistent study and effort from day one is the secret of success!