

Studying in Cork

a guide for parents



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This booklet is designed to give you the information you need to help you understand the third level system and to help you to plan with your child what options will work best for them.

Cork Institute of Technology, Access Office, Bishopstown, Cork.

For general queries please contact the Access Support Service T: 021 4335138

For disability queries please contact the Disability Support Service T: 021 4335107

Your role as a parent

Your child is about to make one of the **biggest decisions of their lives**. It should involve a lot of thought and research on their part and shouldn't be rushed. As a parent you play a very important role in helping and supporting your child to make the right choices **for them**. You can do this by helping your child:

- to gather information about what study choices are available in Cork and elsewhere; and
- to help them with their course choice.

This guide aims to give you a clear explanation of the educational opportunities that are available to your child after their Leaving Cert and information about the:

- Leaving Certificate examinations;
- points system; and
- CAO (Central Applications Office) system.

Fees and grants

We also include information on available fees and grants and transport to and from the colleges in Cork.

In these harsh economic times when employment opportunities are limited, deciding to study after the Leaving Cert can provide young people with extra skills, knowledge, and self-confidence. Getting a qualification can also boost your child's chances of getting a job. In Cork, students have excellent choices when it comes to going to college with:

- four Further Education colleges;
- two Higher Education institutions; and
- a wide range of programmes of study to choose from.

Colleges also offer students financial, personal and learning supports. This booklet aims to give you the information you need to help your son or daughter to make the right choice for them.

Practical steps

There are some practical steps you can take to help your child in making this big decision.

Step 1: Discuss your child's interests

You probably already have a good idea of what your child's interests are, but take some time to sit down with your son or daughter to really explore what:

- they have a flair for;
- they enjoy doing;
- interests them; and
- their strengths are.

Why not suggest that your child asks their career guidance counsellor for advice?

Step 2: Discuss your child's subjects

What subjects does your son or daughter really enjoy and do well in? Write a list of these and then write another list of broad study areas using the college handbooks (these are available from the colleges, their websites or in school). Your child's career guidance counsellor would be a great resource here.

Step 3: Get the facts

You can help your child by encouraging them to:

- look up college websites;
- phone the colleges for a handbook;
- look at www.qualifax.ie; (this is the National Learners' Database)
- talk to other family members or friends who might be in your child's chosen career; and
- attend the college open days.

Step 4: Be flexible

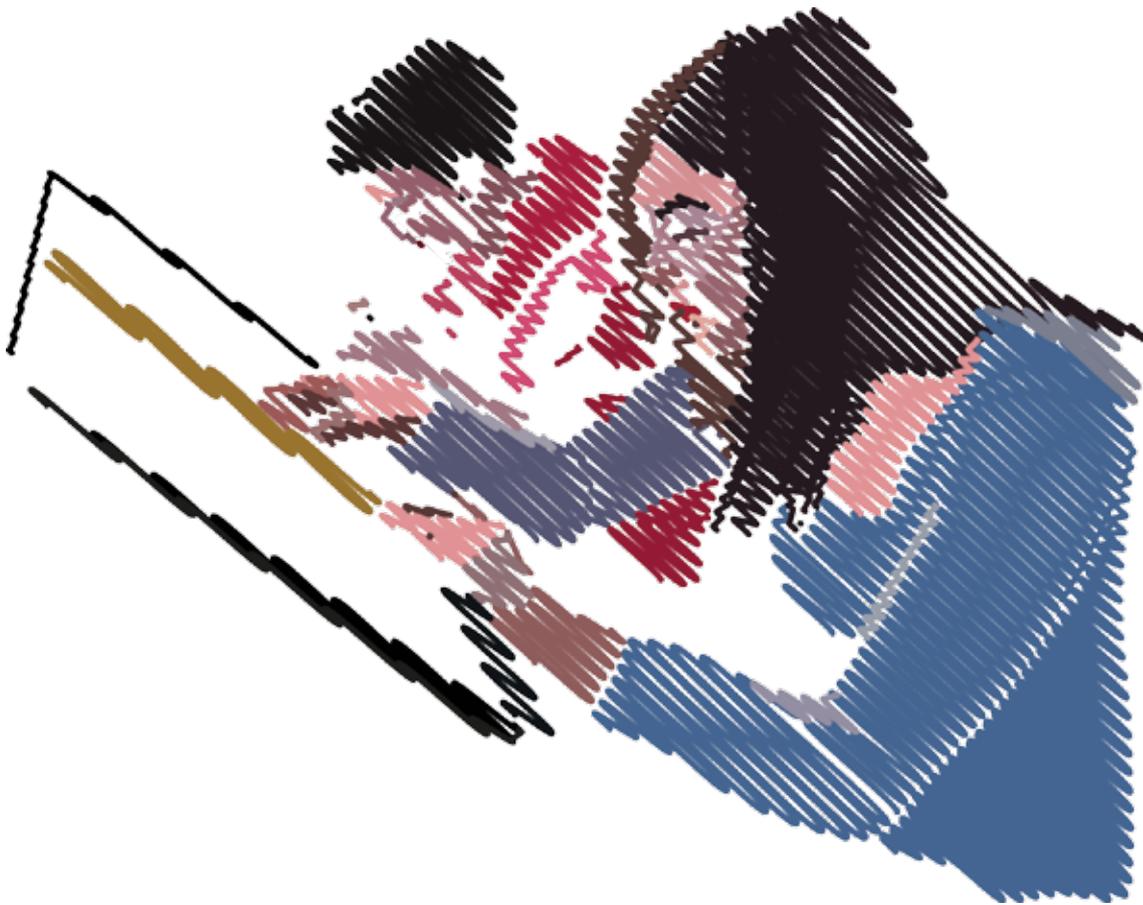
Be open-minded and listen to your son or daughter. Encourage them to make a few choices, to look at broad careers and not narrow jobs. Most people change jobs several times in their lifetime. Look at lots of study options and all study levels.

Step 5: Know the system

Most students have a good idea of the entry system to college. This guide will help you gain that knowledge and will direct you to the right place if you are looking for more information. Keep yourself informed and up to date:

- phone the colleges;
- visit the websites;
- talk to staff at your child's school.

Encourage your child to do the same.



The Leaving Certificate explained

There is more than one type of Leaving Certificate – your child may be sitting either the:

- Leaving Certificate (established); or
- Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

Your child may also be sitting the Leaving Certificate with the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). See Page 7 for more information.

Leaving Certificate (established)

The Leaving Certificate (established – shortened to LC in some cases) is studied over two years usually fifth and sixth year.

Ordinary and honours subjects in the Leaving Cert

In the Leaving Cert, points are awarded for marks or grades achieved in your child's exam. More points are given for a 'higher' or 'honours' paper. Here is a list of the points for ordinary and honours subjects at Leaving Cert level:

Grade	Higher Level	Ordinary Level
A1	100	60
A2	90	50
B1	85	45
B2	80	40
B3	75	35
C1	70	30
C2	65	25
C3	60	20
D1	55	15
D2	50	10
D3	45	5

Extra points for honours maths

From 2012, a bonus of 25 points will be awarded to students who achieve a grade D3 or above in honours mathematics. For example, if your child gets a C1 in honours maths they will get 70 points plus 25 points bringing the total points to 95. This is only the case if maths is being used as one of the top six subjects to calculate points for the CAO. The CAO system is explained in more detail on page 10.

The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)

The LCVP adds a vocational element to the Leaving Cert (established). Typically, LCVP students take seven Leaving Certificate subjects plus the Link Modules. Of these seven Leaving Certificate subjects, the student must take Irish, a foreign language and choose 2 subjects from a specific list of subjects (either 2 science, 2 business or 2 practical). The student can also study a further three subjects of choice.

The link modules '*Preparation for the World of Work*' and '*Enterprise Education*' are studied over two years and are assessed by a written exam (worth 60%) which takes place in May before the Leaving Certificate and by a portfolio of work (worth 40%). These two link modules count as an extra subject in the Leaving Certificate results and can be used to calculate CAO points. Please note that the link modules subject cannot be used for minimum entry requirements, see page 14 for more information. The points are allocated as follows:

Grade	Points
Distinction	70 CAO points
Merit	50 CAO points
Pass	30 CAO points



Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

The LCA is studied over two years. Each year is divided into two half-year blocks (also called sessions) and students are examined in January and May of each year. This is unique to the Leaving Certificate Applied and allows students to be examined as they go along. Students are assessed on modules, tasks and exams and the following table explains the awards, results and credits in the LCA.

Certificate Levels

Award	Result	Credits
Pass	60-69%	(120 – 139 credits)
Merit	70-84%	(140 – 169 credits)
Distinction	85-100%	(170 – 200 credits)

For more information go to <http://lca.sls.ie/>



Applying for college

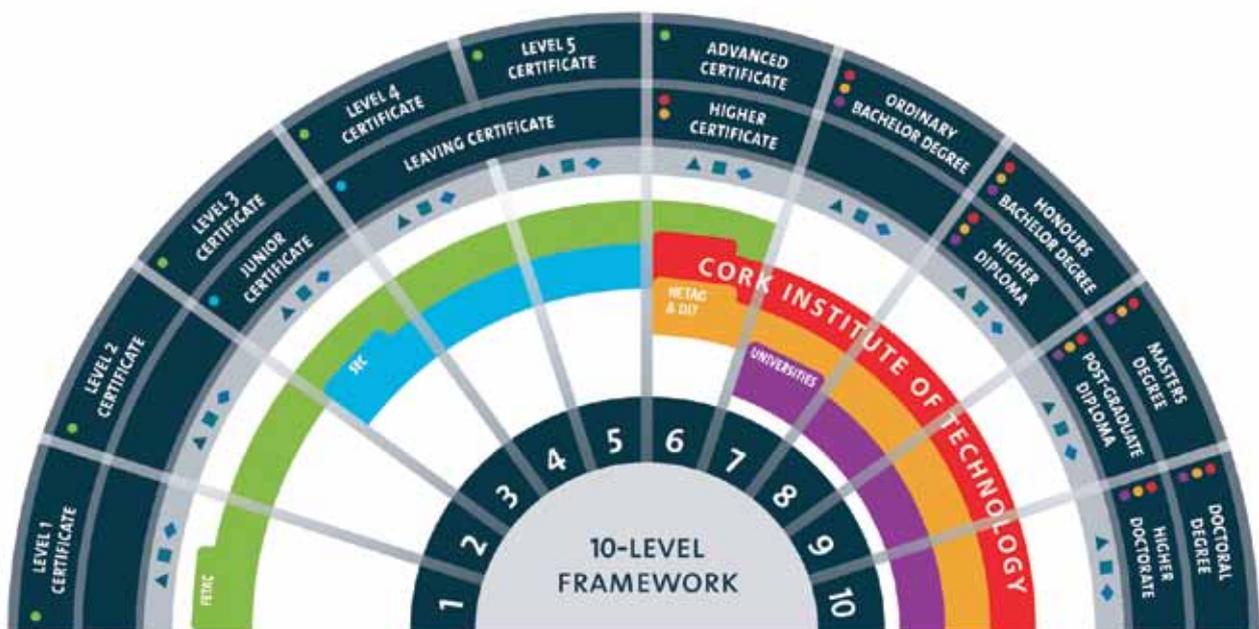
If your child would like to continue studying after the Leaving Cert they have a number of options. The following table explains their choices depending on the Leaving Cert they have done.

Leaving Cert studied	Options to study	How to apply
Leaving Certificate and LCVP	Higher Education Route Further Education Route	Apply through the CAO Apply directly to college
LCA	Further Education Route*	Apply directly to college

*After successfully completing a FETAC award (and meeting minimum requirements) there are 'progression routes' to CIT (more information on page 15)

The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

This is a system that compares qualifications gained; these may have been gained in Ireland or abroad. All state examinations, including the Junior Cert and Leaving Cert, feature on this fan-like diagram, so too do awards gained in further education colleges, institutes of technology and universities. The diagram makes it easy to understand what qualification your child is applying for, is studying for or has achieved. After the Leaving Cert, your child will hold a Level 4/5 on the NFQ.



The National Framework of Qualifications diagram is explained in full on website: www.nfq.ie

During the Leaving Cert year your child will make decisions about what they'd like to do after they finish secondary school. Your child can choose to apply to study a Level 5 FETAC award by directly applying to their chosen further education college. Further education colleges accept online applications for September entry as early as January during the Leaving Cert year. Your child must also do an interview.

Your child might choose to apply for a Level 6 (Higher Certificate), Level 7 (Ordinary Degree) or Level 8 (Honours Degree) at CIT through the CAO system. Entry to these courses will depend on your child's results at Leaving Cert level. For more information on entry requirements go directly to the college website www.cit.ie.

Gaining minimum results does not guarantee a place

It is important to note, however, that even if your child's Leaving Cert results meet the minimum entry requirement, it does not guarantee that they will be offered a course. You can get a realistic idea of how many points your child will need for a particular course, by looking at the listing of the previous year's points at www.cao.ie. These points can change from year to year and only act as an indication of the level of results to aim for in the Leaving Cert.

The CAO application process

If your child is sitting the Leaving Cert and they want to apply to CIT then they should apply to the Central Applications Office (CAO) in Galway, (phone [091] 509 800). They can apply:

- online at www.cao.ie; or
- by sending a paper application by post to – Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway.

You must pay for this application either online using a laser or credit card; or by going to the bank before the close of business (5:15pm) on 1 February. Late applications must be paid by 1 May.

February 1 is the closing date

The **closing date** for the normal application is the **1 February**. Late applications are allowed up to the **1 May**, but there is an extra charge for this. Only one application is allowed per person but your child can **change their mind** about their choices; this can be done between the 1 May and 1 July.

For more information including fees and closing dates see www.cao.ie or talk to your child's career guidance counsellor.

After the Leaving Cert Applied – Further Education and FETAC

If your child would like to continue studying after the Leaving Cert Applied (LCA) they can choose to do a full-time Post Leaving Certificate Course (PLC) in one of the four full-time providers of PLCs in Cork (see providers in Cork below).

PLC courses are also available to students who complete the Leaving Cert (established). Your child might also have the option to apply to CIT through 'progression routes' (see Page 15) once they have successfully completed a PLC and meet minimum requirements.

Post Leaving Cert courses

Cork College of Commerce

Phone

www.corkcollegeofcommerce.ie

(021) 422 2100

Coláiste Stiofáin Naofa

Phone

www.csn.ie

(021) 496 1020

St John's Central College

Phone

www.stjohnscollege.ie

(021) 425 5500

Northside Campus Knocknaheeny

Phone

E: terencemacswineycc@eircom.net

(021) 439 1782

FETAC courses

These educational institutions generally provide FETAC courses, prepare students for the world of work and act as a pathway to higher education. FETAC stands for the Further Education Training Awards Council. There are also industry specific awards available in these institutions. Please visit the websites above for more information about these college courses and awards.

There are a number of independent colleges that provide Further Education courses in Cork. For more information on FETAC courses and providers in Cork please visit the FETAC website www.fetac.ie

After the Leaving Cert – Higher Education

If your child wishes to study at the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) they must apply through the CAO system either online or by post. If your child has completed a PLC they may also be eligible to apply to study at CIT. See page 15.

Level	College	Entry Level/CAO*
Higher Education	Cork Institute of Technology	6, 7, 8

*Entry Level/CAO: this refers to the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) as outlined on page 9

What can CIT offer your child?

Cork Institute of Technology

Website: www.cit.ie

Phone: (021) 432 6100

Student support, clubs and societies

CIT is highly rated for its facilities and for its student support services. We were awarded the Sunday Times Institute of the Year 2010/2011 award. With more than 50 clubs and societies to choose from, students are spoiled for choice. We encourage first year students to sign up to clubs and societies at the beginning of the year. We have excellent sports facilities and boast a state-of-the-art library.

Four CIT campuses

We have four main campuses:

- Bishopstown Campus;
- CIT Crawford College of Art & Design;
- CIT Cork School of Music; and
- the National Maritime College of Ireland.

We offer programmes of study in:

- Business Studies
- Science and Computing
- Engineering
- Humanities
- Art
- Music.

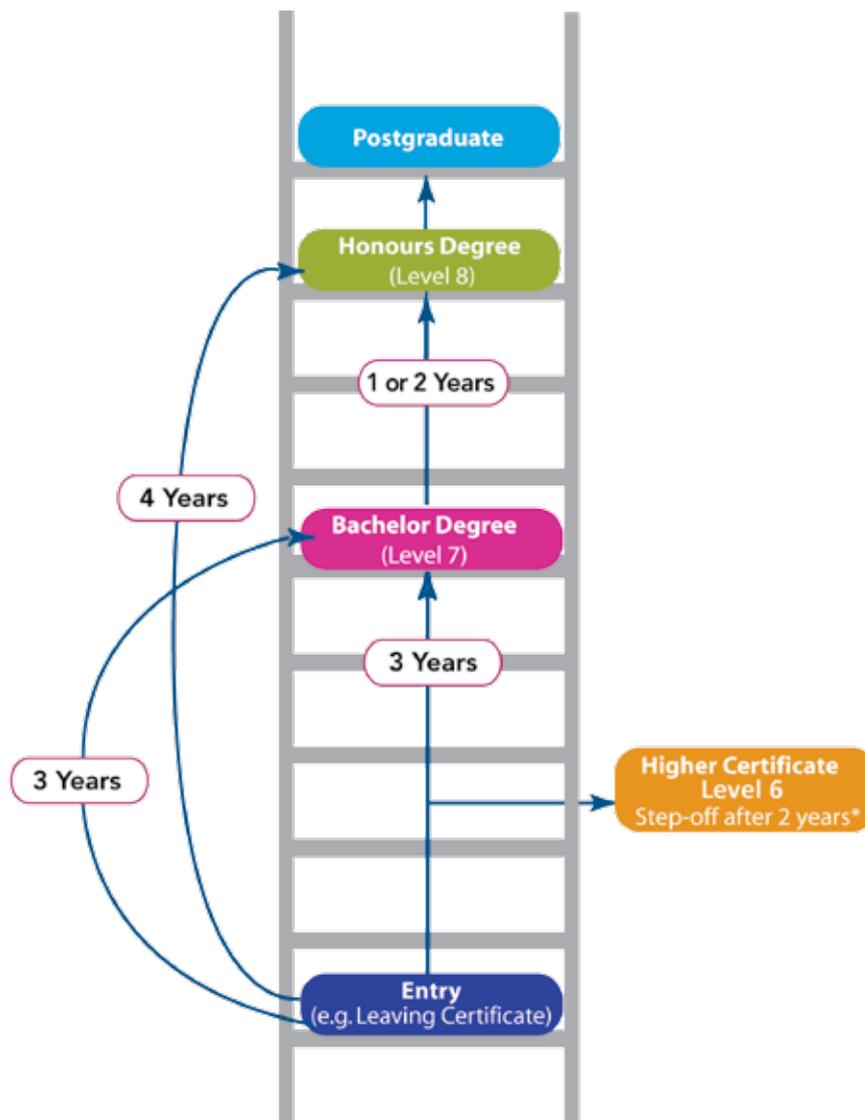
Students can study for a variety of qualifications including:

- Higher Certificates (Level 6);
- Bachelor's Degrees (Level 7);
- Honours Degrees (Level 8);
- Masters Degrees (Level 9); and
- PhD Degrees (Level 10).

We use a system of modularisation and semesterisation. This means that we break the academic year into two semesters. Students study six modules per semester and sit their exams at the end of each semester. This allows students to spread their workload throughout the year. For a full breakdown of modules and semesters visit <http://www.cit.ie/courses>

We allow students to go through the different levels of qualifications along a 'ladder of progression'. A student, in some programmes of study, can begin by studying a Level 6 Higher Certificate and progress to a Level 8 Honours Degree and even higher. There is also flexibility that allows students to 'step off' the ladder after completing a level and walk away with a qualification.

CIT's Ladder of Progression



CAO - minimum entry requirements

Bachelor Degree (Level 7)

The current minimum entry standard for Leaving Certificate applicants to a Level 7 Bachelor Degree course is a D3 ordinary in five subjects including mathematics and either English or Irish.

Honours Bachelor Degree (Level 8)

The minimum entry standard for Leaving Certificate applicants to Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree programmes is generally a pass in six Leaving Certificate subjects with two higher C3 grades and 4 D3 ordinary grades, including mathematics and either English or Irish.

There are some exceptions, please check the CIT website www.cit.ie

Please note: a pass in the Leaving Certificate does not guarantee a place in college, see page 10.

Trend in points changes every year

It is important to be aware of the trend in CAO points; although these change every year and are difficult to predict. Knowing the points trend will give your child a general idea of what they need to aim for. A useful exercise would be to look at your child's results after the pre-exams to see how they compare with general points trends. A full listing of CAO points for the previous year can be found on www.cao.ie

CIT support services

We take great pride in providing supports and services for our students. Some of these include:

- Access Office
- Learning Support Unit
- Disability Office
- Accommodation Office
- Careers and Counselling Service
- Chaplaincy and Student Support Team
- Medical Centre with on-site doctors, physiotherapists and nurses
- Clubs and Societies Office
- Students' Union
- Student Ombudsman
- Student Induction Programme

Access to education

FETAC (Level 5 or 6)

For CIT full-time courses, holders of FETAC (Level 5 or 6) **should apply directly through the CAO system**. Applicants must present a full award (major award: 8 modules). Points are allocated to each module and a CAO points score is calculated. Points are allocated as follows:

Pass:	20 points
Merit:	35 points
Distinction:	50 points

For information on the minimum entry requirements for Level 7 and Level 8 degrees go to: http://www.cit.ie/fetacawards_admissiontocit

FETAC (Level 6)

Holders of FETAC Level 6 awards can also directly apply to CIT Admissions Office for entry to Year two of a linked programme. Email admissions@cit.ie for more information.

For a comprehensive list of minimum entry requirements for all programmes of study at CIT please go to www.cao.ie and check out the section on FETAC qualifications.

Progression Scheme for linked schools (applies to CIT)

This is a pilot scheme in CIT where students from linked schools can apply for a limited number of places on a reduced-points system. If your child is applying through the Progression Scheme (PS) they must meet minimum requirements and get at least 200 points in their Leaving Cert. Your child must supply supporting financial documents such as P60, copy of social welfare payments, copy of medical card and so on. Students must still **apply through the CAO system** to be considered for this scheme. You can check with your child's school if it is a linked school.

For qualifying criteria and for information on link schools please contact our Access Office by phoning (021) 433 4139.

Fees and funding

Changes to student fees and grants in 2011

The maintenance grant is also called the student grant and it is the main source of funding from the Irish state for full time students in Further Education or Third Level Institutions. Family income is the key factor that is assessed when applying for the grant.

- If you are eligible for a maintenance grant your child's 'student contribution charge' may be paid directly to the college by the funding body. For more information go to www.studentfinance.ie
- For 2011/2012, the annual fee in CIT, set by the government for student services, registration and examinations is €2,000 for your first child, and €1,500 for each child after that.
- Due to the 2011 budget the non-adjacent grant qualifying criteria is now 45km (not 24km as per previous years). This refers to the distance the student lives from the college they wish to attend. There are two rates of grant payment; the adjacent grant and non-adjacent grant. For more information visit www.studentfinance.ie
- **St John's Central College, Coláiste Stiofáin Naofa, Cork College of Commerce and Northside Campus:** At these colleges, you must pay a 'Further Education Contribution' charge of €200 per student.

For more information visit www.studentfinance.ie

Other information

If your child qualifies for the grant, the funding body will pay the contribution charge directly to the college. In other words, the college fees will be paid by the funding body. If successful in obtaining a grant, your child may also receive a payment towards the cost of attending college. Levels of grant payments depend on meeting certain conditions.

For more information visit www.studentfinance.ie

Grants and funding available	Where to apply	When?
Maintenance grant PLC Course, CIT	City of Cork VEC	Online or end of August
Student Assistance Fund Not available to PLC students	Access Office of college	Enquire in college
Student Disability fund	Disability Office of college	Enquire in college

There are other sources of funding available which provide additional support to some students. For more information on fees, funding and assessment criteria visit: www.studentfinance.ie

Buses to and from CIT

- No 5** From city centre to CIT.
- No 8** Mayfield to the city centre and then to CIT.
- No 1** Orbital route serving Mayfield, Blackpool, Knocknaheeny and Bishopstown.
- No 19** Orbital route serving Mahon, Douglas, Ballyphehane, Togher and Bishopstown.

For more information on Cork City Services visit: www.buseireann.ie and choose timetable information (Cork City Services).

Abbreviations

- CAO** Central Applications Office
- CIT** Cork Institute of Technology
- FETAC** Further Education and Training Awards Council
- HETAC** Higher Education and Training Awards Council
- LC** Leaving Certificate
- LCA** Leaving Certificate Applied
- LCVP** Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
- NFQ** National Framework of Qualifications
- SEC** State Examinations Commission

Glossary of terms

Bachelor Degree

When a CIT student successfully completes 3 years of a full-time course, they receive an ordinary degree award which is called a Bachelor Degree.

Campus

College grounds

Modularisation and Semesterisation

CIT uses a system called modularisation and semesterisation.

Semesters

Each year of a full-time course is divided into two equal parts called semesters. Each semester is 15 weeks long. Semester 1 begins in September and ends in January. Semester 2 begins in February and ends in May.

Modules

A module, which is sometimes called a subject, is completed in one semester. Students normally study 6 modules in each semester.





Prepared by the Access Office at CIT

The information contained in this booklet was correct at the time of publishing.
We encourage you to keep informed of any changes.