

# Pathfinders Second-Level Route Information Sheet

## Introduction

Promoting equality of opportunity in higher education has been a national policy priority for successive governments, the HEA and third-level institutions for many years. The objective of achieving equity of access to higher education is rooted in the principles of equality and social inclusion. The main aim of any local or national Access scheme is increasing participation in higher education from groups and communities who have traditionally been under-represented, in particular, those living with socio-economic disadvantage, mature students, people with disabilities and Irish Travellers. IT Tralee has developed an access infrastructure to attract, support and retain students from these national target groups.

## About the ITT Pathfinders Scheme

The Institute's second-level schools access consists of three strands:

- **Pathfinders Route for Entry**
- **Getting College Ready:** Calendar of Events for Students, Parents and Schools
- **Star Pupil Traveller Access to Education Programme**

The Pathfinders **Route for Entry** is a supplementary admission route open to school leavers from mainstream schools in Co. Kerry. Students attending VTOS programmes in Kerry who have completed a Leaving Certificate and who are not eligible to be considered as mature candidates are eligible to apply for the Pathfinders Entry Route subject to meeting the criteria for that route.

The **Getting College Ready Calendar** is a suite of events and activities designed to raise awareness of the student experience, programmes of study in higher education, admissions requirements and academic skills required for success in third-level.

The **Star Pupil Access to Education Programme** provides information, guidance, support, summer work-experience opportunities to students from the Traveller community attending mainstream Kerry schools and who join the programme in 5<sup>th</sup> year. Successful applicants on any strand, will be given the opportunity to apply for programmes of study in ITT on a reduced points basis.

The Institute will provide post-entry support to all participants in the form of induction and orientation, academic and personal supports and educational guidance.

In order to be eligible for admission via the Pathfinders Route, the student must satisfy the following requirements:

- A. Eligibility criteria
- B. General admission requirements
- C. Minimum cut-off points

## What are the Aims and Objectives of the Pathfinders Scheme?

In line with the National Access Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015 – 2019, the aim of the **Pathfinders scheme** is to promote access for students in socio-economic groups currently identified as being under-represented in higher education. Participants in the **Star Pupil Traveller Access to Education Programme** are also considered for entry in 2017 via this route and should complete the Pathfinders application form. The objectives of the scheme are to:

- Increase the numbers of students from the target groups who have traditionally been under-represented at third-level
- Communicate the value of and support positive attitudes towards higher education
- Increase the participants' awareness and expectations of their own ability to progress to third level
- Support the participants in achieving their potential
- Provide clear information on education pathways
- Profile the learning opportunities available at ITT to allow the participants make informed choices
- Reinforce the Institute's engagement with communities and other stakeholders, particularly community-based organisations working to combat educational disadvantage
- Involve parents and teachers as key advisers to students

## Eligibility Criteria

In order to be eligible for entry the applicant **MUST** meet Criterion 1 **PLUS** two more of the criteria listed below.

### Criterion 1 - Low Income Family

To meet the income indicator the total combined income, before tax and PRSI, of your parents or guardians in the tax year prior to entry must be within the income limit as shown below. **(The applicant must meet this criterion PLUS two more).**

A low income family is determined by the number of:

- Dependent children in your family. A dependent child is a child under the age of 16 years on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017, or over 16 years and attending a full-time educational institution or medically certified as permanently unfit for work.
- People in your family in full-time education.

Number of dependent children in your family	Income Limit
Less than 4	€45,790
4-7	€50,325
8 or more	€54,630
Add €4,670 to the total income for every sibling/parent enrolled in a full-time third-level or post-leaving certificate further education course.	

### Criterion 2 - Means Tested Social Assistance Payment

To meet this criteria, the Parent/Guardians must be in receipt of a means-tested social assistance payment(s) from the Department of Social Protection for a minimum of 26 continuous weeks in the relevant year (January to December 2017).

### Criterion 3 – Medical/GP Visit Cards

To meet this criterion, the applicant and/or his/her parents/guardians must be the holder of a Medical Card or GP Visit Card valid on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

**Criterion 4 – History of third-level education in the family**

The applicant is the first of their immediate family, parents/guardians or siblings, to study at third level.

**Criterion 5 – Socio-Economic Group**

Socio-economic group – the applicant belongs to a socio-economic group which is under-represented in higher education (i.e. non-manual workers group; semi-skilled or unskilled manual workers group (which includes agricultural workers)).

**Criterion 6 – Attendance in linked school**

The applicant must have completed five years in a mainstream Kerry school that is participating in the Pathfinders Route.

***Supporting documentation is required.***

## General Admission Requirements

Candidates must apply through the CAO and complete Section 6 and also complete the direct application form.

The Institute reserves a minimum of 5% of places on all full-time programmes offered at the Institute with the exception of the nursing programme. Two places in total are allocated on the nursing programmes each year.

## Minimum cut-off points for programme of choice

All Pathfinder applicants must meet a common minimum cut-off point for all programmes as outlined below.

Programme	Minimum points required
Higher Certificate (Level 6)	<b>Within 50</b> points of CAO points in the relevant year
Ordinary Degree (Level 7)	<b>Within 50</b> points of CAO points in the relevant year
Honours Degree (Level 8)	<b>Within 50</b> points of CAO points in the relevant year
*BA Social Care (Level 7)	<b>Within 50</b> points of CAO points in the relevant year
*BA Early Child Care (Level 7)	<b>Within 50</b> points of CAO points in the relevant year
*BA Early Child Care (Level 8)	<b>Within 50</b> points of CAO points in the relevant year
*BA Youth and Community Work (Level 7)	<b>Within 50</b> points of CAO points in the relevant year
*BSc Health and Leisure (Level 7)	<b>Within 50</b> points of CAO points in the relevant year
*BSc General/Mental Health Nursing (Level 8)	<b>Within 30</b> points of CAO points in the relevant year

\*Please note specific cut-off points apply for specific programmes.

### **Higher Certificate (NFQ Level 6)**

Applicants must achieve a pass in the Leaving Certificate or equivalent examinations, obtaining a minimum grade O6/H7 in English or Gaeilge, O6/H7 in mathematics or a minimum grade of F2 in foundation level mathematics (in specified courses) and O6/H7 in three other subjects.

**Please Note:**

Foundation level mathematics meets the minimum entry criteria for the following programmes only in the Level 6 Higher Certificate Category:

- TL605 Higher Certificate in Business Information Management.

**Please Note:** Maths is not a requirement for the following programmes where the minimum leaving certificate requirement is five leaving certificate O6/H7s or an equivalent qualification (English is a mandatory requirement):

- TL620 Higher Certificate in Arts in Culinary Arts;
- TL621 Higher Certificate in Arts in Hotel Operations.

For the following higher certificate programmes, the minimum leaving certificate requirement is five Leaving Certificate O6/H7s or an equivalent qualification (English is a mandatory requirement):

- TL620 Higher Certificate in Arts in Culinary Arts
- TL621 Higher Certificate in Arts in Hospitality Studies

**Degree (NFQ Level 7)**

Applicants must achieve a pass in the Leaving Certificate or equivalent examinations, obtaining a minimum grade O6/H7 in English or Gaelge, O6/H7 in mathematics or a minimum grade of F2 in foundation level mathematics (in specified courses) and O6/H7 in three other subjects.

**Please note:** A minimum grade of F2 in foundation level mathematics fulfils the minimum entry requirements in mathematics for the following programmes:

- TL731 Bachelor of Business
- TL781 Bachelor of Arts in Social Care
- TL780 Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Care and Education

**Honours Degree (NFQ Level 8)**

Applicants must achieve a pass in the Leaving Certificate or equivalent examinations obtaining two H5 and four O6/H7 grades. Candidates are required to obtain a minimum of O6/H7 in English or Gaelge and mathematics.

**Please note:** That a minimum grade of F2 in foundation level mathematics fulfils the minimum entry requirements in mathematics for the following programmes:

- TL831 Bachelor of Business (Honours)
- TL881 Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care
- TL880 Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Care and Education.

## Institute of Technology Tralee

The Institute of Technology, Tralee will select successful candidates based on their eligibility, their application forms and the submission of all required documentation and evidence on time. Applicants who are not successful will be informed of the reasons. Any applicant can request that his/her application be reviewed should they have a query regarding the reason provided.

If a student is unsuccessful under this scheme, the student may still gain admission to IT Tralee through the traditional CAO process if they meet the entry requirements.

***If you are deemed eligible for the Pathfinders Entry Route in 2018, then your Pathfinder eligibility can be carried forward for one year for entry 2019, subject to meeting the Pathfinder entry requirements for your chosen course.***