




Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

The future is here

Parents Guide

Treoir do Thuismitheoirí



Parents Guide

Treoir do Thuismitheoirí

At Atlantic Technological University we understand that parents and guardians may have questions and concerns, as their child begins to explore their options in third level education. Entering higher education is a significant milestone in anyone's life. It's an exciting time but can also be an anxious time too.

This guide aims to help applicants and their families make the right choices for them.

How you can help

1. Make time to talk
2. Understand the options
3. Research courses
4. Get to know the CAO
5. Focus on the financials
6. Seek support
7. Why Choose Atlantic Technological University
8. Embrace Change



Make Time to Talk

Cuir am i leataobh le labhairt leo

Take the time to help your child identify their interests and what it is they like to do. Ask lots of questions like; what do they enjoy doing? What are their favourite subjects at school? What kind of job do they see themselves in?

Natural Talent

Help your child identify their natural talent and passion. Are they creative, good with numbers, have good personal skills, are they caring, a problem solver? Help them pick a passion over a profession and think longer term about the course of study.

Under Pressure

Try not to let your child be influenced or pressured by their friends and peers. Encourage your child to follow their own path. It is very common to make lifelong friendships while at university.

Find something you love to do
and you'll never have to work a day in your life.

Seek Guidance

Encourage your child to engage with their guidance counsellor about all their options. They have a wealth of knowledge; they know the various pathways available to students and are trained to help students choose the right course for them.

Offer Support

Be supportive, you may have the power to influence where your child goes from here but try to keep all options open until the research is complete. Be a good chairperson – impartial and objective, tactful, approachable, and informed.

Understand the Options

Bí ar an eolas maidir leis na roghanna

Where to next? There are a lot of options when considering future career paths. The most popular is to apply to the CAO for entry into Higher Education, such as a University, a Technological University or Institute of Technology in Ireland. Other options include PLC courses in Further Education, an apprenticeship, study abroad or to enter straight into the workplace.

Qualifications – Ladder System

The National Framework of Qualifications allow students compare qualifications across the Irish and international education systems. The framework can be viewed as a ladder. Each qualification is placed on a scale from 1 to 10 and students can work their way up the ladder as they study each level. (qqi.ie)

In this system, the Junior Certificate is placed at Level 3, the Leaving Certificate Applied is Level 4, while the traditional Leaving Certificate is Level 5. ATU offer courses from Level 6 – Level 8 (Undergraduate) and Level 9 - Level 10 Doctorate (Postgraduate).

CAO Points

Students who have taken the Leaving Certificate examination are allocated points for the results they get in their 6 best subjects at a single sitting of the Leaving Certificate. The CAO points set per course are determined by the number of spaces available and the points from the people who applied.

CAO Portal

In November 2021, a new look CAO portal was introduced. CAO applicants continue to apply for entry into Higher Education through the CAO portal, but they can now also see all the PLC courses and training opportunities available to them in one place. Applications for Further Education and apprenticeships continue to be made through traditional channels e.g. direct to the FE college or SOLAS.

High or low points

are not a measure of quality or difficulty of a course, they simply reflect supply versus demand.



Research Courses

Cúrsaí taighde

Take the time to research the options available based on the interests identified. Websites such as careersportal.ie, qualifax.ie and cao.ie can be used to narrow options before moving to the university website (atu.ie/cao) and prospectus (atu.ie/prospectus) to look at the detail of each course.

Check Entry Requirements

Each university or course may have different entry requirements to qualify for a place e.g. some courses may need honours maths, while others do not need maths at all. The entry requirements based on the application type will be found in each college webpage and prospectus.

Alternative Pathways

There is never just one way to accomplish your goals. If your child dreams of a career in a certain profession, there may be alternative routes they are not aware of. For example, Atlantic Technological University has routes into allied health professions such as physiotherapy, radiography, and occupational therapy. A number of our honours degree programmes meet Teaching Council subject requirements so students can use it as a stepping stone to a career in teaching.

Added Value

Look out for added value in a qualification such as professional accreditation, which is a kitemark of quality that demonstrates a programme meets or exceeds standards developed by experts in the profession. Many courses at ATU offer this, together with real-life work experience, which helps our graduates stand out from the crowd and enjoy increased employability.

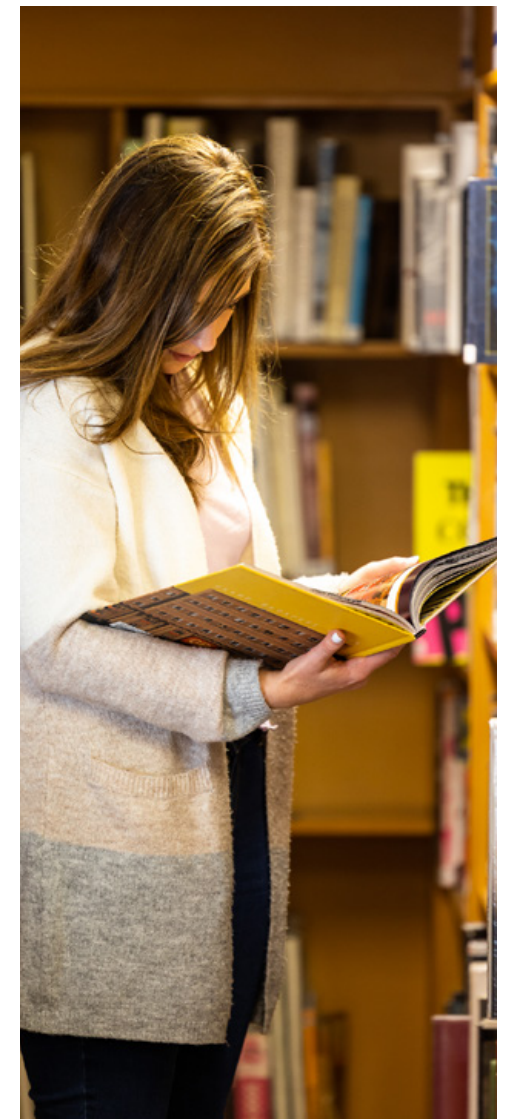


Common Entry

It is not always easy to know exactly what area to study. It is even more difficult to decide what area to specialise in. That is why our flexible common entry programmes are so popular. Common entry allows students to understand where their true passion lies. Students study a broad range of subjects before choosing what area to specialise in.

Visit the Campus

Open Days and Campus Tours give students and parents the opportunity to meet lecturers, discover more information about the course, facilities, and resources. Take the opportunity to ask questions and ensure the college is the best fit for your child. (atu.ie/opendays)





Get to Know the CAO

Cuir aithne ar an CAO

The Central Applications Office (CAO) is a centralised applications system that processes full-time undergraduate course applications the higher education institutes in the Republic of Ireland.

Apply to CAO

Applicants can use the CAO system to apply for undergraduate courses across a mixture of colleges and levels using a single application. The levels available on the CAO are Level 6 higher certificates, Level 7 ordinary degrees and Level 8 honours degrees.

Key CAO Dates

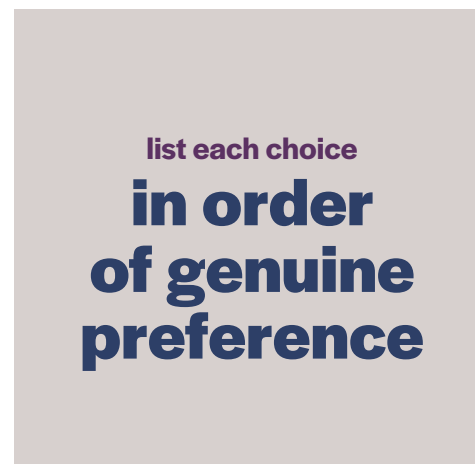
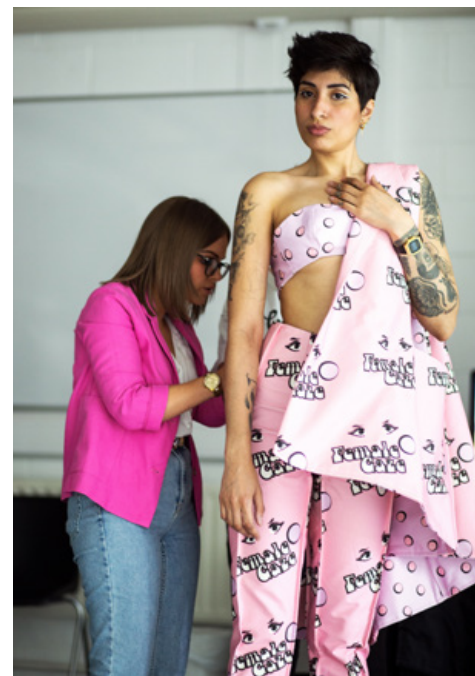
- 5th November at 12pm: CAO opens for applications
- 20th January at 5pm: Online discounted application (€30) closes
- 1st February at 5pm: Normal Application Deadline (€45)
- 5th March CAO Re-opens for late applications (€60)
- 1st May at 5pm: Late application closing date
- 5th May to 1st July at 5pm: Change of mind date (FOC)
- Mid-August Round one offers and available places

Two Lists

Applicants can choose to apply for up to twenty courses – ten at Level 8 and ten at Level 6 or 7. The choices on one list do not affect the choices on the other; your child may receive two independent course offers, one from each list. They can only accept one offer.

Back Up

Be sure to have a backup plan & include alternative routes into a preferred career. Selecting a Level 6 or 7, instead of a Level 8, can often lead a student to the exact same place thanks to the ladder system, in often the same length of time. This also could give the student greater flexibility to change path along the way.



Genuine Preference

It is vitally important to check the course choices are listed in genuine order of preference. An applicant will only be offered the course highest on their list for which they are eligible. Students should not base their preference order on the points they think they might get or the cut-off they expect on the course offers.

Remember high or low points listed on a course are not a measure of quality or difficulty of a course, they simply reflect supply versus demand. The points for any course could drop due to falling demand, increased places or students with lower points than last year applying. The rule is simple: list courses in order of preference and not based on expectations of Leaving Certificate performance or cut-off points.

Check the detail

When deciding on courses, make sure to check the minimum entry requirements for each of the courses and take note of any restrictions, such as early application dates, supplementary information that may need to be submitted, or if an interview forms part of the qualification process.

Important Communication

CAO communicates with applicants at different stages throughout the year. Ensure all correspondence is treated as important and checked carefully to make sure that the information held on file by CAO is correct. This could affect the offer made to your child if ignored.

Before the end of May, the applicant will be sent a Statement of Application Record. It is very important this is checked as it could affect their CAO offer e.g. Is the leaving cert exam number correct? Are all exams mentioned? Are all exemptions listed? Are all the courses shown in the correct order? If you do not receive a Statement by June 1st, contact CAO immediately.

Find out more

Check out the CAO webpage for useful information videos, guides and handbook to help you understand the system and how the offer process works in more detail. (cao.ie)



Focus on the Financials

Smaoinigh ar chúrsaí airgid

The cost of sending a child to college can certainly add up, that's why it's important to focus on the financials. How much will the fees cost? What is the cost of living and accommodation? What supports are available?

Fees

A Student Contribution (registration) fee is set by government, and is payable by all ATU students who do not qualify for a grant or scholarship, per academic year. At registration, students have the option to pay in full or in two instalments.

A Tuition Fee is an additional fee; however, the Department of Education normally covers this fee under the Free Fees Initiative scheme for full-time students who are citizens of a Member State of the EU and who meet the residency requirements.

Tax Relief

You may be able to claim tax relief on tuition fees that you have paid. Families who pay student contributions for more than one student in a year can also claim tax relief on the second and subsequent contributions. (revenue.ie)

Grant

SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland) provides financial support to eligible students. There are two elements to the student grant – a maintenance grant (contribution towards living costs) and a fee grant (cover all or part of the student contribution fee plus the costs of essential field trips). The grant is based on your family's reckonable income. (susi.ie)

Scholarship / Bursary Funding

There are various scholarships and bursary funding available to students, from socio-economically disadvantaged students to elite sports people. Industry sponsored bursaries can also be found to encourage applicants into programmes where there are large skills shortages in industry. (atu.ie/scholarships)



Cost of Living

Whether they are living away from home or traveling to college, the costs are going to add up. When you consider this could be for up to four or even five years, then the cost of living is something that really needs consideration. ATU students not only get a world-class education and lifestyle to match, they do so in some of Ireland's most affordable locations.

Travel Costs

Students can choose to travel daily or at weekends, depending on how far away home is, at student discount rates. ATU is well serviced by daily and weekend bus services, most of which drop and collect from our campuses.

Food and drink

Students can enjoy a thriving culinary scene across the west and north west of Ireland with something to suit every budget.

Campus Locations

Our campuses across Galway, Mayo, Donegal and Sligo offer affordable living costs in student focused locations where lots of businesses offer sizeable student discounts.

The Free Stuff

College life is more than just study. It is also about experiences. And these experiences might not cost a thing. ATU's stunning location along the Wild Atlantic Way lends itself to some breath-taking natural facilities.

Looking after your family

Whilst there are so many fun and exciting experiences to be had, we also realise our students may need a little extra support and help from time to time. Here at ATU, our student health service is free. This includes counsellors, doctors and nurses. Academic supports such as learning support, maths support, academic writing and English language support, are also completely free.

Supporting our students is really important to us. So, if they ever need a little extra help – they just ask. If it's important to them, it's important to us.



Seek Support

**Faigh
Tacaíocht**

Academic Supports

Tacaíochtaí Acadúla

We have invested heavily in our learning facilities to ensure our students are fully supported throughout their academic journey.

Learning Support

Our dedicated learning-support tutors help students who have dyslexia or other specific learning difficulties. Students have access to the latest assistive technology and can engage with a learning support tutor on a one-to-one or group basis. Reasonable accommodation at exams and liaising with relevant staff are other ways our learning-support tutors can help.

Maths Support

Our innovative and friendly maths support centres offer the extra support that many students need. Services include consultations, tutorials, computer-based tutorials and access to relevant text materials. You can even submit maths problems for correction. Students can access these facilities on a one-to-one basis, as a small group or online.

Academic Writing

Students of all abilities can benefit from our academic writing supports. These include getting started with assignments, effective notetaking, report writing, avoiding plagiarism, successful writing in exams and the writing process – generating ideas, drafting, revising and editing. Students can access these facilities on a one-to-one basis or as a small group.

Technology Support

Our students have free Office 365 to download to their own devices plus free unlimited One Drive data storage, allowing them to study from anywhere in the world at any time. Students can also access a range of free modern technologies and free high-speed Wi-Fi on our campuses.

Induction

We know that the transition to college is an exciting time, but a nerve-wracking one too. Our comprehensive induction and welcome programmes ensure the transition is both easy and fun. During induction students receive their timetables, meet their classmates and lecturers, learn about supports and services, get their questions answered, go on a campus tour and lots more. Screening questionnaires are also carried out with first year students to identify their preferred learning style and any supports they may need.

Careers Service

Our careers teams are passionate about finding every student a career and future they will love. They advise on career options and postgraduate studies whilst also assisting with CV and interview skills. The teams have well established links with local, national and international employers. Throughout the year they organise a range of workshops, careers fairs and employer talks.



Student Supports

Tacaíochtaí do Mhic Léinn

Our student supports teams help with any concerns or worries you may have in a confidential and sensitive manner. If it's important to you, it's important to us.

Access Office

If you have special learning needs, a disability or any circumstances which might need individual consideration, our access offices are here to help. A range of comprehensive and extremely modern assistive-technology supports are also available at ATU. This is central to our facilitation of students with disabilities or learning difficulties.

HEAR and DARE

ATU participates in the HEAR (Higher Education Access Route) and DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) access schemes. These target applicants from groups who are under-represented in Higher Education. The schemes facilitate flexibility on points and offer additional supports to students throughout their studies. For more information please go to page 315 of the prospectus.

Disability Support

We are passionate about creating a third level community which is accessible and inclusive to all. Our disability-support services provide an individual support plan tailored to the specific needs of the student. Engagement with other relevant staff ensures appropriate plans are in place to support students to reach their full potential.

Counselling

Our professional counselling service is free-of-charge to all students. The experienced teams will help and support students with any area of concern that might arise; be that academic, personal, financial, mental health or otherwise.

Health

The health service teams across ATU provide free, on-campus medical care and health promotion information to students. The teams, which are made up of doctors and nurses, can help with the diagnosis and treatment of health problems, alongside providing services such as issuing prescriptions and repeat prescriptions.

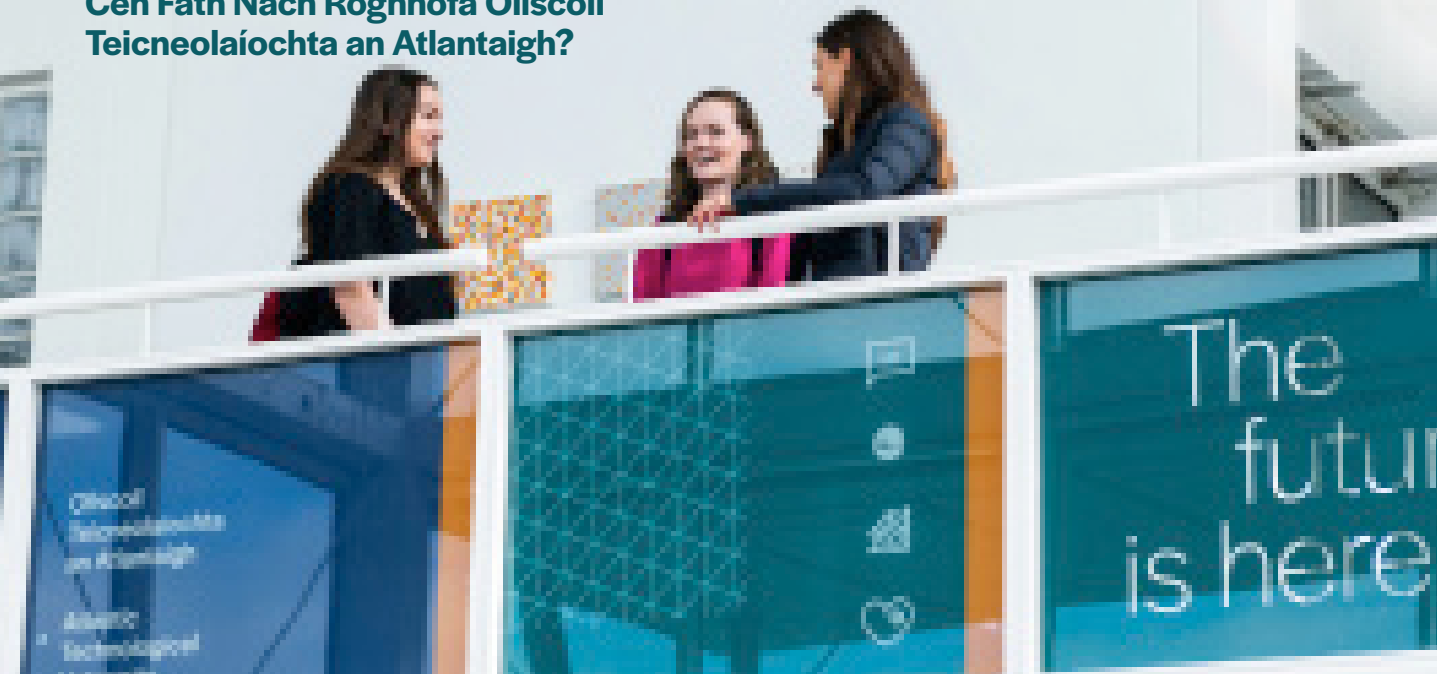
Chaplaincy

The chaplaincy service supports students in their personal and spiritual growth during their time at ATU. The chaplaincy service is available to students of all faiths and those who have none. The team help to build a sense of community, care for the wellbeing of all and are always available for a chat.



Why Choose Atlantic Technological University

Cén Fáth Nach Roghnófa Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta an Atlantaigh?



Atlantic Technological University is a multi-campus technological university in the west and north-west of Ireland that delivers a rich combination of academic and research excellence, quality of life and opportunity.

Collaborative Strength

Atlantic TU has a student population of over 20,000 learners, spanning 600 academic programmes from pre-degree to doctoral level. ATU's strength lies in our collaborative ethos, realising our shared goals by elevating and championing success.

Academic Excellence

Atlantic TU offers an exceptional higher educational experience. Building on the foundations of applied learning, our university focuses on research-informed teaching. We empower learners to realise their full potential, developing responsible citizens, critical thinkers, innovators and problem solvers equipped for life-long learning.

Research, Engagement & Innovation

At Atlantic TU we have a proud tradition of industry engagement, through collaborative research and providing courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels that meet employers' skills requirements. As the leading higher educational institution in the region, our students, staff and communities are intrinsically linked to regional employers, building sustainable employn and driving growth in the west and north-west.

Global Opportunities

At Atlantic TU, students develop as global citizens and building awareness of the opportunities and in developing sustainable global economies. From international research to overseas study and work opportunities, ATU students are part of a global c with a mindset that reaches far beyond our shore

- **1** Region
- **9** Campuses
- **600** Programmes
- **8** Research Centres
- **4,977** Graduates Annually
- **20,418** Total Students
- **2,253** Total Staff

- 1** ATU Donegal Letterkenny
- 2** ATU Donegal Killybegs
- 3** ATU Sligo St Angela's*
- 4** ATU Sligo
- 5** ATU Mayo
- 6** ATU Connemara
- 7** ATU Mountbellew
- 8** ATU Galway City

* Subject to formal incorporation of St Angela's College into Atlantic Technological University.



Embrace Change

Glac Leis
An Athrú

First year students at ATU will experience a fresh change in a stimulating learning environment, our team are here to help get them started on the right path.

Successful Start

1. Go to Induction; This is where students will learn all about the services, facilities and supports available at ATU so that they can hit the ground running from day one.

2. Make Friends; Join a club or society, get involved in a mentorship programme, talk to classmates. It's very important to get the balance between academic studies and social life

3. Talk to our Lecturing staff; The benefit of small classes and groups means students can talk to our lecturing & technical staff and get the support they need to ensure success.

4. Talk to Us; If the course is not what they expected, talk to us early on. It may be possible to transfer internally or defer your course for a year. Talk to us before the end of October to try not to incur a financial penalty.

See for yourself

Join us on campus to see for yourself. We host a number of Open Days and CAO information events throughout the year across all our campuses. Visit atu.ie/opendays for more information.

Talk to us

At ATU we understand that parents and guardians may have questions and concerns, as their child begins to explore their options in third level education. We encourage you to make contact with us if we can be of any assistance to you or your child. Our contact information can be found on the next page of this booklet.

Contact Us

Our experienced team are here to support students, parents, guardians, teachers and guidance counsellors. They can answer questions on programmes, accommodation, entry requirements, pathways and lots more. The team will also work with schools to arrange visits, talks, career events, subject-specific workshops, TY taster days and much more.



Lorraine Cunningham

Schools Liaison Officer

Atlantic Technological University
(Galway and Mayo Campuses)

Email: lorraine.cunningham@atu.ie

T: 091 74 2390

M: 086 143 8705



Victoria Wilson

Schools Engagement Officer

Atlantic Technological University
(Donegal Campuses)

Email: victoria.wilson@atu.ie

T: 074 91 86104

M: 086 737 4922



Jacqueline Mellett

Schools Liaison Officer

Atlantic Technological University
(Sligo Campuses)

Email: jacqueline.mellett@atu.ie

T: 071 91 37325

M: 087 930 0057



Seán Kelly

Schools Liaison Officer

Atlantic Technological University
(St. Angela's Campus)

Email: skelly@stangelas.ie

T: 071 91 95512

M: 086 138 3756



Aisling Hynes

FE/PLC Engagement Officer

Atlantic Technological University
(Galway and Mayo Campuses)

Email: aisling.hynes@atu.ie

T: 091 74 2390

M: 085 879 0855



Lauren Reynolds

Schools Engagement Officer

Atlantic Technological University
(Donegal Campuses)

Email: lauren.reynolds@atu.ie

T: 074 91 86104

M: 086 343 9360



Micheál Dowdican

Schools Liaison Officer

Atlantic Technological University
(Sligo Campuses)

Email: micheal.dowdican@atu.ie

T: 071 93 05981

M: 086 898 4086

Campus Tours

If you can't make one of our open days or scheduled events, you can contact a member of our team to book a campus tour. We offer campus tours throughout the year. A campus tour is ideal for students who are considering studying at ATU. Family and friends are also encouraged to come along on the tour.

Connect with us online

For the most up to date CAO information please go to www.atu.ie/CAO and follow @atu_ie on social media





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