



Preparation BEFORE THE EVENT

Why attend Higher Options?

It's a great opportunity to engage with and get information from people in the following:

- Post-Leaving Cert Colleges of Further Education,
- Institutes of Technology
- Universities attending from Ireland, UK and Europe
- Apprenticeship Organisations
- Lots of other information providers.

It's your opportunity to hear talks on:

- Careers and courses in which you have some interest
and
- Career areas you may have not considered before - broadening your knowledge and giving you new ideas.

Your opportunity to attend lecture sessions covering topics such as:

- How to apply to the Irish CAO admissions system
- Studying in Europe
- Alternative routes to third level through Further Education PLCs,
- How to choose a career and how to cope with college life.

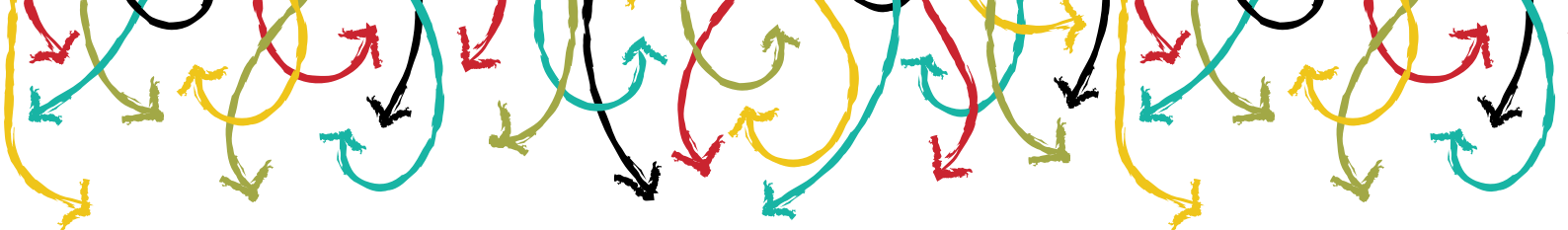
It's your opportunity to ask questions and get answers to lots of questions.

All exhibitors will be able to answer questions in group chats and one-to-one discussions. They will also be able to advise you what material to gather from their stand for further information. The chat function will appear in every booth you visit. There will also be live Q&A sessions with the speaker after each talk session where any questions you may have can be answered in real time.

It's a great opportunity to add your own personal copies of brochures/prospectuses of the colleges you are interested in to your digital backpack. You can download these to your device for further research at home or at school.

Get answers to your questions

Higher Options is a great opportunity to find out what is really being offered by a third level college over and above what is written in the prospectus and on the website, even if you have already some prior knowledge about the college. With the opportunity to speak with representatives in group or individual chat you will be able to put your own questions. Picking the right college is a big decision - one of the more important you'll ever make. You will need to ask many questions when making a college choice.



Starting to prepare for Higher Options

1. Research your future options

It's definitely a good idea to spend some time researching your future options before attending the event. This means you'll be able to really benefit from the knowledge of the college representatives and advisers on the day.

2. Prepare some questions

As part of your research, write down a few questions or issues you'd like to discuss. These might be very specific, or simply a check list of topics, such as course structure, maths level on course, entry requirements, career opportunities, etc. Don't make this too long, or you'll never get through it; aim for no more than five key points, focusing on the issues most important to you.

3. Check the schedule beforehand

A few days before the event, check the final schedule for the day at higheroptions.vfairs.com

Write down the start times of any talks you definitely want to attend, as well as any you're at least partly interested in.

On screen alerts will appear to remind you when talks start but it is a good idea to have a plan. You can watch recordings of talks afterwards.

4. Keep an open mind

While it is useful to be prepared and have a clear focus, try to balance this out by also remaining open to new study options and possibilities. You might find your ideal course exists in a form you didn't previously know about.

5. Keep an eye on the time

Make sure you don't get too caught up in one conversation and miss out on other opportunities. Make sure you know the start time of the talks you would like to attend. There will be on screen announcements before a talk is about to start. Be sure to look out for these!

6. Make notes

Make sure to make a note of anything you want to follow up later. You might think you'll remember, but there will be a lot to take in.

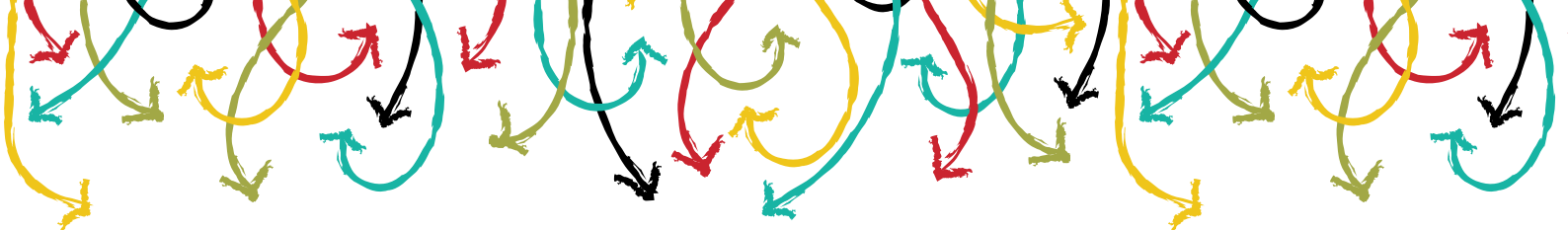
7. Your virtual rucksack

Don't forget to add the prospectuses and information packs to your virtual rucksack from the stands you visit. You can research these later at home or at school from any device.

Of course it doesn't all end when the exhibition finishes – you've then got the task of sorting through all the information you collected, following up any interesting opportunities, and reaching that final decision.



Remember all talks and exhibitor material will be available to all ticket holders on-demand AFTER the event is over for 30 days!



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Issues other than course choice to find answers to.

Accommodation

This generally the most expensive part of going to college for those who cannot live at home.

If you have identified some colleges that are strong possibilities for you then for each of them find out:

- Is there university/college owned accommodation and how much is it
- How do you apply for it
- Can you see the accommodation when you go to visit on an open day
- What about accommodation outside the college, do they help with finding this

Remember that you will have to pay for food, electricity, gas, heating, telephone, wifi, etc.

Ask when accommodation bookings start – for some colleges it is months ahead of CAO offers!

Colleges differ in their approach to this, so don't get caught out.

Transport

If you are living at home and hoping to commute to the college, what are the transport options available, public or private? If driving to the college, what about car parking – availability and cost.

Scholarships

Are there any Scholarships available in the college. These could be academic, sporting, performance or community based. If interested find out when should you apply for them. Are there points awarded for them?

Social Life

You will be in the place for at least three years and the friends you make will be with you for life, so, apart from bars and night-clubs (which are usually in great abundance anyway), what clubs/societies are available? What entertainment venues – theatres, cinema, etc. - are close by? Is the college's social life based in a town/city or within the College?

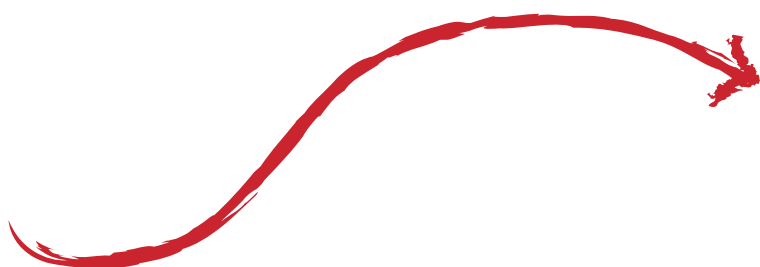
Sports Facilities

Sports provision is important for many. Find out what sports are available in the college, how many teams there are and what the facilities are like. Is there a gym available, swimming pool, pitches, competitions, etc.

Student Support

What sort of support does the college offer?

- Medical – on campus doctor/nurse
- Mental Health – Is there a counselling service
- Academic - Is there a mentor system available? Maths support?
- Disability - If I have a specific learning difficulty or disability what support will be available.

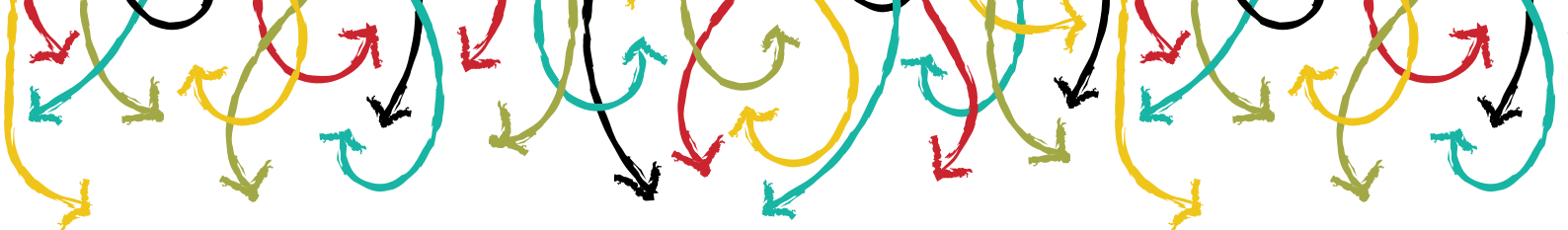


**Getting the most out of
your Higher Options Day:**

Plan + Preparation

> List of questions

> Answers you need



On the day WHAT TO DO AND EXPECT

What I want to gain from the Virtual Event

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

During the event ensure you get answers to all your questions such as:

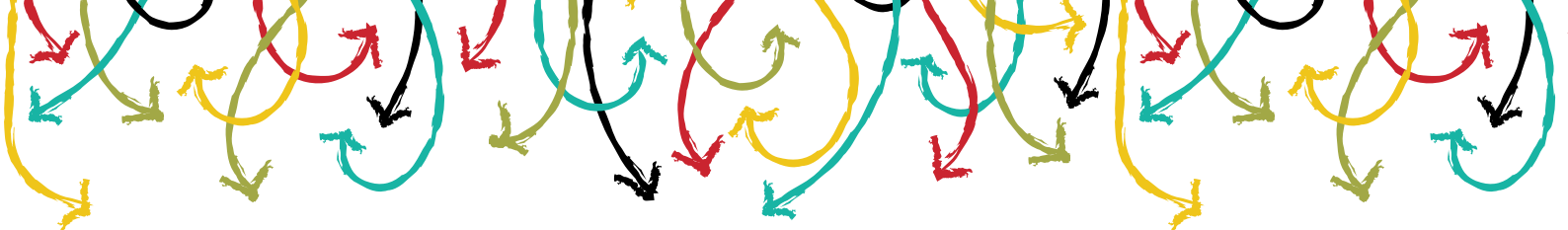
- Types of assessment used on course?
- Leaving Cert. subjects & levels required/desirable for this course?
- What tutoring is provided?
- Is the qualification recognised by the professional body?
- You will also have your own queries – record them here and the answers you get.

Questions I would like answered on the Event Days

- Q1
- A1
- Q2
- A2
- Q3
- A3
- Q4
- A4
- Q5
- A5

Courses that interest me, and the college(s) offering such courses

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5



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Lectures that I will attend (choose from list on website)

Venue	Time
Talks & Lectures 1	
Talks & Lectures 2	
Talks & Lectures 3	
Talks & Lectures 4	

Contact details

You can opt to share your email with exhibitors – to be filled in on the day

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Notes

Know yourself. Know your options.
Make a good decision

