

Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)

Similar to the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) described above, the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a college and university admissions scheme in Ireland which offers places on a reduced points basis to school leavers with disabilities. DARE has been set up by a number of colleges and universities as evidence shows that disability can have a negative effect on how well a student does at school and whether they go on to college. DARE is designed for school leavers who have the ability to benefit from and succeed in higher education but who may not be able to meet the points for their preferred course due to the impact of their disability.

The benefits of DARE

Students who are eligible for the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) may secure a college place on a reduced points basis. All students with a disability, irrespective of whether they come through DARE or not, are offered a variety of academic, personal and social supports while studying at third level. Individual institutions will determine the nature and delivery of such supports in accordance with their own policies and practices and subject to the availability of resources. Examples of the types of supports available include:

- Orientation programmes to introduce students to university/college
- Study skills, extra tuition if required and exam support
- Access to assistive technology and training
- One-to-one meetings with support staff, social gatherings and mentoring

Verification of Disability Needs

Students must complete a Personal Statement outlining the academic impact of the disability or specific learning difficulty. They must also submit a Second Level Academic Reference completed by their school providing background information on the student's educational experience, which helps to determine appropriate supports at third level. Verification of the student's disability by a medical consultant or specialist is also required.

Places available through the DARE scheme

Each college or university taking part in the DARE scheme has allocated a limited number of places on a reduced points basis for students entering through DARE. This number or quota is different for each college and university. Students applying for quota places must give evidence confirming that the disability has had a significant impact on educational performance, meet the minimum entry (matriculation) and subject requirements of the colleges or universities to which they apply and compete for one of the quota places based on Leaving Certificate (national examination) results.

Further information on DARE

Further information on the DARE scheme is available on the website <http://www.accesscollege.ie/dare/index.php>