



Ireland - Good practices in Social Dimension implementation in Higher Education



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Examples of Good Practice – Ireland

Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)

In Ireland, the seven universities and the Dublin Institute of Technology along with a number of other third level institutions are participating in the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR), a third level admissions scheme for school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. HEAR has been established based on clear evidence that socio-economic disadvantage has a negative impact on educational attainment at school and progression to higher education. All school leavers who present satisfactory evidence relating to a number of socio-economic criteria and satisfy matriculation/minimum entry and subject requirements will be eligible to compete for a quota of places (usually 5%) allocated to applicants on a reduced points basis in each of the participating institutions.

Aligning with Government Objectives

The Irish Government is committed to the objective of promoting 'equality of access to higher education, irrespective of social class, age or disability'. In June 2008 the Minister for Education launched a *National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education*, setting out ambitious targets and equity of access measures for the 5 years 2008 to 2013. The important role that targeted admissions schemes play is recognised in this National Access Plan. The HEAR Scheme is one part of the efforts of the participating institutions to tackle long-term educational disadvantage and to promote equity of access to higher education.

How HEAR benefits students

Students who secure places in the participating institutions through HEAR 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.

Places available through the HEAR scheme

The quota of places available through the HEAR scheme differs between the participating institutions. All HEAR applicants must satisfy the matriculation/minimum entry and subject requirements of the institutions to which they apply. Applicants can then compete for the quota of places based on their Leaving Certificate results.

Further information on HEAR

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