

Area of Study

Work and future

Overview

This transition unit encourages learners to consider options in further and higher education and training. Using creative and varied learning methodologies students will learn about their own strengths, interests and abilities, what education and/or training courses are on offer and what kind of courses are likely to suit them and help them to reach their full potential. As part of their learning students will research information, work in small teams and participate in group discussions and presentations. The skills developed (of processing information, working together, communicating, thinking critically and so on) will be of benefit throughout the rest of second level education and beyond.

Related learning

The unit has links with a range of existing curriculum components in junior and senior cycle. These include ongoing guidance work with students from first to sixth year (see the NCCA Curriculum Framework for Guidance in Post Primary Education); the career guidance components of the Junior Certificate Schools Programme; Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE); preparation for the world of work in the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme; and vocational preparation and guidance in the Leaving Certificate Applied.

Outline of the unit

It's Your Future! Exploring Options in Further and Higher Education. Resource handbook for teachers and students. is available to download on www.heai.ie/ access

1. Students complete a number of workshops on the idea of continuing their education and/or training after school, and discuss the perceived benefits, advantages and disadvantages for individuals, families and the wider society.
2. Students explore with their teacher what knowledge and skills they would like to have gained by the end of the unit.
3. Students complete an appropriate self-assessment of their own personal strengths, abilities and interests.
4. Students use the results of the self-assessment as a guide to the areas of

further or higher education that might suit them in the future.

5. Individually or in pairs or small groups, students identify one or more study routes and investigate what preparation is needed in order to pursue this route.
6. Students compile the information gathered on study routes and discuss their findings in small groups or among the group as a whole.
7. Students help to organise the visit of a current or past student of further/higher education (or other person of interest) to talk about their experience.
8. In small groups, students use the internet, knowledgeable people/services in the community, and/or text-based sources to research a relevant topic and share the findings among the group. Possible topics include:
 - what student life is like and how to balance study and leisure, including part-time work
 - having fun in college—clubs, sport, entertainment and other opportunities
 - additional access/progression routes (to higher education)
 - available learning and pastoral supports
 - special needs support and accommodations
 - accommodation
 - transport
 - studying abroad (including Erasmus) or in Northern Ireland
 - Aspects of student finance, including budgeting and sources of money advice.
9. Students complete a field day in a further/higher education college or in an apprenticeship environment, exploring in greater depth an aspect of further or higher education that interests them.
10. Students reflect on what they have learned by completing a short evaluation of the field day.
11. Students are encouraged to plan for the future by
 - i. drawing up a personal plan that outlines the steps they would need to take to achieve their ambition
 - ii. discussing possible barriers to achieving this ambition and ways of overcoming these barriers.
12. Students evaluate the impact of the unit and identify what areas they would like to pursue further as they progress through senior cycle.

Breakdown of the unit

The unit will require a time allocation of approximately 45 hours, structured as follows:

38 hours for class-based activities. This includes workshops, group work, internet, media and text-based research, talks by visiting speakers, debate/discussion and evaluation.

7 hours participating in the field day visit, including preparation and debrief.

Suggested timetabling: two double-classes each week for half the year (approx fifteen weeks) or one double-class for a full year (approx 30 weeks).

Aims

This transition unit aims to

- encourage students to consider the possibility of progressing to further and/or higher education
- enhance students' awareness of their own personal strengths, interests and abilities
- equip students with practical information related to further and higher education.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit students should be able to:

- identify their own personal strengths, interests and abilities and what kind of further/higher education may suit them
- identify one or more further or higher education courses that are of interest to them
- demonstrate research skills using a range of sources, including the internet
- summarise the steps they need to take to prepare for entry to further/higher education
- identify key information on eligibility for further and higher education, such as available financial supports, pastoral and learning supports, disability, and other student supports
- set out their own plans for the future
- identify possible barriers to success and ways of overcoming them
- participate in small and large-group discussions on access to further and higher education.

Key skills

How evidenced

information processing

Students will use a range of sources to access and evaluate information on opportunities in further and higher education. They will develop their ICT skills, including effective use of the internet and other audio-visual material. They will develop their ability to extract and evaluate information from text-based documents, including the print media. Students will also process information on themselves and their own strengths and interests.

critical and creative thinking

Critical and creative thinking will be prompted throughout the unit and students will be encouraged to question their current/past views on issues such as who goes to college and the benefits of and reasons why they might choose further study themselves. They will also be encouraged to be creative and resourceful as they research and discuss issues related to further and higher education.

communicating

There are a range of opportunities in the unit to practise and improve communication skills, verbally and in writing. Students will participate in workshops, pair and group work, one-to-one work with the teacher, classroom discussions, question and answer sessions, dialogue with outside speakers/contributors and presentations.

working with others

Students will work together in small and large groups. They will engage in discussion and debate and share feedback with each other as they explore different options and plans.

being personally effective

The personal study that each student completes will help them to become more personally effective and aware of their own strengths, abilities and interests. Students will also set personal goals (both short term and long term) and evaluate progress at the end of the unit.

Learning approaches

Learning approaches can include practical workshops; discussion and debate in small and large groups; pair and group work; written exercises; interaction with outside speakers and personnel; effective research techniques using text-based sources, the media and the internet; small-scale presentations and how to reference information and sources for use throughout the rest of senior cycle.

Assessment approaches

Students will compile a learning journal that reflects their progress through the unit and is a reference source during the remainder of their studies at second level. The reflection exercises in the resource handbook can be used to help structure the journal. It is suggested that some time is allocated periodically before the end of class for students to work on their journal.

Evaluation methods

On completion of the unit, teachers and students are asked to complete an evaluation of its content and the learning achieved.

Resources

Resources to accompany this transition unit are included in It's Your Future! Exploring Options in Further and Higher Education. Resource handbook for teachers and students. An electronic version of the handbook is available on www.heai.ie/ access

Hard copies are also available on request from the Higher Education Authority.