Candidate Brief: TU699 Access Foundation Programme

Duration: 1 Academic Year (September to May)
Location: TU Dublin, Aungier Street
Qualification: Foundation Certificate in Higher Education (Access Foundation Programme)
Minor Award Level 6 – National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

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1. Programme Overview

The Access Foundation Programme (AFP) is a free, one-year preparatory programme designed to help students develop the skills, confidence, and knowledge needed to succeed in higher education.

The programme provides an alternative route into higher education for mature applicants and young adults who have experienced educational, social, or economic disadvantage. Through a supportive and inclusive learning environment, students are encouraged to realise their potential, build academic confidence, and explore future educational opportunities.

Students who successfully complete the programme may be eligible to progress to a suitable undergraduate course at TU Dublin.

Throughout the programme, students receive dedicated guidance and support from the AFP team, helping them explore progression pathways, make informed decisions about further study, and plan for their future careers.

The AFP equips learners with the personal, academic, and study skills required for successful progression to undergraduate degree programmes across a wide range of disciplines at TU Dublin.

2. Entry Requirements

2.1 Mature Students

To be eligible for entry as a mature student, applicants must:

- Be aged **22 years or over on 1st January of the year of entry**.
- Demonstrate motivation, commitment, and readiness to undertake higher education study.
- Possess an appropriate standard of English language proficiency and communication skills.
- Be ordinarily resident in an EU/EEA country or Switzerland for at least two of the previous five years.

Non-EU/EEA applicants must:

- Hold Stamp 4 permission or international protection status.
- Be ordinarily resident in Ireland for at least two of the previous five years.

Additional Information:

There are no formal educational requirements, such as a Leaving Certificate.
Applicants who already hold a Level 6 qualification or higher are generally not eligible for the programme. Exceptions may be considered where there is evidence of significant academic disadvantage, academic deterioration, or other exceptional circumstances.

2.2 Young Adults (socio-economic disadvantage)

To be eligible for entry as a young adult applicant, applicants must meet the same eligibility requirements as mature student applicants outlined in Section 2.1, with the exception of the age criterion. Applicants must Be **under 22 years of age on 1st January of the year of entry**.

In addition, young adult applicants must meet **three of the following five indicators of socio-economic disadvantage**:

Income: Family income falls at or below the applicable HEAR income threshold.

Medical Card/GP Visit Card: The applicant or their family holds a valid Medical Card or GP Visit Card.

Means-Tested Social Welfare: The applicant's family received a means-tested social welfare payment from the Department of Social Protection for at least **26 weeks** during the assessment year.

Area Profile: The applicant lives in an area recognised as experiencing concentrated socio-economic disadvantage.

DEIS School Attendance: The applicant currently attends or previously attended a DEIS secondary school.

Household Income Thresholds (2027):

Household size	Income threshold
Less than 4	€46,790
4–7	€51,325
More than 8	€55,630

*Add **€4,785** to the total income limit for every sibling/parent enrolled in a full-time college, university, or PLC course.*

Please note that the assessment year is two years prior to the year when the course starts. (e.g. for 2027 entry the assessment year is 2025)

If you fall within the below categories, you are not required to meet the above indicators, however you are still required to attend for interview and English language assessment

- Member of the Traveller community
- Member of the Roma community
- Care of the State/Tusla or previously in Care of the State/HSE
- Young Parent

3. What You Study

Core Modules (five per Semester):

Semester 1	Semester 2
Applied Writing	Applied Writing
Mathematics (Fundamental, Intermediate or Advanced)	Mathematics (Fundamental, Intermediate or Advanced)
Digital Study Skills	Digital Study Skills
Destination Planning	Destination Planning
Communication Skills	Research Skills

Optional modules (choose two each semester):

Semester 1	Semester 2
Introduction to Humanities	Approaches to Humanities
Introduction to Social Science	Applied Social Science
Introduction to Marketing	Introduction to Management
Introduction to Financial Accounting	Introduction to Economics
Computer Science Fundamentals (Networking Technologies)	Computer Science Fundamentals 2 (Programming)
Engineering (Electronic and Electrical)	Mechanical Engineering
Introduction to Chemistry	Applied Chemistry
Fundamental Physics	Applied Physics

Human Biology	Cell Biology and Genetics
Art Portfolio Preparation (year-long)	Art Portfolio Preparation (year-long)
Introduction to Irish History	Cultural Tourism

Note: Modules offered on the AFP are subject to change.

4. Time Commitment & Expectations

4.1 Time commitment

Students should expect to spend approximately 35 to 40 hours per week attending classes, completing assessments, and studying independently.

Classes generally run Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 4.00pm from September to May.

4.2 Expectations

Students are expected to:

- Attend lectures, tutorials, and support sessions regularly.
- Participate actively in classes and engage in discussions.
- Come prepared for all classes and learning activities.
- Complete and submit assessments by the required deadlines.
- Check their TU Dublin email account and Brightspace regularly for important updates and communications.
- Seek support from academic and student support services when needed.
- Treat fellow students, staff, and the wider TU Dublin community with respect and professionalism.
- Successfully complete all programme modules and requirements to be eligible for progression.

This set of expectations is designed to support student success and ensure a positive and productive learning environment.

5. Progression After the Programme

Students who successfully complete the programme may progress to undergraduate programmes across TU Dublin, including:

- Science and Health
- Engineering
- Computing
- Business
- Social Sciences
- Arts and Humanities
- Hospitality
- Tourism

Progression offers are determined by the AFP Admissions Board based on academic performance and suitability for the chosen programme.
Mature students may also apply to other higher education institutions through the CAO system.

6. Fees

The programme is free of charge. Students on the course are not eligible for Further Education/Higher Education grants such as SUSI Grant. Students may be eligible for the Back to Education Allowance (see https://www.welfare.ie for more information).

7. Student Supports

TU Dublin offers a wide range of supports, including:

Financial Support	https://www.tudublin.ie/for-students/student-services-and-support/financial-support/
Laptop Loan Scheme	https://www.tudublin.ie/for-students/student-services-and-support/financial-support/laptop-loan-scheme/
Disability Support Service	https://www.tudublin.ie/for-students/student-services-and-support/student-wellbeing/disability-support-service/
Counselling Service	https://www.tudublin.ie/for-students/student-services-and-support/student-wellbeing/counselling-service/
Pastoral Care/Chaplaincy	https://www.tudublin.ie/for-students/student-services-and-support/student-wellbeing/pastoral-care-chaplaincy/

8. How to Apply & what you need to apply:

Apply online TU Dublin via the online form (not through CAO):

https://tudublin.ie/study/undergraduate/courses/access-foundation-programme-tu699/

After submitting your application, you will be required to provide the following documents to access.foundation@tudublin.ie for mature applicants or accessentryroutes@tudublin.ie for young adults.

- Copies of Qualifications
- Provide any available certificates or transcripts.
- Proof of Identity
- Non-EU/EEA citizens must include: Copy of GNIB card showing Stamp 4 status, or
- proof of international protection status.
- Additional information required for Young Adults
- Social Welfare Statement

- Medical Card
- Proof of Income

9. Assessment & Selection Process

Applications are reviewed for eligibility and suitability. The process includes meeting the relevant number of indicators, shortlisting, an interview, and an English language assessment.

10. Key Dates

Please see the programme webpage for the latest closing dates and timelines: https://tudublin.ie/study/undergraduate/courses/access-foundation-programme-tu699/

11. Contact Information

Programme Coordinator: Susan Benson
Email: access.foundation@tudublin.ie
Phone: 01-220 5083
Admissions Office
Email: admissions@tudublin.ie
Phone: 01-220 6100
Mailing list: To receive updates on the application process and events, email access.foundation@tudublin.ie