



Higher Education Undergraduate Admissions FAQ

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About the programmes and SETU

Q: What is the relationship between An Cosán and SETU?

A: An Cosán runs community based higher education programmes that are validated and awarded by South East Technological University (SETU). This means you study through An Cosán, but your qualification is a SETU validated degree or certificate on the national framework (NFQ).

Q: What higher education programmes does an Cosán offer through SETU?

A: An Cosán currently offers two BA Level 7 Degree Programmes in 1) Applied Addiction Studies and Community Development and 2) Leadership and Community Development. You can also study higher education Minor Awards, which are Level 6 standalone modules on topics such as "Learning to Learn at Third Level" or "Drug Prevention, Education, and Awareness". These awards are all accredited by SETU. Please contact us for further information on the Minor Awards.

Q: Are these full-time or part-time programmes?

A: An Cosán's Higher Education programmes are part-time and designed for adults who may be working, parenting, or volunteering etc., Our courses are delivered in a blended format, with most learning online and some required face-to-face classes. Please check out our website for further information [Higher Education | An Cosán](#)

Location and delivery

Q: Where are An Cosán SETU programmes delivered from?

A: Our programmes are primarily delivered through An Cosán with blended online learning and occasional in person sessions. Some supports may be coordinated with SETU's wider campus network (Carlow, Waterford, etc.), However the main student contact point is An Cosán in Jobstown.

Q: Do I have to attend classes in person or is it fully online?

A: Our BA programmes are blended: you will have online classes or activities plus some face-to-face workshops or sessions in An Cosán. The exact balance of online and in person will depend on the specific course.

Q: When do the programmes start and how long do they run?

A: The Level 7 Degree courses with An Cosán are three-year programmes that start in September each year. The Minor Awards run for six weeks, and start dates can vary, so please contact An Cosán for further details on the Minor Awards. Exact start dates, term times, and duration will be set out on in your offer letter.

Requirements and who can apply

Q: Who can apply for our Higher Education programmes?

A: These programmes are mainly aimed at adult learners, especially those involved in community, education, health, or social care settings. Many are designed for “mature learners” (often 23+), and priority is given to people from disadvantaged backgrounds or with limited prior formal qualifications.

Q: Do I need to have the Leaving Certificate or other formal qualifications?

A: No. You do not need the Leaving Certificate or other formal qualifications. Mature learners apply on the basis of their “mature years”, which means being at least 23 years old on 1 January of the year you start your undergraduate course.

Entry to An Cosán is based on your experience so far - including any previous learning, life experience, and work history - rather than on school exam results.

However, you still need to have reached a level of education that will help you feel prepared for higher education study. Many people get ready for higher education by completing an access or foundation course, or a further education course in their local college before they start.

Q: What is Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) And how does it work with An Cosán programmes?

A: RPL is a process where your previous experience, training, volunteering, or informal learning is assessed and can count towards entry or even partial exemption from some modules. For An Cosán programmes, you usually submit examples of your work, reflections, or reports and attend a brief interview or review

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Q: What is RPL?

A: RPL stands for Recognition of Prior Learning. It means your past learning and experience can be recognised when applying for a course.

This could help you:

- Get credit for what you already know
- Gain exemptions from certain modules
- Potentially reduce the amount of study you need to complete

Your learning can come from education, work, or life experience.

Q: Who can apply for RPL?

Learners who have already been offered a place on a course with An Cosán (in partnership with SETU Carlow) can apply for RPL.

RPL is useful if:

- You have relevant work or life experience
- You have previous learning or qualifications in a related field
- You feel you already meet some of the course learning outcomes

You cannot apply for RPL before receiving a place on your course.

Q: When do I apply for RPL?

You apply for RPL after you have been accepted onto your course with An Cosán.

Once you have your place:

- An Cosán will provide you with the RPL information pack
- This will include the correct forms and guidance

Q: What evidence do I need for RPL?

A: You will need to prepare An RPL portfolio. This shows your learning and experience.

Your portfolio should include:

- Your CV
- Certificates or transcripts (if available)
- Details of your work experience
- Examples of your skills (such as reports, projects, or references)

You will also need to explain how your experience matches the course modules.

Q: How does the RPL process work?

A: Once you have applied and received a place on your course, you can request an RPL pack, complete the relevant form, prepare your portfolio, and submit everything to An Cosán. An Cosán will then send your full application to SETU for assessment.

Q: How long does the RPL decision take?

A: Once your application is submitted to SETU, it usually takes a minimum of 2 weeks for assessment and a decision.

Q: Does RPL reduce the amount of study I need to do?

A: It can, depending on your application.

If successful, you may:

- Be exempt from certain modules
- Have a reduced study workload

This depends on how your experience matches the course requirements and learning outcomes.

Q: Do I need to contact someone before applying?

A: You don't need to apply for RPL before your course application.

However, once you are accepted onto your course our Higher Education team will guide you through the RPL process and provide all necessary documents.

Q: What application forms are available?

A: Depending on your situation, you may be asked to complete:

- Module Exemption Form
- Advanced Entry Form
- Uncertified Learning Form

These will be provided to you by An Cosán after you receive your course place.

Q: What happens after I apply?

- Your completed RPL application is checked by An Cosán
- It is then sent to SETU for assessment
- SETU reviews your prior learning and makes a decision

Q: What outcome can I expect?

A: If your RPL application is successful, you may:

- Receive exemptions from certain modules
- Have a reduced study load

For more information on RPL please visit: [SETU | Recognition of prior learning](#)

Application process

Q: How do I apply for a higher education programme through An Cosán And SETU?

A: You apply directly through An Cosán's website or application form for the specific higher education programme. All applications are processed and reviewed internally

by An Cosán. Where required, successful applications are then entered into the SETU validation system for accreditation and record-keeping.

If your application is successful, you will receive an offer letter from An Cosán that confirms your place and gives details about fees and start dates.

Q: When is the closing date for applications?

A: For the September intake, the closing date for applications is 8 weeks from the launch date. Exact deadlines may vary by course, so you should always check the course page or contact the higher education admin team.

Incomplete applications and applications submitted after closing date will not be considered

Q: Can I apply before I finish my previous course or qualification?

A: In some cases, you may be able to apply with predicted results or interim transcripts, leading to a conditional offer.

Q: What documents do I need to include with my application?

A: There is no official ID or document required for the BA application. However, if you are under 23 years of age, you must provide your Leaving Certificate or an equivalent qualification.

Q: I can't find a particular course on the application form – what should I do?

A: If the course is not listed on the application form, you cannot apply for it through that route. Contact the higher education admin team at An Cosán

he.admin@AnCosan.ie And they will let you know if it is open for applications or if there are alternative options.

Offers

Q: What is an offer and what do I need to do to accept it?

A: An offer means we confirm a place on **your course** is available to you, subject to meeting the conditions below.

To accept your offer and secure your place, you must:

- **Confirm acceptance by email** by the stated deadline.
- Reply to the offer email stating: *“I accept my offer of a place on this course.”*

If you do not confirm by the deadline, your place will be offered to another applicant.

- **Pay the deposit and complete the payment plan** by the specified date set out in your offer letter.
- Pay the required **deposit** for your course.
- Complete and return the **Fee Payment Plan form**, selecting one of the three payment options.
- If the deposit is not paid by the deadline, your place will be forfeited.

For any questions about the offer or acceptance process, please contact

he.admin@ancosan.ie

Q: What are my chances of getting a subsequent round offer?

A: We're unable to give a specific chance or guarantee of a place in a subsequent round, as offers depend on how many places are available, how many people apply, and how applications compare each time. If you are not offered a place now, you are welcome to reapply when the next round opens, and your application will be reviewed alongside the others on its individual merits.

Q: Can I defer my place to the next year?

A: Deferral is permitted only if the tuition / application deposit has been paid and the deferral request is submitted on or before the end of July. Where appropriate, deferral requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by our Higher Education team once your place has been confirmed.

The applicant must provide good reason for deferring and must take up the place in the next academic year. Double deferral is not allowed. The original deposit will be carried forward to the following year but will be forfeited if the offer is not taken up in that subsequent academic year.

For further information, please contact he.admin@ancosan.ie

Q: Can I withdraw after accepting my place?

A: Withdrawal after accepting an offer and paying the deposit is permitted, but the deposit will not be refunded.

Q: How do I pay my fees and when do I need to pay them?

A: For many An Cosán programmes, fees are paid upfront or in instalments during the academic year. The exact amounts and dates will be set out in your offer letter.

Q: What happens if I cannot pay my fees on time?

A: A non-refundable deposit is required; however, if you are experiencing financial difficulty, An Cosán offers supports such as payment plans and bursary options. For further information or assistance, please contact our admin team.

Fees, bursaries, and supports

Q: How much does each programme cost?

A: Fees vary by course and level. For full information on fees please contact our Higher Education team who can provide a breakdown of fees, and a copy of our policy should you need it

Payment plans are available if required and you can also apply for Bursary if needed. We do not offer Bursary's for the full amount of any course, and you must pay the non-refundable deposit before applying for the Bursary

For Further Clarification please contact the Higher Education admin team at An Cosán he.admin@AnCosan.ie

Q: Are there bursaries or financial supports available?

A: Yes. An Cosán has a small bursary fund to help learners who face financial hardship, and additional external funding or partnership schemes may be available.

Q:What is a bursary?

A: bursary is financial support that may help with course costs.

Q: When can I apply for the bursary?

A: You can only apply for the bursary once you have received an offer for a course and paid the non-refundable deposit.

Q: Who is eligible for the bursary?

A: It is available to some learners, depending on need and available funding.

Q: How do I apply for the bursary?

A: Once you receive an offer, you can follow the bursary application process set out by An Cosán.

It must be noted all students are required to pay your course deposit even when seeking bursary funding.

Q: Does the bursary cover all fees?

A: No. Unfortunately, we do not offer Bursary's for the full amount of any course. It is a partial bursary, depending on the fund and your circumstances.

See our webpage for further information and supports [Funding | An Cosán](#)

Q: What “wraparound supports” are available for learners?

A: An Cosán offers wraparound supports to help adults overcome barriers, including:

- Counselling and well-being services.
- Practical And Learning support - This includes study skills, IT access, study space when available, and one-to-one support with tutors for assignments or course questions.
- Hospitality supports.

Q: Does SETU offer scholarships or entry awards for An Cosán students?

A: Only the Student Assistance Fund (SAF) is available to all students. Registered students can apply for it once they start the programme as a SETU–An Cosán learner. The grant is not for fees; it is for student upkeep and course expenses.

Please see the following website for more information [SETU | Scholarships](#)

Attendance, timetables, and life as a learner

Q: When do classes start and what does the timetable look like?

A: Classes usually start in September, following an orientation or induction session. The timetable (days and times) will be shared with you closer to the start date, often through email or your online learning platform. The term typically commences in September each year with An Orientation session. Classes begin the following week, with each module running for 6 weeks. Classes for the BA Programmes are held online during weekday mornings from 10am-1pm. You will be required to attend one on-line class per week, And one full day in-person workshop in An Cosán over the 6-week period. The Minor Awards typically run in the evenings from 6-9pm.

Q: What happens if I can't attend on time or miss a class?

A: You will be required to attend one on-line class per week, and one full day in-person workshop in An Cosán over the 6-week period. The Minor Awards typically run in the evenings from 6-9pm. An Cosán understands that adult learners may have unexpected commitments. If you think you will miss sessions, you should contact your tutor or the higher education admin team as early as possible. They may be able to help you catch up with materials or, in some cases, consider deferring or adjusting your study plan.

Orientation, support, and everyday life

Q: Is orientation mandatory and what happens at it?

A: Orientation attendance is compulsory. It helps you meet tutors and classmates, understand the online system, and learn about supports that An Cosán and Setu can offer.

Q: What support services are available once I start?

A: Learners can typically access:

- **Academic support**, for example help with academic writing, study skills, and using technology.

- **Wellbeing and counselling supports.**
- **Practical help** with day-to-day study and course requirements.

Tutors can also arrange **voluntary study groups** of up to four learners. These groups act as a study community and can meet (online or in person) to discuss course work, separate from regular class-based group work.

Another form of support is the **Office Hour** shown on each module schedule. Learners can email their tutor in advance to arrange a one-to-one meeting during this time, usually before class sessions.

Study, learning, and assessments

Q: How much time will I need to set aside each week for my studies?

A: Most part-time programmes are designed to fit around work or family commitments, so you might expect to study a few hours per week online plus Any scheduled workshops or face-to-face sessions. For example; A standalone module will usually run for six weeks, with approximately three hours of scheduled class time per week, plus some hours of self-directed study.

Q: What kind of assessments will there be?

A: Assessments are usually practical and learner centred, for example:

- Written assignments, reflective journals, or project reports.
- Presentations or group work.
- Practice based portfolios showing your work in a community setting.
- Work experience and project work in the community. The focus is on applying your learning to real life community work. Further details on assessments will be provided to you by your tutor for each module.

The focus is on applying learning in real life. The exact assessment mix will depend on the course, so make sure to check with our admin team if you have further queries.

Q: Do I need strong English language skills to join?

A: These programmes are taught through English, so you will need a reasonable level of spoken and written English to understand classes and complete your assignments.

Please contact our admin team he.admin@ancosan.ie for further clarification should you need it.

Changes, deferrals, and leaving the course

Q: Can I change my mind after accepting an offer and attending part of the course?

A: Yes, you can usually withdraw your place or request a change to a different course, but this depends on your course rules, funding arrangements, and deadlines. There may be financial or administrative implications if you withdraw part-way through.

If you are thinking about changing your mind, please contact the Higher Education team as soon as possible so we can explain how this applies to your situation and support you through the next steps.

Q: Can I switch from one An Cosán SETU programme to another?

A: It may be possible to transfer between programmes in some cases, but this will depend on available places, entry requirements, and timetabling. For further information, please contact he.admin@ancosan.ie

Q: What happens if I fail a module or cannot complete the course?

A: In many cases, learners may be able to repeat a module or retake assessments, depending on the policy for that specific qualification. An Cosán will work with learners to support them through difficulties, but it must be noted learners must complete one module before progressing to another.

Technical Requirements

Q: What kind of hardware do I need to be a part of a blended and online course?

A: You will need a laptop or desktop computer (Windows or Mac) that can run online classes and coursework. You cannot use a phone or tablet on its own to join or complete these courses.

**** Our IT department recommends the below**

- Intel i3 processor (or equivalent; Intel i5 or equivalent is preferred)
- 8 GB RAM (16 GB recommended)
- 128 GB storage (250 GB recommended)
- Built-in or external webcam and microphone
- A headset is also recommended for clearer audio during classes.

Don't worry if you don't have a device that meets these requirements these are just recommendations.

Q: What kind of software do I need to be a part of a blended and online course?

You will need access to:

- Zoom for attending live online classes
- Microsoft 365 (including Word and PowerPoint) for coursework and communication - this will be provided by SETU
- A modern web browser (such as Chrome, Edge, or Safari)

Q: How can I tell if my broadband is sufficient to participate in a blended and online course?

To participate fully in an online course, you will need a strong, stable broadband connection. You can do a free speed test using [Ookla or Speedtest](#) to check your download and upload speeds.

For a reliable experience:

- **Download speed:** at least 25 Mbps

- **Upload speed:** at least 10 Mbps

Q: How do I access the University's IT Services remotely?

For support with your Microsoft account or Blackboard access, contact SETU IT Support at ITSERVICES.cw@setu.ie

If you are using a laptop from An Cosán's laptop loan scheme, contact ITSupport@ancosan.ie and the IT Support team will assist you.

If you have questions that are not covered in this document, or if you would like to chat through your options, please contact a member of the Higher Education team at he.admin@ancosan.ie We are happy to support you as you take your next steps in education.