

Sporting Chance - Scholarships and Professionalism

The number of sports scholarships is increasing steadily in higher education institutions throughout Ireland. School leavers who excel at sport and who wish to continue training and playing at a serious level during their third-level education have many options to consider when making their CAO application. All institutes of technology and universities now provide a form of sports scholarship.

Student support services available to scholars vary widely – besides the traditional bursary (anything from €500 to €2,000 usually), many scholarships include supports such as accommodation, travel costs, personal coaching, nutritional advice, and physiological assessment, as well as the money. Prospective students are advised to contact the respective sports departments of the institutions that interest them, and find out exactly what is provided to the student through the scholarship.

Applications for most scholarships are lodged only after students have already landed places in the respective college through the standard CAO process. However, in a reflection of the growing regard for sporting success in Irish higher education, there are a certain amount of cases in which students are not assessed solely by their CAO points tally alone, but by sporting achievement. NUI Maynooth, DCU (Elite Sportspersons Entry Scheme), and UCD (for the Sports Management Diploma only) are three institutions which offer limited places in this concessionary manner to the most talented athletes. These direct entry programme (i.e. outside the CAO process) are designed to cater for top athletes whose CAO points tally may have suffered due to intense training commitments.

Just remember that taking up a scholarship will require a serious commitment to your sport – not easy thing when you have to overcome the same academic challenges faced by every other student too.

Visit www.cusai.ie for more information about competitive sport in Ireland's colleges and universities.

- See more at: <http://www.gotocollege.ie/sports-scholarships>