

# U First Programme

September 2025 - April 2027



## What is U First?

U First is a two-year 'preparation for college' programme for 5th and 6th year students from local DEIS schools linked to DCU. It is designed to give students the knowledge, confidence, and skills to begin their university journey.

## What is the aim?

The primary aim of the U First Preparation for College programme is to support students who are already 'college aware' in becoming 'college ready'. The programme helps students explore their choices for third level education and learn more about the different courses available. The programme also aims to ensure students from local DEIS schools have the necessary tools and resources to succeed in college.

## Eligibility Criteria

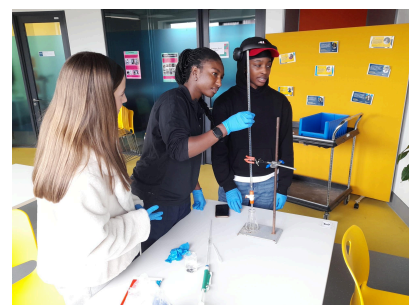
- ★ Students must intend to take at least **four higher-level subjects**, at least **ordinary-level maths**, and be interested in progressing to the third level.
- ★ Applicants should meet the criteria for the HEAR/Access DCU Entry Route, i.e.
  - Low income
  - Social welfare payment
  - Living in a disadvantaged area
  - Attendance at a DEIS school
- Or
  - Be in Foster Care/care of TUSLA
  - An Irish Traveller or Roma
- ★ Demonstrate motivation and determination to go to college.



## Workshop Content

Students will have the opportunity to experience a variety of workshops:

- Sampling a variety of courses in DCU
- CAO/Grants/HEAR/DARE information
- Study skills & Maths revision
- Personal development
- Clubs and Societies
- Parental engagement



- Industry visit

## **Workshop Schedule**

- The successful applicants will be split into two groups.
- Each group will attend one workshop per month in Year 1.
- Group 1 will attend on a Wednesday & Group 2 on a Friday.

### Year 1 (5th years) : September 2025 - April 2026

Year 1 will consist of six workshops. Students will also participate in Shadowing Days, Taster Sessions, Open Days, and optional events and workshops during school holidays.

### Year 2 (6th years) : September 2026 - April 2027

A shorter schedule will offer guidance on course selection, CAO applications, HEAR/DARE, and other supports to help students as they prepare for life after secondary school.

## **How to apply**

5th year students should complete the online application form by Wednesday 17th September 2025. Please contact your Guidance Counsellor for the application form.

## **Further information**

Email: [maz.sweeney@dcu.ie](mailto:maz.sweeney@dcu.ie)