Introduction

Coláiste Éile is a dedicated adult education and training centre in the heart of Thurles offering a valuable educational and training opportunity to adults hoping to return to learning, in a collective, welcoming and progressive environment. Coláiste Éile offers full-time options through VTOS (Vocational Training & Opportunity Scheme) and part-time options through BTEI (Back To Education Initiative).

Coláiste Éile is part of the Tipperary ETB and further information on our ETB can be obtained on www.tipperaryetb.ie.

Coláiste Éile also supports work based learning initiatives, the Tipperary Adult Guidance Service, Community Education courses and the Tipperary Adult Literacy Service. Coláiste Éile has been providing adult education courses since 1993.

Mission Statement

Coláiste Éile offers a valuable educational opportunity to all adults in a welcoming and progressive environment.

Funding

Coláiste Éile is funded through the Department of Education and Skills as part of the National Development Plan 2007 - 2013. The two primary course options are funded as follows:

VTOS is funded by the Department of Education and Skills.

BTEI is co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Union under the European Social Fund.

Location

We are located near the Railway Station 5 minutes’ walk from Liberty Square in the centre of Thurles.
Programme Title: Learning for Everyday Living

Major Award: NFQ Level 3 Certificate in General Learning 3M0874

Programme Structure: One Year Full Time – September to June

Funding: VTOS Grant funded (see notes on VTOS)

Programme Overview
This programme is ideally suited to adults returning to education after a length of time. This programme facilitates progression to further studies at Level 4 and Level 5 (Post Leaving Certificate) on the National Framework of Qualifications and enhances the employability of the student.

Programme Objectives
• To provide a programme of learning that is general in nature and flexible in structure so that students have the maximum opportunity to improve their overall level of education
• To facilitate the student to explore new areas such as Nutrition, Personal & Interpersonal Skills and Computer Technologies that may interest the student in future programmes
• To enhance the student’s confidence in their abilities to use their skills to reach their potential
• To assist the student in developing their core mathematic and communication skills
• To provide a sound base and foundation of learning that will afford the student the opportunity to progress to other programmes at Level 4 on the National Framework of Qualifications

Programme Content

Autumn Term
Communications
Mathematics
Career Preparation
Internet Skills
ECDL

Spring Term
Personal & Interpersonal Skills
Work Experience
Spreadsheets
Word Processing
ECDL
Programme Title:
Using Information and Communication Technologies in Everyday Life

Major Award:
NFQ Level 3 Certificate in Information and Communication Technologies
3M0877

Programme Structure:
One Year Full Time - September to June

Funding:
VTOS Grant funded (see notes on VTOS)

Programme Overview
This programme is ideally suited to adults returning to education after a length of time. This programme facilitates progression to further studies at Level 4 and Level 5 (Post Leaving Certificate) on the National Framework of Qualifications and enhances the employability of the student.

Programme Objectives
• To provide the student with the opportunity to improve their core skills in mathematics, communications and interpersonal skills
• To enhance the student’s confidence in their abilities to use their skills to reach their potential
• To provide a sound base and foundation of learning that will afford the student the opportunity to progress to other programmes in the computer technology area

Programme Content

Autumn Term
Internet Skills
Personal and Interpersonal Skills
Spreadsheets
Word Processing
ECDL

Spring Term
Mathematics
Communications
Computer Literacy
Digital Media
ECDL
**Programme Title:** General Learning

**Major Award:**
NFQ Level 4 Certificate in General Learning 4M2010

**Programme Structure:**
One Year Full Time – September to June

**Funding:**
VTOS Grant funded (see notes on VTOS)

**Programme Overview**
This programme is ideally suited to adults returning to education after a length of time. This programme facilitates progression to further studies at Level 5 and 6 (Post Leaving Certificate) on the National Framework of Qualifications and further to Third Level as well as enhancing the employability of the student.

**Programme Objectives**
- To provide a programme of learning that is general in nature and flexible in structure so that the student has the maximum opportunity to improve their communication, numerical, ICT, planning and problem solving skills
- To facilitate the student to explore new vocational areas such as Work Experience or with a view to upskilling, developing new skills and exploring concepts and subjects that may interest the student in future programmes or employment
- To enhance the student’s confidence in their ability and to build on their skills and potential

**Programme Content**

**Autumn Term**
- Business Calculations
- Communications
- Computer Applications
- Career Planning
- ECDL

**Spring Term**
- Mathematics
- Information Technology Skills
- Work Experience
- Personal & Interpersonal Development
- ECDL
VTOS is the Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme and is funded by the Department of Education & Skills to encourage adults to return to full-time learning. Under the VTOS programme eligible adults can participate in full-time training, without losing their benefits. This, in effect, means that people who are in receipt of social protection payments prior to going on VTOS will retain their entitlements. The VTOS allowance will be paid for the duration of the course including all holiday periods. As VTOS is not means-tested, VTOS participants may also take up part-time work without affecting their payments.

VTOS eligibility
Places are available on this scheme for those receiving:

- Job Seekers Benefit / Allowance
- One-Parent Family Payment
- Disability Allowance / Benefit
- Farm Assist
- Invalidity Pension, or
- Widow/Widower’s Contributory/Non Contributory Pension.
- Other social protection payments may qualify, contact centre for details
- Those signing for credits, or
- Those for whom adult dependant allowances are payable.

However, neither of these categories is eligible for the additional training allowance payment.

To participate on the VTOS scheme, all candidates must be in receipt of one of the above for a minimum of six months (this time period can be waived for persons who receive statutory redundancy) and be at least 21 years of age. Travel allowances are available where applicable. Childcare assistance is also available through the CETS (Childcare Employment and Training Support Scheme) operated by the Tipperary County Childcare Committee.

VTOS Full Time Programme
The VTOS programme at Coláiste Éile is offered over one or two years on a full-time basis. There are three full-time options available in Coláiste Éile to adults returning to further education.

Each of the three programmes is designed to support the adult student return to formal learning by building their confidence and providing them with a solid learning foundation. The programmes give the adult student as much choice as possible in terms of realising their learning goals. Each additional subject achieved is further credit towards their overall award.

Each programme is divided into four semesters over a two year period. Enrolment takes place in September & January. Applications may be made in advance. Places are strictly limited and are allocated firstly on VTOS eligibility and then on the basis of educational achievement at the time of application and finally on the basis of date application is received. In addition to the two semesters there is a summer project during the summer where the emphasis is on more holistic subject content giving the student a wider educational experience.

There are additional supports available in the afternoons to assist students with their work as well as having computer facilities available. Potential students should note that to complete the necessary programme, students should allow for thirty hours per week.

Each semester is 16 weeks long and the first week is an introductory week. The times of the classes are available on the course timetable which you may request from the coordinator or administrator.

Please note the college reserves the right to alter the full-time programme detail and any amendments to the programme will be notified to the relevant students.

The summer project can include subjects such as:

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<th>Art &amp; Design</th>
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<td>Historical Studies</td>
<td>Music Appreciation</td>
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<td>Manual Handling</td>
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**When will I know if I have a place?**

Once you complete the application process at the college the application is forwarded to the Dept. of Social Protection for approval and then to the Tipperary ETB. After this process each applicant is written to and informed as to the status of their application. Every applicant has the right to appeal a decision if they are not satisfied with the process or the outcome.

**How much does VTOS cost?**

There is no cost to the student once the student satisfies the following two requirements:

- Be at least 21 years of age (from date of application).
- Be in receipt of a social protection payment for the appropriate duration.

**Will I lose any of my existing entitlements?**

No.

**Is childcare available?**

Yes, childcare assistance is available to VTOS students under the Childcare Education and Training Support (CETS) scheme administered by the Tipperary County Childcare Committee.

**How will I be paid?**

VTOS students on admission must provide bank account details as all VTOS monies are paid by ‘pay path’ which means directly into your bank account. Monies are lodged to students’ accounts on a weekly basis on a Friday morning. Students are informed in writing when their VTOS payments will commence and when students finish their course they are again informed in writing when their payment finishes. Students also receive a weekly payment advice slip detailing exactly how much has been paid into their bank account. These advice slips are emailed to nominated addresses.

**How is my subject assessed?**

Each subject option is assessed on a continuous basis with students building up a portfolio of evidence which is submitted for assessment after the subject has been delivered and after agreement has been reached between the student and the tutor.

**What is expected of me?**

There is a code of practice which is an agreement between the student and the college which each new VTOS student must accept and sign as part of the admission process. A copy of this agreement is included in this booklet and is presented in detail at induction.

**At what times are the courses on?**

Classes start at 9.05am and finish at 1.50pm, with afternoon classes starting at 2.20pm and concluding at up to 4.20pm. We have a 15 minute morning coffee break.

**How long is the course?**

VTOS is a grant assisted course which is available for a period of 2 years. Each year is broken into semesters. In exceptional cases, students may apply for a third year.

**What are the holidays like?**

Coláiste Éile students get their holidays in line with the nationally agreed school year. Usually that means one week at Halloween, two weeks at Christmas, one week in February and two weeks at Easter.

**Do I have to do exams?**

It depends, there are some examination assessments as part of the overall continuous assessment process. The majority of assessment is by coursework in the form of assignments.

**Will I be the only student who has not studied for many years?**

No, many of our students have been away from education for many years. Our VTOS students range in age from their early twenties, up to their mid-sixties.
**When should I call in?**

Any weekday morning between 9.30am and 12 noon. If these times do not suit please telephone to make an appointment at a more suitable time for you. Coláiste Éile is closed to the public during the standard school holidays.

**How do I enrol?**

Each applicant must call into the college to fill in an application form. Application forms are available on request from reception.

**What is the NFQ - National Framework of Qualifications?**

The NFQ provides a structure (a framework) to compare and contrast the level and standard of different qualifications. This helps you to make informed decisions about your qualification choices and to consider progression opportunities available to you. The NFQ also makes it easier for you to explain to others what qualifications you hold, or are studying for. This becomes very important when you are considering further learning or when you are applying for a job – at home or abroad.

As a student, you need to be aware of key questions you should ask to identify qualifications that are recognised through the NFQ. This information should be used to influence your education and training decisions for the future. The NFQ, illustrated by the “fan diagram” below is a system of ten levels. It is based on standards of knowledge, skill and competence and it incorporates awards made for all kinds of learning, wherever it is gained. School qualifications (awards) awarded by the State Examinations Commission, further education and training qualifications awarded by FETAC and higher education and training qualifications awarded by HETAC, DIT, other Institutes of Technology and the Universities are all included in the Framework.

Qualifications in the NFQ are quality assured. This means that you, the learner, can have confidence that your course, and the college at which you are studying, are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Quality assurance is intended to ensure that all learners have a high quality learning experience regardless of where you are studying.

**What is the QQAI – Qualifications and Quality Assurance Authority of Ireland?**

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance Authority of Ireland is to be an amalgamation of the National Qualifications of Ireland (NQAI), the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC).

This agency (at the time of print) is awaiting the passing of government legislation to put the agency into effect and once the legislative process is complete the Minister for Education & Skills intends establishing this single agency.

The establishment of a single unified agency to assure the quality of qualifications and of students’ experience of education and training at all levels in Ireland will make it easier for employers and others to make sense of Irish qualifications, including within a global context. The strength of current qualifications and quality assurance systems will grow, opening up new opportunities for people to engage and succeed in learning.
**What is the ECDL?**

The ECDL is the European Computer Driving Licence and is a nationally recognised award in basic computing. The ECDL is the world’s most successful IT skills certification programme. Almost three million people are participating in the programme today in over 60 countries worldwide. In Ireland, the ECDL is administered by ICS SKILLS. Coláiste Éile is a recognised ECDL centre and has delivered this programme to many local adults for many years and the ECDL is an optional extra qualification for VTOS students.

The ECDL establishes a standard for everyone who uses a computer in either a professional or personal capacity. It is a certificate that verifies competence in computer use, making the holder readily mobile within Ireland and internationally. Employers and job seekers all agree on the importance of this standard definition of practical competence in Information Technology.

Coláiste Éile is also a recognised Advanced ECDL centre and these courses are scheduled when sufficient demand arises.

**What is Sloas?**

SOLAS is the new Further Education and Training Authority in Ireland. It is responsible for funding, planning and co-ordinating training and further education programmes. SOLAS (An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) was formally established on 27th October 2013 by Ruairí Quinn T.D., the Minister for Education and Skills. SOLAS is tasked with ensuring the provision of 21st century high quality Further Education and Training programmes which are responsive to the needs of learners and the requirements of a changed and changing economy.

**What is the Tipperary ETB?**

North Tipperary VEC amalgamated with South Tipperary VEC on 1st July 2013. The amalgamated organisation is known as Tipperary Education and Training Board (TETB). These changes were brought about by the commencement of the Education and Training Boards Act on 1st July, 2013. Education and Training Boards have taken over the functions of what were known as Vocational Education Committees.

**How do I find out more?**

Phone: 0504 21166  
Fax: 0504 21166  
Email: reception@colaisteeile.ie  
Post: Coláiste Éile, Railway Road, Thurles, Co. Tipperary.  
Website: www.colaisteeile.ie  
VTOS Coordinator: Dr Laurenz Egan  
VTOS Administrator: Bernie Gleeson
BTEI

The Back To Education Initiative (BTEI) is a part-time programme consisting of a range of courses designed to meet the education and training needs of adults looking to enhance their level of qualifications.

The aims of BTEI are to increase the participation in a range of accredited learning opportunities and to facilitate access, transfer and progression to other education or employment pathways.

BTEI offers you a chance to continue your education and training, to develop new skills, to gain certification at a range of levels and to improve your chance to find good employment.

To qualify for our BTEI part time programmes students must be over 18 years of age.

BTEI Part Time Programme

The BTEI programme at Coláiste Éile is offered in a flexible manner with courses ranging from a number of weeks up to two years in duration. There are major and minor award options available under BTEI to adults returning to Further Education. The majority of courses are offered at Levels 3 & 4 on the National Qualifications Framework but there are options available from Levels 1 to 5.

Our BTEI programmes are designed to support the adult student return to formal learning by building confidence and providing a solid learning foundation. The programmes give the adult student as much choice as possible in terms of realising their learning goals. Each additional subject achieved is further credit towards their overall award.

The college year is divided into three semesters allowing for enrolment throughout the year. The majority of students enrol for the September term but enrolment also takes place for the January term and the June term. Applications may be made in advance. Places are strictly limited and are allocated firstly on BTEI eligibility and then on the basis of educational achievement at the time of application and finally on the basis of date application is received.

The BTEI subjects are delivered over a variety of course lengths and times and are delivered in as flexible a manner as possible to ensure the widest level of participation. The times of the classes are available on the course timetable which you may request from the coordinator or administrator.

Courses under BTEI are free of charge to adults in receipt of a social protection payment, or who hold a medical card or who have not yet achieved upper second level qualifications. There are no grants payable to students on BTEI and students will not incur any charge for class materials or examination fees whilst on their course. The local social protection office will be notified of relevant persons participating on BTEI programmes and persons should continue to receive their social protection entitlements in the normal manner. BTEI students are eligible for pro-rata childcare assistance through the Childcare Employment and Training Support (CETS) scheme administered by the Tipperary County Childcare Committee.
**Programme Title:** Learning for Everyday Living

**Major Award:**
NFQ Level 3 Certificate in General Learning 3M0874

**Programme Structure:**
Two Year Part Time

**Funding:**
BTEI Grant funded (see notes on BTEI)

**Programme Overview**
This programme is ideally suited to adults returning to education after a length of time and unable to commit to a full-time course of study. This programme facilitates progression to further studies at Level 4 and Level 5 (Post Leaving Certificate) on the National Framework of Qualifications and enhances the employability of the student.

**Programme Objectives**
- To provide a programme of learning that is general in nature and flexible in structure so that students have the maximum opportunity to improve their overall level of education
- To facilitate the student to explore new areas such as Nutrition, Personal & Interpersonal Skills and Computer Technologies that may interest the student in future programmes
- To enhance the Student’s confidence in their abilities to use their skills to reach their potential
- To assist the student in developing their core mathematic and communication skills
- To provide a sound base and foundation of learning that will afford the student the opportunity to progress to other programmes at Level 4

**Programme Content**

- Communications
- Mathematics
- Digital Media
- Word Processing
- Internet Skills
- Spreadsheets
- Personal & Interpersonal Skills
- Career Preparation

This programme offers two subject areas at a time over four terms over a two year period. Participants will still receive national accreditation for each subject completed but will only receive the major award if all required subjects are successfully completed.
Programme Title: General Learning

Major Award:
NFQ Level 4 Certificate in General Learning 4M2010

Programme Structure:
Two Year Part Time

Funding:
BTEI Grant funded (see notes on BTEI)

Programme Overview
This programme is ideally suited to adults returning to education after a length of time and unable to commit to a full-time programme. This programme offers flexible progression to further studies at Level 5 (Post Leaving Certificate) on the National Framework of Qualifications and Third Level as well as enhancing the employability of the student.

Programme Objectives
- To provide a programme of learning that is general in nature and flexible in structure so that the student has the maximum opportunity to improve their communication, numerical, ICT, planning and problem solving skills
- To facilitate the student to explore new vocational areas such as Work Experience or Work Practice with a view to upskilling, developing new skills and exploring concepts and subjects that may interest the student in future programmes or employment
- To enhance the student’s confidence in their ability and to build on their skills and potential

Programme Content
- Computer Applications
- Work Experience
- Understanding Interculturalism
- Business Calculations
- Information Technology Skills
- Personal & Interpersonal Development
- Communications
- Mathematics
- ECDL

This programme offers two subject areas at a time over four terms over a two year period. Participants will still receive national accreditation for each subject completed but will only receive the major award if all required subjects are successfully completed.
Programme Title: An Introduction to the Sciences

Major Award:
NFQ Level 4 Certificate in Science Skills 4M2911

Programme Structure:
Two Year Part Time

Funding:
BTEI Grant funded (see notes on BTEI)

Programme Overview

This programme is ideally suited to those adults with an interest in Science returning to education after a length of time and unable to commit to a full-time programme. This programme offers the student an opportunity to develop a broad range of scientific knowledge and skills to enable progression to further studies at Level 5 (Post Leaving Certificate) on the National Framework of Qualifications and Third Level as well as enhancing the employability of the student.

Programme Objectives

- To provide a programme of learning of a broad scientific nature that is flexible in structure so that the student has the maximum opportunity to explore this vocational area of learning

- To provide the student with vocationally specific scientific knowledge, skill and competence at this level, thus affording the student the opportunity to progress to programmes leading to awards at Level 5 on the NQF

- To systematically enable the student to develop the scientific language, literacy and numeracy skills embedded in the programme objectives and content

Programme Content

Laboratory Techniques
Work Experience
Biology
Everyday Science
Horticultural Science
Physics
Communications
Mathematics

This programme offers two subject areas at a time over four terms over a two year period. Participants will still receive national accreditation for each subject completed but will only receive the major award if all required subjects are successfully completed.
Programme Title: Horticulture

Major Award:
NFQ Level 4 Horticulture 4M1994

Programme Structure:
Two Year Part Time

Funding:
BTEI Grant funded (see notes on BTEI)

Programme Overview
This program is ideally suited to those adults with an interest in Horticulture returning to education after a length of time and unable to commit to a full-time programme. This programme offers the student an opportunity to develop a broad range of horticulture knowledge and skills to enable progression to further studies at Level 5 (Post Leaving Certificate) on the National Framework of Qualifications and Third Level as well as enhancing the employability of the student.

Programme Objectives
- To provide a programme of learning of a broad horticultural nature that is flexible in structure so that the student has the maximum opportunity to explore this vocational area of learning
- To provide the student with vocationally specific horticultural knowledge, skill and competence at this level, thus affording the student the opportunity to progress to programmes leading to awards at Level 5 on the NQF
- To systematically enable the student to develop the horticultural language, literacy and numeracy skills embedded in the programme objectives and content

Programme Content
- Plant Identification, Care and Maintenance
- Work Experience
- Safe Horticultural Practice
- Growing Vegetables
- Horticultural Science
- Growing Fruit
- Communications
- Establishing Trees & Shrubs

This programme offers two subject areas at a time over four terms over a two year period. Participants will still receive national accreditation for each subject completed but will only receive the major award if all required subjects are successfully completed.
Individual Learning Programme/Community Education

Individual learning programme

Minor Award:
NFQ Level 3, 4 & 5

Programme Structure:
Various times and dates

Funding:
BTEI Grant funded (see notes on BTEI)

Programme Overview

Listed below are stand-alone subject options which may arise during the academic year where funding and minimum numbers permit the running of these courses.

Examples of stand-alone subject options include:
- ECDL
- Advanced ECDL
- Occupational First Aid (Level 5)
- Cookery (Level 3 & Level 4 options)
- Art (Level 3 & Level 4)
- Desk Top Publishing (Level 3 & Level 4)
- Graphic Design (Level 3 & Level 4)
- Craft (Level 3 & Level 4 options)
- Horticulture (Level 3 & 4 options)
- Computers (Levels 3, 4 & 5 options)
- Manual Handling

Other learning options available subject to sufficient demand

To enrol in any of the above options students are required to complete an application process and when the minimum numbers required to run the course and the funding has been secured for the delivery of the course then applicants will be informed as to the times and duration of the programme.

Community Education

The community education service provides opportunities for intergenerational learning, building self-confidence and self-esteem and is also aimed at adults wishing to join a taster course before starting into other further education courses.

There are a wide range of uncertified community education courses that can be set up with a group directly, or set up depending on demand in Coláiste Éile.

Traditionally the community education service has supported groups to access short courses in some of the following areas:
- Art, Painting & Drawing
- Copperwork & Jewellery making
- Rush work and Willow Work
- Woodcraft and woodworking
- Cookery and Health Eating
- Yoga & Meditation
- Horticulture
- Personal Development
- Introduction to IT

If your group are interested in accessing support from the community education service please contact Deborah Ryan at 067 31845.