



Certificate in Transition to Higher Education Programme **Student Stories**



TUS

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre, An tIarthar Láir
Technological University of the Shannon:
Midlands Midwest



Welcome from the Vice President

As the Vice President for Student Education and Experience in the Technological University of the Shannon - Midlands Midwest (TUS), it is my privilege and pleasure to launch this booklet of student stories. This is an exciting and momentous occasion for TUS as we celebrate the stories of current and past students of the Transition to Higher Education programme. The stories as featured in this booklet reveal resilience, motivation, honesty, a passion for education and lifelong learning. They are testament to taking that first step, to taking a leap of faith, to enabling life-long dreams. The programme also reminds us that by teaching others we learn ourselves. The input of our students on this programme enable us to learn in TUS and I thank them for affording us that opportunity also.

At TUS, we aim to ensure that neither a student's background or their past academic experience has a bearing on their ability to attend and flourish in higher education. We recognise every person's educational journey is different and every person requires different enablers and supports. We are very proud of the students on the programme, of students who have progressed to full-time undergraduate degrees as well as post-graduate study. It gives us great joy to witness our graduates from this programme progress, excel and thrive in their chosen careers.

Through the Transition to Higher Education programme, TUS collaborates with schools, community, and voluntary agencies to progress engagement in higher education for under-represented students. TUS understands the significant potential that effective partnerships offer in progressing equity of access to education. The symbiotic relationships which have been fostered between TUS and our community partners have proven to be essential in empowering members of these communities to achieve their educational potential. I now take this opportunity to sincerely thank our partners and stakeholders who have engaged and collaborated with us on the programme to date and we look forward to continuing and further developing partnerships in our region.

Frances O'Connell

Vice President Student Education and Experience

Welcome from the Head of Department

As Head of Department of Flexible and Professional Learning at TUS, I am proud to have enabled the development and delivery of this Certificate in Transition to Higher Education.

Established in 2021, the purpose of the Technological University of the Shannon in our Strategic Plan 2023-2026, is to provide **leading student-centred higher education that is research-informed, regionally relevant and accessible to all**. Our Strategic Priorities include the **provision of an education offering delivered in both traditional and flexible ways to cater to a diverse cohort of students**.

This inclusive programme is delivered in-person, online and through a mix of both in a blended format. The programme provides an accessible route to Higher Education to a diverse student population across communities in our region. No matter what a student's educational history or background is, our programme team and lecturers will provide a supportive and engaged learning environment, maintaining a student-centred ethos throughout, caring about students and their well-being.

Education is a personal journey of growth and we are focused on supporting each student achieve their individual potential. This programme inspires transformative change in people's lives and is the embodiment of why the Technological University of the Shannon exists, delivering on the Strategic Priorities of our Technological University and is living proof of how we embrace and live our core values.

Dr Órlaith Borthwick

Head of Department

Flexible and Professional Learning



Welcome from the Lecturing Team



Anna
Murphy

I am the Programme Leader for the Certificate in Transition to Higher Education, and I also lecture on the programme. The subject that I teach is 'Personal Development', and I am dedicated to fostering inclusive learning environments where everyone is supported to learn in a way that suits their needs best. I have 20 years' experience working in education and the promotion of access to education.

I have a passion for championing the development of individuals. One of the greatest privileges of my work is having an opportunity to see students begin to foster a sense of belief in themselves and their capabilities, and in turn seeing that belief grow into endless possibilities for their futures. I am deeply committed to applying my skills and experience to empower students to meet their academic and personal goals.

I really hope you enjoy reading this booklet and that you are as inspired by our students and their stories as I am.



Dr Carolann
Bargary

I am the manager of the Access and Disability Services for the Midwest campuses of the Technological University of the Shannon. It has been a pleasure to have been involved with the Transition to Higher Education programme since it started, both from a design perspective as well as lecturing on the programme. The subject that I teach is 'Learning and Academic Skills Development'.

This subject is focused on providing students with a foundation in learning and academic writing skills. The module is broken down into manageable pieces of work so that week by week, students build up their skills and confidence in academic writing.

I feel very privileged to work on the Transition programme where each year I get to meet new students and where I feel that I learn as much from them as hopefully they do from me. I am immensely proud of the students who have completed the programme. Indeed, some of these students and their stories are featured in the publication.

I look forward to the years ahead where I will get to meet new students and where we can continue our learning journey together.



Jean
Wall

I am a lecturer on the Certificate in Transition to Higher Education since the programmes launch in September 2017. With a background in Business and Information Technology, I teach the Computer Applications module. This module is designed to provide students with a solid grounding in essential digital competencies.

My focus is on empowering students to build the skills and confidence they need to succeed academically and personally. This is achieved by creating a supportive, engaging, and dynamic learning environment that helps students reconnect with their education.

It has been a privilege to see first-hand the transformative impact this programme has had on our students. I am delighted to be a part of this programme, and I look forward to supporting future students on their journey to academic and personal growth.



Niall
Johnston

I have been lecturing and tutoring mathematics in the Learning Support unit in TUS/LIT for over 12 years. I came to LIT in September 2010 on the Back to Education allowance after losing my job in Dell when it ceased manufacturing in December 2009.

At school I always struggled with learning, and it had always been my ambition to go to college. Returning to full time education after, let's just say over 30 years, was a challenge in itself. Over the years I have helped hundreds of students with mathematics not just in TUS/LIT but in various colleges throughout Ireland and as far afield as Holland. One of my proudest moments came when a major US multinational asked me to go in house to assist their engineers with mathematics.

I find the biggest issue with most mature student is not their actual maths ability but rather confidence issues. The vast majority of students can thrive once you instil in them the belief they can do it. The great majority are very pleasantly surprised that they can be quite good with maths with proper support, explanation, and encouragement.

Programme

Transition to Higher Education (Certificate, L6, 20 ECTS)

Always wanted to go to college... but didn't know where to start? The Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) has developed a Foundation Level programme (called the Certificate in Transition to Higher Education) aimed at those who wish to experience Third Level Education and develop their skills and knowledge prior to starting a full degree programme.

This is a Foundation preparation course providing a pathway for students to gain experience of Third Level Education and potentially progress to entry onto TUS certificate/degree programmes.

Course Content

The programme takes place over an academic year (September to May).

The programme consists of four (5 credit) modules:

- Personal Development
- Computer Applications
- Learning and Academic Skills Development
- Mathematics



What are the entry requirements?

This programme is open to anyone who is interested in entering or returning to Higher Education.

Upon completion of this programme, students wishing to progress to a TUS undergraduate programme of study must meet the University's entry criteria for their programme of choice. Students should note that the Technological University welcomes mature students and will accept applications from persons aged 23 years of age on 1st January of year of entry for admission in September.

Eligible students will be supported, at the end of their studies on this programme, to identify a chosen discipline and consider progression to the range of full-time undergraduate programmes at Level 6/7 and 8 within TUS. Minimum entry requirements to these full-time programmes will apply.

What qualification will I get?

On successful completion of the programme, you will receive a Certificate in Transition to Higher Education (Level 6 Special Purpose Award, 20 Credits).

Where can I find more course information?

You will find more information on the course at **tus.ie/flexible**

Who can I contact if I am interested?

You can contact the Flexible Learning Office at TUS Midwest.

Email: flexible.midwest@tus.ie

Telephone: (061) 293802

Academic Queries

Anna Murphy

Email: Anna.Murphy@tus.ie

Derek

Class of 2017/18



“Going back as a mature student was something different. I wanted to be there, and I wanted to learn.”

I am a graduate of TUS. I heard about the Transitions programme through a career guidance counsellor, and I went online to look it up. Before starting the Transitions programme, I had been out of education for about 16 years. My last education was from secondary school which was quite different than my experience in Higher Education. It's a different type of learning.

I had a great time in third level education. Going back as a mature student was something different. I wanted to be there, and I wanted to learn. I wanted to go back to education for a career change and I wanted to expand my potential. My experience with the Transitions Programme was overall positive. The subjects we covered were Personal Development, IT, Maths and Academic Writing.

Something I initially struggled with was the belief that I could succeed and that I could actually do what was going to be

asked of me. However, I had the support from the lecturers involved who were always there if I had a question or if there was something I was struggling with. And they took the time out to explain. The camaraderie in the group with the other students that were on the course was valuable as well.

I would recommend this course. My sister has now just completed the same course and is studying on a degree programme at TUS. Since completing the Transitions programme, I went on to do a degree in Social Care. Recently I've re-entered education, studying Counselling Psychotherapy. The Transitions programme gave me the foundation to achieve my goals that I had for myself.

Christine

Class of 2023/24



“This course and the lecturers made me feel nurtured, safe and welcome”

The Transition to Higher Education programme came highly recommended to me by a family member who previously completed it and had a very positive experience. While I had completed some short courses over the years, it had been 20 years since I had been involved in a structured academic setting.

The course was very beneficial in terms of the modules on offer. I found the academic writing module extremely helpful to learn how to structure and complete assignments and essays. The personal development module helped me to build confidence in myself, while the computer skills module gave me the knowledge needed technically to embark on a degree programme.

My experience was extremely positive, not only because it provided me with the necessary tools and confidence needed to proceed further on my education path, but also because I felt vulnerable when I first began this journey. This course and the lecturers made me feel nurtured,

safe and welcome; it was evident that they believed in me. I really felt that they wanted me to succeed but more importantly they made me feel that it was possible for me to succeed. It was exactly what I needed to begin my journey.

After completing the Transition to Higher Education programme, I began a Level 8 degree in Psychology, at TUS Midwest, Moylish Campus. I am now in full-time education, while working and sustaining a home life with my family.

I would advise anyone looking to get back into education to start with the Transition to Higher Education programme, don't overthink it, just do it. I am a firm believer that knowledge is power, and I have no doubt without having started on this programme I would have found it quite challenging to adapt to first year on my degree programme. The Transition to Higher Education programme is like a toolkit to prepare one for university life, not only academically but personally too.

Noma

Class of 2022/23



“When I started the course, I struggled with computers, but thanks to Jean, she was so good. She taught me everything, step by step.”

I am from Zimbabwe, and I was last in education in 2005, back home, where I was in secondary school. I was so happy to be offered a place in the Transition to Higher Education programme. I heard about the programme from my sister’s friend who is also a Sanctuary Scholarship student in the TUS.

I decided to enter this programme because it had been my dream to go far with my education, but I didn’t get the chance back home. My experience of the Transitions programme has been so good. I really liked doing this course. I was so happy. Everything was so perfect. Thanks to the lecturers, they were so good! They taught me. When I started the course, I struggled with computers, but thanks to Jean, she was so good. She taught me everything, step by step. Whenever I didn’t understand, she would go back and show me.

Now, I know how to use computers, something which I didn’t know from my past experiences with education. And now I know how to do research. This thing I didn’t even know. I didn’t know where to go to get some information about something. But now I know. I would recommend the Transitions programme, it’s a very good course to do. It’s a great stepping stone to higher education.

Nicola

Class of 2017/18



“All the lecturers, you could reach out to them and ask them, and they’ll help you out, as long as you were there to do the work as well.”

Before I started the Transitions course, I had sat down with my engineering manager to talk about what I wanted to do or what kind of engineering I liked. Following that, I spoke to one of the lecturers in LIT who, because I had been out of school for so long, suggested that I needed maths to do engineering. Then he suggested that I do the Transitions course. If I could have done just the one module, I probably would have, but all four modules have been very helpful since doing the course. I completed my Junior Cert and had a little bit of fifth year, but I didn’t have a Leaving Cert. I didn’t like school. I couldn’t see why anyone wanted to go to college and would choose to go to college. I just wanted to be out working. However, I thought the Transitions programme was great.

The lectures were so helpful, and the courses like Academic Writing, which I

thought I’d never use, actually helped with bibliographies and everything. Personal Development I liked, and I’ve done a lot with personal development since leaving the course. I initially struggled with Maths because at the time it was new, and it was like going back to the start again. But I wanted to be there rather than being made to be there. All the lecturers, you could reach out to them and ask them, and they’ll help you out, as long as you were there to do the work as well. It was a huge step to take, to go back to school. When you go back into the mainstream course or college you know where you were going, you weren’t starting everything from scratch. I recently graduated from TUS with a Level 8 in Engineering.

I would 100% recommend the course. You will use most, if not all, of what you learn and all the lecturers are there to help you, reach out, ask the questions, don’t be afraid to ask questions. The advice I’d give would be just do it. Just give your best and take it at your own pace. You don’t have to follow what anyone else is doing. Just do what you want to do.

Karen

Class of 2019/20



“The programme is different than other programmes and with smaller classes you’re able to communicate more with the person that’s teaching you.”

I heard about the Transition programme through the primary school in Moyross. They had asked me would I be interested in furthering my education. I came from Moyross and I just saw a lot of issues, and I just want to give back and try to help people. There wasn't enough support there when I was younger.

I initially wanted to go back to college, so I'd be able to go back and support young people that didn't have it from years ago like myself. At first, when I started the programme, I was extremely nervous. I didn't know anybody. I was going back to education after many, many years of being out of it and not knowing anything. The course itself was just brilliant, just the way everything was laid out. It was just an easier, simpler way for people that are trying to get back into education. We went online during COVID and for me it was a bit easier to be at home because

I have kids. So, I first struggled with reading and writing and understanding some of the words but as the weeks went on, I spoke to each individual lecturer and they helped me. I overcame my fears because they shouldn't hold anybody back. That's why the lecturers are there so you can ask these questions, and they'll give you the answers.

The programme is different than other programmes and with smaller classes you're able to communicate more with the person that's teaching you. Every question is a question, and there's never a stupid question when it comes to forwarding your education.

I have no complaints; I enjoyed every bit of it. I would recommend this course. I've actually met with a few people and I've told them about the course because I think at the end of the day school isn't for everyone, but when you want to do something for yourself, you know you can overcome those fears and this course can help you to get back into education. I'm now in my final year of a degree programme at TUS.

Richard

Class of 2021/22



“You’re never too old and situations are never that hard to get around.”

I had started in Further Education about 10 years ago. I didn’t complete the course, I lasted about four or five months. I felt out of my depth and I never went back after that. I went back to the building sites and that was it. That was my last experience with education.

I heard about the Transitions from a friend. I was reluctant to start given my age and the time frame that it would take me to complete it. But I took my friend’s advice, and entered the Transitions. I’ve always wanted to come back into education, and I’ve always been academic and it was always a goal of mine. My kids got to a certain age, and it became possible. I just said I would give it a go.

My favourite subject was Personal Development because I’m big into self-care, anything to make myself a better person. I initially struggled with Maths, and I got frustrated around it, but the support system that the Access Course offered to us on campus was great, as well as from students that studied the

course previously. I ran into a few barriers when doing the assignments, but with the support that I got from Anna and Carolann, they helped me and stopped me from spiralling. They made a tough time a lot, lot easier. I really felt like after that year I knew that there was another four years in me. Maybe six if I can keep it going for the masters.

My advice for anyone that’s around my own age, mid-30s or 40s, anyone that’s late starting and thinks they’ve run out of time — you haven’t. The Level 6 Transitions will stand to you, it will actually get you to the end of the course and get you to graduate, instead of being in a Level 8 and thinking when am I going to fail and drop out? Instead of thinking when is the deadline, you’re thinking, when’s my next assignment? When am I going to submit this? When am I going to graduate?

I’d recommend the course to anyone that’s thinking about going back into third level education. You’re never too old and situations are never that hard to get around. There’s always a way.

Sandra

Class of 2020/21



“I think the programme is a good step if you’re not sure where you want to go and and if you’re afraid to start third level education”

I finished secondary school in 2004 in Lithuania before moving to Ireland. Before starting the Transitions programme, I was looking for few years for a course, but I had no confidence to start. And then, in Moyross Community Centre, one of the girls there suggested I start the Transitions programme. So, I started in 2020 and I’m glad I did. I just needed to change and build up more confidence in myself.

To see can I have a third level education, to see I have enough English, and to explore how I can progress more here in Ireland, that is why I started the programme. The first semester was face-to-face but then we moved to online learning in the second semester due to COVID. For myself, I prefer to be in class and learn. I initially struggled with Personal Development, I wanted to drop out after a month and Anna convinced me to stay, so I’m glad I did.

For me, a highlight of the programme was seeing new people and just showing myself that I’m well able to do it and I’m well able to cope with everything. It’s just self-confidence I think, and I was able to build up more than I had before. I think the programme is a good build up step if you’re not sure where you want to go and and if you’re afraid to start third level education, to build up that self-confidence and it’s a good way to challenge yourself. I loved it and that helped me to start my own third level education journey at TUS.

I think the Academic Writing module is brilliant. That’s helped me a lot and I’m still glad I did it and I’m still using all of the skills that I learned. I’m now in my final year of the Accounting and Finance degree and the Transition to Higher Education programme has helped me a lot, the Academic Writing, the Maths, all the skills I learned, all the notes I took, I still have them and I’m still using them.

My advice is just go and do it. Don’t stop yourself. Don’t doubt yourself. Just make that first step. Just go and apply for it. It’s nothing scary. Nothing is stopping you. Just make that first step. That’s the most important thing.

Donna

Class of 2020/21



“ I would have been very hesitant to get back into education and with the help of people that supported me through it, I just went for it.”

I am a 4th year student at TUS. I completed the Transitions to Higher Education programme in 2020. Before that, I completed a course called Boxing Clever. The experience for that was absolutely fantastic. It was really helpful. It was a FETAC Level 5. It was a positive experience, so it helped me then to move forward with education.

I then heard about the Transition to Higher Education programme through Corpus Christi School in Moyross. I decided to enter the programme to give myself a chance. Basically, I had little self-belief, so I had to push myself to do the programme, but it was one of the best decisions that I've made.

I always struggled with maths in school, so I was really nervous for when that came around. With the help of the Learning support Unit here in the college it really helped me. So, I ended up

passing that exam and it's boosted my confidence as well. With the Transition to Higher Education programme there was a lot of support, support for me as a person, but also educational support, so it was really a different experience. It was a positive experience and the people that were involved in the Transitions programme were really helpful and supportive. I think the highlight of the transitions programme for me would have been the fact that I passed the maths. It was a struggle, and I did feel like giving up, but with the help of the people on the course I pushed forward and pushed past my fears, I suppose, and I was really grateful for that.

I would highly recommend the Transition to Higher Education programme for others because it prepares you for third level education. I would have been very hesitant to get back into education and with the help of people that supported me through it, I just went for it. I am in my final year of my degree currently studying Community Development and Addiction Studies and I really love the course. I'm really excited about my future, and it's thanks to the Transitions programme.

Aileen

Class of 2017/18



“The course also allowed me to experience completing assignments and meeting deadlines and how to arrange my life and my routine in order to do so.”

I came across the Transition to Higher Education programme through social media. At the time it had been six years since I had last studied, I was in full time employment and looking for a career change.

As it had been a while since I had studied, when I stumbled across the Transition to Higher Education programme it seemed like a good fit to gain the fundamentals needed before embarking on a full-time degree programme. The course was very beneficial in terms of the modules on offer — even maths! I also found the Academic Writing module extremely helpful as it allowed me to gain the confidence I needed when completing assignments. The course also allowed me to experience completing assignments and meeting deadlines and how to arrange my life and my routine in order to do so.

What I really enjoyed about the course was the camaraderie I experienced with my fellow students. We were all different ages, from different backgrounds and had different life experiences and perspectives. This worked well and we were a great support to one another. The class size wasn't too crowded, which I liked, so it made it easier for us all to mix as a group successfully.

After completing the Transition to Higher Education programme, I pursued a Level 8 degree in Agricultural Science, at TUS Thurles campus. I'm now in full-time employment, and I feel my studies over the past five years have really benefited me to get to where I am today.

I would advise anyone looking to get back into education to start with the Transition to Higher Education programme, to gain the confidence and fundamentals needed to have in your back pocket before beginning first year in third level education. I have no doubt without having started on this programme I would have found it quite overwhelming when I began full time study.

Dave

Class of 2022/23



“My advice is to stick with it if you need help, which you probably will like I did.”

I am a 2nd year Social Care student. My higher education journey started with the Transition to Higher Education programme when in 2022, I came across an article about Limerick’s Lifelong Learning Festival. In 2000, I had taken three subjects in my Leaving Cert and at the time, I wasn’t ready to move on, but this time, I was.

There were four subjects on the Transitions programme — computers, maths, personal development and academic skills. My experience was amazing. The lectures were absolutely amazing and what they taught me was really a life lesson. My favourite subject was where I struggled. It was the academic writing. But I persevered and with help from my lecturers, I really got through it and could see the value in it.

My past previous experiences with education wasn’t good. I left school at 15 and went straight into the workforce. There is a total difference between then and now, how much involvement the

lecturers had with me, and really guided me and helped me through the course.

The highlight for me was at the end of the programme is receiving the certificate and then applying through the CAO. I’d highly recommend the course to somebody that would be interested, even if they’re not going to go on to do a three-year degree, just for themselves, so they know they can do it, that it’s achievable. My advice is to stick with it if you need help, which you probably will like I did. Just reach out, the help is available, and lecturers don’t hesitate in helping. The Transitions programme has been the whole underpinning of my education.

Daniel

Class of 2024/25



“A lot of people might feel the same way as me, maybe scared to take the jump, but don’t be afraid.”

I am a student on the Transitions programme. My last experience of education was about 20 years ago when I did my Leaving Cert. Since then, I have been working.

I heard about the Transitions from the local community Centre in Moyross. My brother also completed the programme. I’m also doing another part-time course, and I can balance the Transitions programme with that.

I started these part-time programmes because I wanted to ease myself back into education. In this semester I am doing two subjects as part of the Transitions programme, Personal Development and Computers. I was looking forward to starting the Transition programme. I wanted a different route for myself after working for the last 20 years. I want to get into Social Care, and I feel that this is my route to that. I’m excited about new subjects and doing

things I’ve never done before. I have a lot of drive and motivation. I have a different mindset about education now compared to before. Education is different now. Before, there was that fear of getting things wrong. The Transitions programme gives me the confidence, it’s something I look forward to. A lot of people might feel the same way as me, maybe scared to take the jump, but don’t be afraid.

Sonya

Class of 2018/19



“The lecturers were there to help and support and that was a big thing for me.”

Before I took part in the Transition to Higher Education programme, my last engagement with the educational system was when I left secondary school. Originally, I heard about the Transition to Higher Education programme through my son's school principal. I was working and had three kids at this stage, I was 25 and I thought that was my life. That that's the way it was going to be forever. However, the school principal who knew me from when I was a child had said, “Would you go back to college?”. I told him it wasn't feasible as I had three kids and a busy lifestyle. I felt I didn't have the time. Even so, he explained the process of the Transition to Higher Education programme to me and that's when I met with Anna from the programme, and she explained it all in detail to me.

On the first night that the programme was supposed to start, I freaked, and fear took over and I emailed to say I couldn't come to class. However, between the principal of my son's school and the staff at TUS, they convinced me to believe in

myself and to go back and just see what it was like.

When I did come back on the second night it was like a whole different experience from what I expected. The lecturers were there to help and support and that was a big thing for me. It was a huge benefit to me to know that they really cared about my education. Looking back at the programme now, my highlight would have been the relationships I've built through the programme. I know it's about my education and going back to education to be the best I can be.

Once I completed the Transition to Higher Education programme in 2019, I enrolled to start a full-time BA (Hons) in Social Care Work within TUS. Throughout my studies, I continued to have links and connections with the Access team. I still linked back for support for anything that I needed. Since then, I graduated in November 2023, and I gained employment with Tusla as a Social Care Worker. I would 100% recommend the Transitions programme to others who are thinking about getting back into education. I would tell everyone to go and give it a try. You will see the development in yourself, you will see the progress.

Mary

Class of 2018/19

“My advice to someone thinking of returning to education is to just go for it. I feel it was one of the best decisions I made.”

I decided to enter the Transitions programme because I felt it was a good opportunity for me. I also liked the idea that it was only two days a week, and it allowed me to see if college was something I could pursue. The subjects we did were Communications, Academic Writing, Personal Development and Computers. I feel these subjects really helped me when I went to college after, especially Academic Writing as I feel it helped me when writing essays. I think what made the transition course easy was it was only two days a week, so it wasn't a huge commitment. I didn't like secondary school, and I left secondary school at 16 and went to Youthreach. After Youthreach I did a Level 5 business studies course.

I would recommend doing the Transitions programme because it allows students to see what college life is like, you will also do some of the subjects that you will do

in college. It's not a huge commitment for people and it will allow them to know if college is something that they want to pursue. My advice to someone thinking of returning to education is to just go for it. I feel it was one of the best decisions I made. After I finished the Transitions course, I completed a Social Care degree in TUS and now I'm now doing Adult and Further Education teaching at Mary Immaculate College.

Karolis

Class of 2017/18

“The lecturers were so supportive and approachable, it was always evident that they really cared and wanted students to succeed.”

I came across the Transition to Higher Education programme when searching online through the TUS website. At the time, it had been three to four years since I had last studied. I wasn't sure where to start and even though I knew I wanted to study something technical, I thought the Transition to Higher Education programme would be a good place to start. It jumped out at me. The modules on offer were key in preparing me for my degree programme, especially in the areas of Maths and Academic Writing.

My experience on the course was extremely positive, the lecturers were so supportive and approachable, it was always evident that they really cared and wanted students to succeed. Another advantage to this course was the small number in the class, as returning to Higher Education can be daunting so the small group put me at ease. I made great connections and friendships with

my fellow students, whom I am still in contact with, and we have supported each other throughout our education paths to date.

I could not recommend this programme enough to those who want to return to education; it's a great way to begin your journey and help you figure out what direction you wish to go. After I completed the Transition programme, I continued my studies in TUS on a full-time programme, BSc (Hons) in Computer Networks and Systems Management, Level 8. I am currently working as a Cloud Sales Specialist with Eir and previously I had a role in Cytrix in Dublin.

I highly recommend the Transition to Higher Education programme to anyone considering returning to Education, it's not too time consuming and extremely manageable each week, especially for those who may need to continue staying in employment while completing it.

Christina

Class of 2020/21

“One of the highlights was the camaraderie in the group. We were a small group and I think that we all felt similar to each other.”

I am a full-time student at the Ennis campus studying Social Care. My journey with the Transitions began in 2020. I was following LIT at the time on Facebook when I heard about the programme. I had left secondary school without a Leaving Cert and it was always a regret of mine. I had my children quite young as well, so I had spent the previous years being at home.

Going back to education was always a goal of mine. I had completed a Level 5 prior to starting the Transitions, and I felt that the course gave me a bit of a refresher and a feel for what third level might be like. I loved the course. I initially struggled with my confidence, and I was really nervous starting. However, the Personal Development module with Anna and the support that we got was second to none. It's the whole reason that I'm here.

The course gave me a good understanding of what a full-time course might involve in higher education. For me, one of the highlights was the camaraderie in the group. We were a small group and I think that we all felt similar to each other. We were all a bit apprehensive when we started and our confidence might have been kind of low. However, we gave great support to each other, through our WhatsApp groups and through our online classes. Nothing beats that. It really kind of kept us all going.

This is a programme that I would definitely recommend to other people if you were thinking about going to third level education. Maybe your confidence or your own belief in yourself might not be there. Just dip your toe in the water with the Transition course and it will give you a feel for it, and it will show you that you can do. It was the Transitions programme that led me to where I am now. I am loving my course, and I think it fits me really well. Through that course, I've had two placements and it's given me a good feel for the line of work that I want to be in and I already know some kind of opportunities that are going to come up for me out of this.

Shannon

Class of 2023/24

“It’s never too late to go back to school and follow your dreams, no matter what obstacles you’ve faced.”

Taking the Transition to Higher Education course has been a life-changing experience for me. At 25, and as a single mother to a six-year-old, I used to feel like I was failing at life. Balancing motherhood and daily responsibilities left me wondering if I could ever go back to school and work towards a career I care about, but starting with this course gave me a fresh start and a new sense of hope.

The staff and coordinators of the course were incredibly welcoming and kind. From the very first day, they made me feel supported and capable of success, no matter what my background or situation was. Their encouragement helped me believe in myself again, and I’m so grateful for that.

Since completing the course, I’ve gone on to start my degree in Community and Addiction Studies at TUS Moylish, a four-year program that I’m really passionate about. What once seemed like

an impossible goal is now my reality, and I’ve grown so much — both personally and academically. The course gave me the skills and confidence I needed to manage being a student and a mother at the same time.

If you’ve been out of education for a while, whether it’s been a few months or years, I highly recommend the Transition to Higher Education course. It’s never too late to go back to school and follow your dreams, no matter what obstacles you’ve faced. The staff are so supportive, and the course will help you build the confidence to succeed, whatever your situation.

Breda

Class of 2022/24

“I learned so much on this course, gaining the knowledge and confidence in myself to do what I never imagined possible before.”

Returning as a mature student can be quite daunting, as it was to me for many years. Post-COVID, I made a decision to rejoin education, initially thinking of evening classes just to get a feel for it again. So, I did a little research on the local colleges and came across this course, Transition to Higher Education. I made an enquiry and before I knew it, I had received a call from one of the lecturers to discuss the course and my start date!

That call changed my life. I learned so much on this course, gaining the knowledge and confidence in myself to do what I never imagined possible before. I am very proud and grateful. With the help, support and infinite kindness from all the lecturers, my journey had begun. Helping to nurture and grow both personally and academically, I felt empowered in reaching my goal towards a degree in the arts.

If you are thinking of returning to education, I would highly recommend taking this course. I am now well into my first semester in Art College and absolutely love it! Without the help and guidance from the team in Flexible Learning, this dream would now be just a distant memory. I can't believe that I'm here, doing something I've always wanted. That's thanks to all that have helped me along this journey, making me believe in myself, and trust the process.

Have you been inspired by the student stories in this booklet?

Are you interested in learning more about the TUS Certificate in Transitions to Higher Education programme?

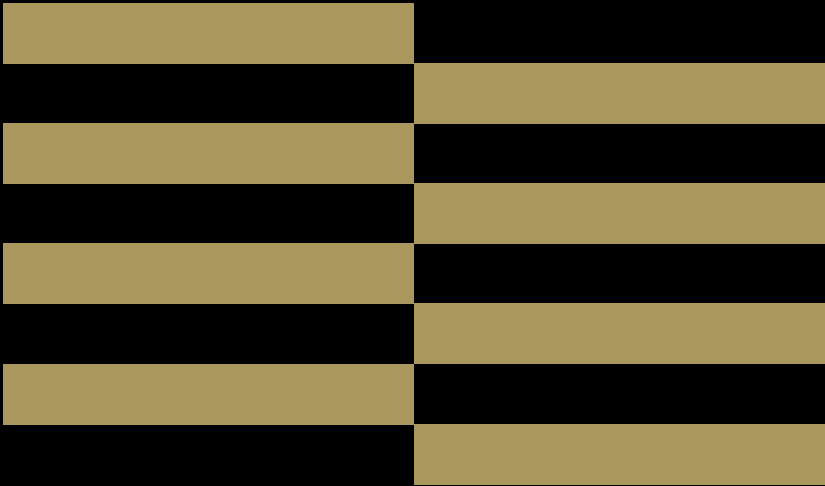
We would love to hear from you and support you on your learning journey.

For more information email **flexible.midwest@tus.ie** or call **(061) 293802**.

You can also visit our website at **www.tus.ie/flexible**

Programme information is available by scanning the QR code below





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