



SPRINGBOARD

Building our future

Springboard 2014

Eligibility Criteria

The following document sets out the eligibility criteria that apply to Springboard 2014. Providers should note that separate criteria apply to Springboard part-time courses and ICT Skills Conversion courses.

Springboard part-time courses

To be eligible for a part-time Springboard course a person must be:

Unemployed* with a previous history of employment AND satisfy one of the following three criteria:

Be in receipt of one of the following payments from the Department of Social Protection:

Jobseekers Benefit
Jobseekers Allowance
One Parent Family
Disability Allowance
Qualified Adults of Working Age
Carers Allowance
Farm Assist/Fish Assist
Widow(er)s Contributory or Non-contributory Pension
Blind Pension
Deserted Wives Allowance

There is no requirement to be in receipt of a payment for a particular period of time prior to the commencement of the programme. Participants in receipt of an eligible payment at the time the Springboard course commences are eligible to apply for a place on that course. However, providers will be required to give priority to applications from people who are long term unemployed.

OR

Be signing for social insurance contribution credits

OR

Be previously self-employed

AND

Be actively seeking employment

People participating in the Community Employment Scheme; the Rural Social Scheme; Tús; JobBridge or in receipt of the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance or the Short Term Enterprise Allowance may apply for Springboard and, with the approval of a Department of Social Protection Case Officer, take up a Springboard course.

To participate in a NFQ Level 9 (Post Graduate) course, a period of at least one year must have elapsed since completing a full time undergraduate degree course leading to a major award at level 8 on the NFQ.

*For the purposes of determining eligibility for Springboard the term unemployed also includes people who are on short term working and in receipt of a Jobseekers payment from the Department of Social Protection.

Further information on Springboard part-time courses and Department of Social Protection income support

Participation on a Springboard course will not confer any entitlement to receive an income support payment from the Department of Social Protection. Participants who are in receipt of a Department of Social Protection income support payment may be able to retain such payments.

Through the Part-time Education Option (PTEO), jobseekers in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit or Jobseekers Allowance who wish to pursue a part-time day or evening course of education may retain their payment subject to continuing to meet the eligibility conditions, including being available for and genuinely seeking work. If a payment is due to cease prior to the end of a course, payment cannot be extended past the due cessation date.

The PTEO will continue to apply when a participant is undertaking a work placement of less than 6 months duration that is a specific component of a Springboard course.

Prior to commencing a Springboard course participants in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit or Jobseekers Allowance should contact their local social welfare office to make an application to retain their payment under the PTEO. The relevant **Springboard PTEO 2014** form can be downloaded on the springboardcourses.ie website. The PTEO scheme does not involve any special payment. Signing-on arrangements continue to apply for PTEO claimants. Attendance on part-time courses is allowed on the clear understanding that availability for and genuinely seeking work opportunities must take precedence over course attendance, including attendance at any work placement component of a course, should a conflict arise.

Participants in receipt of other forms of income support payment from the Department of Social Protection must contact the appropriate scheme area in that Department to confirm if they may retain such payments while on the course. See the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on www.springboardcourses.ie for more information.

Participants who meet the criteria for the JobBridge programme will be eligible for support under JobBridge. Further information on the JobBridge eligibility criteria is available at www.jobbridge.ie.

ICT Skills Conversion courses

To be eligible for a full-time ICT skills conversion course a person must be:

Suitably qualified or, in line with the policy for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) of the higher education provider, someone with sufficient relevant experiential learning is eligible to participate on a full-time Level 8 ICT skills conversion course **regardless of employment status and regardless of whether or not s/he is in receipt of income support**. Tuition fees are waived for all successful applicants. The academic entry criteria for admission to courses funded through the initiative is determined by each participating higher education provider. However it is essential that applicants assigned a place are capable of attaining the requisite (level 8) proficiency in high-level ICT skills within one year.

Priority for long-term unemployed

In line with the Government priority to support people who are unemployed (in particular those who are unemployed for more than 12 months) to reskill in areas of emerging skills needs, where a provider receives more applications from suitably qualified candidates than there are places available, providers are asked to ensure that these places will be awarded to people who have been unemployed for the longest durations.

Back to Education Allowance (BTEA)

A person who is receipt of Jobseekers Benefit or Jobseekers Allowance for at least nine of the previous twelve months may qualify to retain their income support while participating in an ICT skills conversion course. Eligible participants will transfer to a bespoke version of the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA).

Eligible DSP clients who are accepted on a course should immediately contact their local social welfare office and submit a completed **BTEA-Springboard ICT conversion 2014** form which can be downloaded on the springboardcourses.ie website. Participation on periods of work experience which are identified as an integral part of the course may also be pursued and supported under BTEA.

If you are in receipt of other forms of income support from DSP such as the One Parent Family payment you should contact your local DSP office to confirm if you are eligible to participate on an ICT skills conversion course and retain your income support.

Applicants who are previously self-employed and/or signing for social welfare credits are eligible to apply for an ICT skills conversion course but are not eligible for a payment under the BTEA scheme.

Beneficiaries of prior reskilling

Applicants who have completed a government-funded training programme, such as a Springboard or FÁS course, are eligible to apply for an ICT skills conversion course. However two such courses cannot be pursued concurrently.