Springboard+, HCI Pillar 1, ICT Skills FAQ

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Introduction, how to apply, fees

What are Springboard+ and HCI Pillar 1? **(www.springboardcourses.ie)**

Springboard+/HCI offer free and subsidised courses at certificate, degree, diploma and masters level in areas where there are employment opportunities/skills shortages.

Springboard+ is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Social Fund as part of the ESF programme for employability, inclusion and learning 2014-2020. Human Capital Initiative Pillar 1 is funded by the National Training Fund.

Which Springboard+ / HCI Pillar One courses does GMIT offer?

Programmes on offer for Sept 2021, January 22 start will be announced in May on the Springboard Courses website. There will be programmes in Science, Computing, Business, Entrepreneurship, Health/Caring and others. Some programmes will be fully online with no need to attend GMIT for lectures or exams.

How do I apply for the Springboard+ / HCI Pillar One courses which GMIT will offer?

Springboard+ / HCI Pillar One courses must be applied for on www.springboardcourses.ie in May/June when the website opens for applications.

What are the fees for Springboard+ / HCI Pillar One courses which GMIT offers?

All Level 6 programmes are 100% funded, with no cost to the student.

For courses at Levels 7, 8 and 9:
If you are a returner, unemployed / in receipt of another qualifying payment there is no fee for applicants. If you don't qualify for a subsidised fee a 10% fee has to be paid directly to Galway Mayo Institute of Technology. The 10% fee contribution is payable when the course begins.

Eligibility

What are the residency and nationality requirements that Returners and Employed applicants must meet to be eligible to apply to Springboard+ HCI Pillar 1 courses?

Applicants who are normally resident in Ireland should also meet the nationality and EU residency rules. They are:

Nationality

- Applications for admission to Springboard+/HCI Pillar One & ICT Skills programmes should be accepted from suitably qualified applicants who hold EU/EEA/UK/Swiss nationality in their own right or who are:
- Persons who have official refugee status in this State. Time spent from date of official lodgement of application papers for refugee status will be included for the purpose of meeting the three-year residency requirement; or
- Family members of a refugee who are granted permission by the Minister for Justice and Law Reform to enter and reside in the State under Section 18 of the Refugee Act 1996; or

- Persons who have permission to remain in the State as a family member of a Union citizen under the provisions of the European Communities (Free Movement of Persons) Regulations 2006 and 2008 and Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council; or
- Persons who have been granted Humanitarian Leave to Remain in the State (prior to the Immigration Act 1999); or
- Be a person in respect of whom the Minister for Justice and Law Reform has granted permission to remain following a determination not to make a deportation order under section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 or;
- Be a non-EU/non-EEA/non-UK/non-Swiss citizen legally entitled to work full time in Ireland without having to seek an employment permit. These residents may be here as the spouse/civil partner or family member of an Irish or EU citizen and will have Stamp 4 or Stamp 4 EU FAM on their residence cards from Garda National Immigration Bureau.

Residency

Applicants must have been ordinarily resident in an EU/EEA/UK/Swiss state for at least three of the five years preceding their entry to the programme.

Note: The period of residency for holders of Stamp 4 or Stamp 4 EU FAM is calculated from the date of receipt of the Stamp 4. Any period of residency in the state before this date will not be taken into consideration.

I successfully completed a Springboard+ course in the past. Can I do another one?

Former participants may do another Springboard+ if they still meet the eligibility requirements. You should note that priority will be given to applicants who have not previously undertaken a Springboard+ course. More information on applications from previous Springboard+ participants is on www.springboardcourses.ie.

I have successfully completed my Springboard+ course. Can I do another one under the same academic year?

No. It is not permitted to undertake a second Springboard+ course in same academic year

I am interested in a course who do I contact to get more information?

Course pages on the Springboard site have contact details for more information.

I failed to complete more than 1 Springboard+ programme since 2011. Am I eligible?

No. Springboard+ participants who have been unsuccessful on more than one Springboard+ course are not permitted to undertake another course funded as part of the Springboard+ programme. Individuals in this category may be eligible to apply for a HCI Pillar 1 course and should consult the eligibility criteria for these courses. If you are unable to apply due to an existing incomplete record on the springboardcourses website you should contact provider of your incomplete programme.

I was eligible for a place on a Springboard+ course if my circumstances change in the coming months. Can I continue my studies?

Yes. All applicants to a Springboard+ course must be eligible at the time of course commencement but if your circumstances change you may continue to completion.

I am a Returner. but I am not in receipt of a DEASP payment. Am I eligible?

Yes. Courses offered as part of Springboard+ 2020 and HCI Pillar 1 are open to Returners. Returners must have been ordinarily resident in an EU/EEA/UK/Swiss state for at least three of the five years preceding their entry to the programme.

As a Returner, how do I verify my eligibility?

Applicants must verify they have been a Returner for a period of 9 of the previous 12 months to be eligible. Applicants should sign a declaration before a Commissioner for Oaths attesting to your status. This form is on www.springboardcourses.ie

I recently graduated (in the last 12 months) from a full-time, Level 8, Honours Degree Course. Am I eligible to do a Level 9 Springboard+ course?

No. Recent Level 8 graduates must wait for a period of one year from graduation before they are eligible to do a Level 9 Springboard course. However, recent graduates may apply to do an ICT Skills Conversion or a HCI Pillar 1 course.

Am I liable for any costs associated with participating on a Springboard+ course?

A 10% course fee contribution for Level 7, 8, and 9 courses is applicable for employed participants. This is payable directly to GMIT. There are no tuition fees for DEASP customers or Returners but any subsequent costs such as travel and course materials must be borne by the participant. All Level 6 programmes are free to all participants.

How many Springboard+ courses can an applicant apply for?

Applications can be made online for a maximum of ten courses.

Can someone enrol on more than one Springboard+ course at the same time?

No. Participants can only enrol on one Springboard+ course in an academic year.

When do Springboard+ courses start?

Springboard+ courses start dates vary but the majority begin in September. The start date for each Springboard+ courses is included in each course information page on the Springboard+ site.

Are all Springboard+ courses a minimum of one year?

With the exception of the two-year ICT Conversion courses, Springboard+ courses, while varying in duration, are no longer than one calendar year in duration. Many courses run over one academic year. For full details please see the course information page on the www.springboardcourses.ie.

I receive a DEASP payment. What happens if I get a job while on a Springboard+ course?

For those in receipt of a DEASP payment, taking up a suitable job offer must take precedence over participation in a Springboard+ course. However, higher education providers have been asked to respond with as much flexibility as possible in instances where participants get a job before their course is complete. Many courses are delivered flexibly online so it may be possible to combine work with studying.

I have a disability and require additional accommodations; will these be available if I take up a Springboard+ course?

It is a contractual requirement of providers that they ensure there is equality of opportunity for all learners in accordance with relevant legislation. The Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 require educational institutions/service providers do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability.

What is the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)?

The NFQ provides a way to compare qualifications, and to ensure that they are quality-assured and recognised at home and abroad. See www.qqi.ie for information.

Are Springboard+ courses recognised on the NFQ?

All Springboard+ courses are recognised on the NFQ and lead to a higher education award at either Level 6, Level 7, Level 8 or Level 9 on the Framework.

Can I get recognition of my work experience and learning on Springboard+ courses?

All Springboard+ providers consider applicants for recognition of prior learning (RPL) or previous experience on the part of people with or without formal qualifications. Full details are provided with course information on www.springboardcourses.ie.

Can I make a Springboard+ or HCI Pillar 1 application directly to a participating college?

No. All applications must be made online through www.springboardcourses.ie.

I accepted an offer of a Springboard+ place but have changed my mind. Can I re-apply?

If a participant has a change-of-mind after accepting a course offer s/he should immediately inform the relevant higher education provider prior to starting the course. If other providers are still receiving applications for Springboard+ courses it may be possible for a participant to re-apply for another Springboard+ place. There is no guarantee that they will be accepted onto this course.

If I am accepted on a Springboard+ course, do I receive additional income support?

Participation in Springboard+ does not confer an entitlement to receive income support or a student grant. In the case of the one-year full-time ICT Skills Conversion courses, participants who are in receipt of a jobseeker's payment may be eligible for the Back to Education Allowance. Applicants should clarify this with their local Intreo Centre.

Do Springboard+ courses also offer a work placement?

Work placement is a feature of a number of courses. All full-time ICT Skills Conversion courses offer placement. For further details consult course pages on the site.

Do Springboard+ courses run during the day?

Some Springboard+ programmes are a form of blended learning. Therefore, there could be a mixture of on and off campus, online and/or distance learning. Some of the ICT Skills Conversion courses are intensive one-year courses and participants may be required to commit to essentially full-time study for one year. However, there are also two-year, part-time ICT Conversion courses designed for employed persons.

Is it possible to do a Springboard+ course online?

Many Springboard+ courses are offered online. Details of how the course is delivered are included in the information on individual courses, available on www.springboardcourses.ie

What is a "blended" mode of delivery?

Many Springboard+ courses offer a blended mode of delivery. Blended courses are a combination of online and classroom learning experiences. Course providers can be contacted for more detail on how any one particular blended course is delivered.

What is a special purpose/minor award/?

Minor awards provide recognition for learners who achieve learning outcomes but not the specific combination of learning outcomes required for a major award. They allow learners to build up units of learning at their own pace to meet their own needs.

Special-purpose awards are generally of shorter duration and have less content than minor or major awards.

I have a higher education qualification. Am I eligible to apply for Springboard+ course?

In general, yes. Note: to be eligible for a place on a Level 9 (post-graduate) Springboard+ course a period of at least one year must have elapsed since completing and graduating from a full-time undergraduate degree course leading to a major award at level 8. Recent graduates may be eligible to apply for a HCI Pillar 1 course and should consult the eligibility criteria for these courses.

I am completing my full-time college education this year and don't have a history of employment. Can I do a Springboard+ course?

Springboard+ part-time courses are not intended for new or recent graduates. However, the target group for the one-year full-time ICT Skills Conversion courses are graduates (including recent graduates) with an honours degree in a cognate discipline, as well as the capacity and underlying aptitude to undergo an intensive programme of study and work-experience to acquire industry-relevant ICT and software development skills at level 8. A range of other education and training options are available for graduates and others who are not in the priority group for Springboard+.

I was a participant under one of the EU Globalisation Adjustment Fund initiatives. Am I eligible to take up a Springboard+ course?

As long as you fulfil the eligibility criteria you may apply for an approved course.

I have a minor award at Level 7. Can I enrol for a Springboard+ course at Level 8?

Previous education qualifications and/or your work experience may be taken into consideration when making a course offer.

I don't have a Leaving Certificate. Will I meet the academic requirements for Springboard+?

You may; academic requirements are determined by the higher education provider. Many courses provide for recognition of prior learning or experience on the part of people without formal qualifications. Full details are provided with course information on www.springboardcourses.ie

Social protection

How long do I need to be receiving a DEASP payment to be eligible for Springboard+?

There is no requirement to be in receipt of a payment for a particular period of time prior to the start of a course. However, for ICT Skills Conversion courses, applicants will need to satisfy additional DEASP eligibility criteria that they be in receipt of an eligible DEASP for 9 of the previous 12 months. Applicants who are in receipt of a Jobseekers payment, Farm/Fish Assist, or Qualified Adults of a Working Age are not eligible for a place on two-year Part-time ICT Skills Conversions courses. Applicants must inform their local DEASP Office that they are undertaking a Springboard+ course. PUP recipients may be eligible for the BTEA when applying to the one-year ICT Skills Conversion courses and should discuss this with their INTREO office.

What DEASP payments allow me to apply for a Springboard+ place in 2021?

Please see 'Am I eligible' information on www.springboardcourses.ie for full information on participant eligibility.

I was self-employed and do not qualify for a DEASP payment. Am I eligible to apply

Yes, formerly self-employed people are eligible to apply for a Springboard+ place. Please see 'Am I eligible' information on www.springboardcourses.ie

I am unemployed but not receiving a payment, can I apply for a Springboard+ course?

If you have been signing for unemployment credits or you were previously self-employed, you may be eligible to apply for a Springboard+ course. For ICT Skills conversion courses, you do not need to be unemployed to be eligible, any suitably qualified individual is eligible to apply. However, persons who are in receipt of a Jobseekers payment, including Farm Assist and Qualified Adults of Working Age, are not eligible for a place on the two-year, part-time ICT Skills Conversions courses. Please see 'Am I eligible' information on www.springboardcourses.ie for full information on participant eligibility.

I am on a Disability payment; do I need to contact the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) about my Springboard+ application?

If you are in receipt of a Disability Allowance you should contact your local social welfare office. The Disability Allowance section in the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection will confirm if you may retain your payments while on the course. Contact DEASP Disability Allowance section at: Disability Allowance Section, Government Buildings, Ballinalee Road, Longford, or Locall 1890 927 770

I receive a One-Parent Family Payment and meet the eligibility criteria. Do I need to apply for the Part-time Education Option (PTEO) to enrol on a Springboard+ course?

NO. Eligible Springboard+ applicants who are in receipt of the One-Parent Family Payment are not required to register for the Part-Time Education Option (PTEO). Only those in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit or Jobseekers Allowance are required to apply for the PTEO.

I am dependent on a partner who receives a Jobseeker's Allowance but I am not in receipt of this payment myself. Am I eligible to apply?

The spouse/partner of a person in receipt of a Jobseeker's payment is referred to as a Qualified Adult (QA), which is an eligible payment (with the exception of the two-year ICT Conversion courses). See 'Am I eligible' information on the springboard website

If I am accepted on a Springboard+ course, do I receive additional income support?

Participation in Springboard+ does not confer an entitlement to receive a support payment, student grant or the Back to Education Allowance. Please see 'Am I eligible' on www.springboardcourses.ie for full information on participant eligibility.

I am unemployed. If offered a Springboard+/HCIplace do I need to inform DEASP ?

Yes. If you are thinking of taking up a Springboard+ course, you should contact your local DEASP office and let them know of your plans, and to check whether you need to go through any further steps with that Departments' services. For example:

If in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit or Allowance you are required to apply for registration on the Part Time Education Option (PTEO) if taking up a part-time Springboard+ course. The PTEO form entitled 'PTEO – Springboard+ 2020' can be downloaded on the springboard site.

An applicant for the one-year full-time ICT Conversion courses, who is in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit or Jobseekers Allowance for at least nine of the previous twelve months, will need to apply to their DEASP office to retain their income support under a bespoke version of the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA).

PUP recipients may be eligible for the BTEA when applying to the one-year full-time ICT Skills Conversion courses and should discuss this with their INTREO office . PUP recipients are eligible for Springboard part-time courses (part-time courses less than one year in duration).

My DEASP payment is changing from Jobseeker's Benefit to Jobseeker's Allowance. If I take up a Springboard+ course, will this change to my DEASP payment still occur?

Participation on a Springboard+ course does not have any bearing on the duration of a social welfare payment. Participants must continue to satisfy the conditions of their payment. Please see 'Am I eligible' information on www.springboardcourses.ie for full information on participant eligibility.

Does taking a Springboard+ course guarantee continuation of my DEASP payment?

Participation on a Springboard+ course does not provide any guarantee of continuation of a DEASP payment. You should contact your local DEASP office.

If I do not complete a Springboard+ course, will this affect my DEASP payment?

DEASP entitlements aren't connected to the outcome of a Springboard+ course.

Is Part-Time Education Option (PTEO) the same as Back to Education Allowance (BTEA)

No, BTEA applies to full-time education. Springboard+ participants on part-time courses are not eligible for the BTEA.

I have a job two days a week, and am in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance - am I eligible to apply for a Springboard+ course?

If you are in receipt of an eligible payment you may apply. Please see 'Am I eligible' information on www.springboardcourses.ie for full information on eligibility.

I am eligible for a place on an HCI graduate conversion course, but my circumstances may change in the coming months. Can I continue on the course if this happens?

Yes. All applicants to an HCI Pillar one graduate conversion course must be eligible at the time of course commencement but if your circumstances change you may continue .

I recently graduated (in the last 12 months) from a full-time, Level 8, Honours Degree Course. Am I eligible to do a **Level 9 HCI Pillar 1** graduate conversion course?

Yes, recent graduates with at least level 8 qualification in a relevant subject (2020) are eligible to apply and will be required to pay 10% of the tuition fee. Evidence of date and qualification received will be required as proof of eligibility.

Employed persons are also eligible and are required to pay 10% of the tuition fees.

I recently graduated (in the last 12 months) from a full-time, Level 8, Honours Degree Course. Am I eligible to do a **Level 9 Springboard+** course?

No. Recent Level 8 graduates must wait for a period of one year from graduation before they are eligible to do a Level 9 Springboard course. However, recent graduates may apply to do an ICT Skills or HCI Pillar 1 Conversion course.

I am an EU citizen living outside Ireland, can I do a course?

No. Participants must be living in the state at the time of course commencement and also meet the nationality and residency requirements.

What are the general HCI Pillar 1 One rules ?

Am I liable for any costs associated with participating on a HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion course?

A 10% course fee contribution for graduate conversion courses is applicable for employed participants and recent graduates. The formerly self-employed not in receipt of a DEASP payment must also pay 10%. This is payable directly GMIT. There are no tuition fees for DEASP customers or Returners but any subsequent costs such as travel, and course materials must be borne by the participant.

How many HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion courses can an applicant apply for?

Applications can be made online for a maximum of 10 courses.

When do HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversation courses start?

HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion courses vary in start date, but the majority begin in September. The start date for each graduate conversion courses is included in each course information page on the site.

Are all HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversation courses a minimum of one year?

A majority of courses run over one academic year, a number of courses run over two academic years. For full details please see course information page on the site.

Can I do an HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion course in any subject area?

HCI graduate conversion courses are specifically designed to meet current and future skills needs in Ireland. They do not cover all subject areas. For more information check out www.springboardcourses.ie.

I am in receipt of a DEASP payment. What happens if I get a job while participating on an HCI Pillar one graduate conversion course?

For those in receipt of a DEASP payment, taking up a suitable job offer must take precedence over participation in an HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion courses. However, higher education providers have been asked to respond with as much flexibility as possible in instances where participants get a job before their course is complete. For example, a college may offer participants the option to study during evenings or at weekends.

I have a disability and require additional accommodations; will these be available if I take up an HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion course?

It is a contractual requirement of providers that they ensure there is equality of opportunity for all learners in accordance with relevant legislation. The Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 require educational institutions/service providers do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability.

Can I get recognition of my work-based experience and learning on a HCI Pillar 1 course?

All HCI Pillar 1 course providers are required to consider applicants for recognition of prior learning (RPL) or previous experience on the part of people with or without formal qualifications. Full details are provided with course information on www.springboardcourses.ie.

I have accepted an offer of an HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion place but now have changed my mind. Can I re-apply?

If a participant has a change-of-mind after accepting a course offer s/he should immediately inform the relevant higher education provider prior to starting the course. If other providers are still receiving applications for HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion courses, it may be possible for a participant to re-apply for another HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion.

If I accept an offer on an HCI Pillar 1 course, do I receive any additional income?

Participation in HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion course does not confer an entitlement to receive an income support payment or a student grant.

Do HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion courses also offer a work placement?

Work placement is a feature of a significant number of courses. For further details consult individual course pages on the site.

Do HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion courses run during the day?

The majority of HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion courses are a form of blended learning. Therefore, there could be a mixture of on and off campus, online and/or distance learning courses. We advise all applicants to contact the course provider with any questions that they may have in relation to a particular course.

I already have a higher education qualification. Am I eligible to apply for an HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion course?

To be eligible for a place on a Level 8 or 9 HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion course you must have a major award at level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or Recognised Prior Learning equivalent to Level.

What are the HCI Pillar One Social protection rules?

How long do I need to be in receipt of a social protection payment to be eligible for an HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion course place?

Those in receipt of an eligible payment from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) must be in receipt of this payment for 9 of the previous 12 months. Applicants must inform their local DEASP Office that they are undertaking an HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion course. PUP recipients may be eligible for the BTEA when applying to the one-year full-time ICT Skills Conversion courses and should discuss this with their INTREO office. PUP recipients are eligible for Springboard part-time courses (part-time courses less than one year in duration).

What social protection payments allow me to apply?

Please see 'Am I eligible' information on www.springboardcourses.ie for full information on participant eligibility.

I was self-employed and don't qualify for a social protection payment. Can I apply?

Yes, formerly self-employed people are eligible to apply for an HCI graduate conversion course place. Please see 'Am I eligible' information on www.springboardcourses.ie for full information on participant eligibility.

I am on a Disability payment, do I need to contact anyone in the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) about my HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion application?

If you are in receipt of a Disability Allowance you should contact your local social welfare office. The Disability Allowance section in the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection will confirm if you may retain your payments while on the course. Contact details for the Department of Social Protection Disability Allowance section are: Disability Allowance Section, Social Welfare Services Office, Ballinalee Road, Longford LoCall no. 1890927770

If I am accepted on an HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion course, do I receive any additional income support?

Participation in HCI Pillar 1 courses does not confer an entitlement to receive an income support payment, student grant, or the Back to Education Allowance. Please see 'Am I eligible' information on www.springboardcourses.ie for information on participant eligibility. PUP recipients may be eligible for the BTEA when applying to the one-year full-time ICT Skills Conversion courses and should discuss this with their INTREO office. PUP recipients are eligible for Springboard part-time courses (part-time courses less than one year in duration).

I am unemployed if offered an HCI Pillar 1 place do I need to inform DEASP?

Yes . If you are thinking of taking up a HCI Pillar 1 course you should contact your local social welfare office before enrolling on the course to let them know of your plans, and to check whether you need to go through any further steps with that Departments' services.

An applicant for a full-time HCI Conversion course, who is receipt of Jobseekers Benefit or Jobseekers Allowance for at least nine of the previous twelve months, will need to apply to their Social Protection office to retain their income support under a bespoke version of the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) PUP recipients may be eligible for the BTEA when applying to the one-year full-time ICT Skills Conversion courses and should discuss this with their INTREO office. PUP recipients are eligible for Springboard part-time courses (part-time courses less than one year in duration).

My Social welfare payment is due to change shortly from Jobseeker's Benefit to Jobseeker's Allowance. If I take up an HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion course, will this change to my Social Protection payment still occur?

Participation on an HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion course does not have any bearing on the duration of a social welfare payment. Participants must continue to satisfy the conditions of their payment. Please see 'Am I eligible' information on www.springboardcourses.ie for full information on participant eligibility.

Does participation on an HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion course guarantee continuation of my social protection payment?

Participation on an HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion course does not provide any guarantee of continuation of a Social Protection payment.

If I do not complete an HCI Pillar 1 course will this affect my Social Protection payment?

Social Protection entitlements are not connected to the course outcome.

I have a job two days a week, and am in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance - am I eligible to apply for a HCI Pillar 1 graduate conversion course?

If you are in receipt of an eligible payment you may apply. Please see 'Am I eligible' information on www.springboardcourses.ie for full eligibility information.

If your Springboard+ and HCI Pillar 1 questions are not answered here, please email GMIT at springboard@gmit.ie