
Vision Sports Ireland Education Bursary 2023



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Contents

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|---|----|
| The Vision Sports Ireland Bursary Fund 2023 | 1 |
| Bursary information and awarding criteria | 1 |
| 1. Background to the Vision Sports Ireland Bursary | 3 |
| 2. About the Vision Sports Ireland Bursary..... | 3 |
| 3. Eligibility requirements | 4 |
| 4. Identification and selection process..... | 4 |
| 5. Bursary offer | 5 |
| 6. Conditions attaching to all Bursary offers | 6 |
| 7. Value of the Vision Sports Ireland Bursary 2023..... | 7 |
| 8. Payment of the Vision Sports Ireland in 2023 | 8 |
| 9. Renewal of the Vision Sports Ireland Bursary | 8 |
| 10. Determination of disputes..... | 9 |
| Appendix 1 - Approved courses for the 2020 Vision Sports Bursary scheme | 9 |
| Schedule 1 – Approved educational institutions | 10 |

1. Background to the Vision Sports Ireland Bursary

It is widely recognised that there has been a history of exclusion and missed opportunities for blind and vision impaired young people in education (McCarthy, 2016). Within Ireland's further education, blind and vision impaired people now make up just 1.8% of students with disabilities and represent the smallest single grouping of students with disabilities studying at third level (AHEAD, 2018). In reviewing the long-term trends, the growth rate of blind and visually impaired students in higher education has remained three times slower than that of the general disabled student population over the last five years.

Vision Sports Ireland, Ireland's national governing body for promoting sport and physical activity for people who are blind and vision impaired recognises that appropriate financial supports are essential for young blind and vision impaired people seeking to continue into further education in the sport and physical activity sector, and therefore, have launched an annual Bursary which aims to support the living expenses of blind and vision impaired students attending further education.

2. About the Vision Sports Ireland Bursary

The Vision Sports Ireland Bursary is an annual grant for undergraduate or Further Education Training (F, E, T.) students studying in the sport and physical activity sector only, with confirmed visual impairment or blindness, studying on a full-time basis at a recognised educational institution in the Island of Ireland only.

The value of each scholarship is set at €2,000 per year (maximum €8,000 across the duration of a recognised undergraduate certificate, diploma, degree programme or Further Education Training and continues for the duration of the undergraduate programme or Further Education Training course chosen by the Bursary winner, to a maximum of four years. No Bursary will be paid in the event of repeat years. The third-level courses approved for the purposes of this Bursary scheme are set out in Appendix 1.

3. Eligibility requirements

In order to be eligible, all applicants must have a certified diagnosis of their visual impairment or blindness from a registered eye health professional.

The Bursary is open to students who are entering their first year and those who are already studying at undergraduate level or Further Education Training (F, E, T.) In a sport or physical activity course.

Once eligible, the appropriate application form can be completed on the Vision Sports Ireland website at www.visionsports.ie or requested from Vision Sports Ireland on 01 405 6030.

4. Identification and selection process

The selection process will involve a case by case review of all student applications which consists of:

- Background personal details and contact information

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- Undergraduate area of study and duration of course
 - A personal statement outlining the applicant's career aspirations.
 - A personal statement outlining how the applicant has overcome a significant challenge in pursuit of their educational attainment in the sport and physical activity sector.
 - Judges' consideration of the potential impact of the NCBI Bursary on the applicants' ambitions

Applications for Vision Sports Ireland Bursary 2023 will close at 5pm on October 7th, 2023. Submissions should be received on the online application form or via email, visionsports@ncbi.ie. Following the closing date, shortlisted students will be invited to interview online, and the successful candidates will be notified on or before October 30th 2023.

5. Bursary offers

The awarding and administration of the Vision Sports Ireland Bursary shall sit within the administration of Vision Sports Ireland National Services. When a Bursary offer has been made and subsequently accepted, verification will be sought by the Vision Sports Ireland to ensure that the candidate continues to attend an approved undergraduate course or F, E, T as outlined in Appendix 1.

The successful candidate must comply with the terms of the offer as outlined by Vision Sports Ireland and accept the Bursary in respect of an approved course for the 2023 / 2024 academic year. The Bursary can be deferred for one academic year only, and for that period, only with the prior written permission of the Vision Sports Ireland.

Any offer of a Bursary is dependent upon information being truthful and accurate and upon the applicant fulfilling all the conditions of the Vision Sports Ireland Bursary scheme. The right to withdraw an offer is maintained by Vision Sports Ireland in the event of any error or omission whatsoever in the information provided by or on behalf of the applicant.

6. Conditions attaching to all Bursary offers

All applicants to whom a Bursary is offered must fulfill the terms and conditions of the scheme together with the entry requirements for the third level course chosen which must be an approved course for the purposes of this scheme.

All applicants must be a **Vision Sports Ireland member** on our new membership system as of November 2022.

Bursary holders will be expected to comply with the regulations of their college / institution and to undergo every term examination or any other examination determined by the authorities of their college / institution for their course.

It is permissible for any Vision Sports Ireland Bursary holder to be in receipt of an award or grant or scholarships of the state (e.g SUSI, Department of Education) or EU also.

Successful Bursary recipients will be expected to take part in Vision Sports Ireland communications and publicity surrounding the awarding of

the Vision Sports Ireland Bursary. These expectations will run for the duration of the Bursary award. It is advised that all students consider this additional commitment when applying.

If the successful candidate is attending Further Education Training course and progresses on to Undergraduate level it must be within the sport and physical activity faculty and the programme timeline of a maximum of four years remains in place.

7. Value of the Vision Sports Ireland Bursary 2020

The Bursary will be paid for the prescribed duration of the undergraduate or F, E, T programme at an annual rate of **€2,000 to the maximum value of €8,000** for a continuous four-year undergraduate degree or F, E, T programme.

Bursary holders who are required to participate in off-campus placement during part of an academic year as an integral part of their course will have their Bursary entitlement paid in the normal manner by Vision Sports Ireland.

Bursary holders who take a year out to pursue activities, educational or otherwise, which do not form an integral part of their primary undergraduate or F, E, T programme will not have their Bursary payments made during their year of absence from college.

Bursary holders who participate in a compulsory year in full time attendance at a foreign third level education institution as an integral part of an international primary undergraduate or F, E, T programme chosen

will have their Bursary payments made in the normal course while abroad.

A Bursary holder permitted to register for a succeeding year of his / her undergraduate or F, E, T study programme while carrying one or more repeat subjects will have his / her Bursary payments made while she / he remains registered. However, payments will terminate if the repeat exams are not passed within the required timeframe established at the commencement of the academic year.

8. Payment of the Vision Sports Ireland Bursary in 2023

The Bursary holder will be paid the Bursary in equal term instalments by Electronic Fund Transfer directly into the student's Irish bank account. The first term instalment will not be paid until the registrar of the relevant college / institution informs Vision Sports Ireland that the student has been officially accepted on an approved course and she / he has been registered at that college / institution.

At designated periods throughout the academic year, the registrar or the Dean of the faculty of the college / institution will be required to confirm that the student is still registered with the college and engaged in the approved course in order to facilitate payment of subsequent Bursary instalments.

9. Renewal of the Vision Sports Ireland Bursary

Subject to the normal duration of the approved course chosen, the

Vision Sports Ireland Bursary will be renewed when the authorities of the relevant college / institution certify that the Bursary holder has progressed to the next year of the course.

Vision Sports Ireland may terminate or lower the value of a Bursary, at any time without notice, where an unfavorable report on the Bursary holder is received from the authorities of the relevant college / institution.

A Bursary holder who, during the course of her / his studies, wishes to change course within the sport and physical activity faculty or defer her / his Bursary for one academic year and for that period only, must obtain the prior written approval from Vision Sports Ireland.

When a student changes course, the Bursary payments will be deferred until the student reaches the point on the new course where participation on the original course ceased.

10. Determination of disputes

Every question or dispute which shall arise in relation to the interpretation of this scheme shall be determined by Vision Sports Ireland whose decision thereon shall be final.

Appendix 1 - Approved courses for the 2023 Vision Sports Ireland Bursary scheme

“Undergraduate” pertains to:

- a. A **full-time undergraduate** course of not less than two years duration within the sport and physical activity faculty within a

qualifying institution in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

- b. A **full-time undergraduate** course of not less than two years duration within the sport and physical activity faculty pursued in a university or third level institution which is maintained or assisted by recurrent grants from public funds in another E.U. member state, with the exception of the following:

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“Further Education and Training” pertains to:

- a. Any Course post second level education such as a Post Leaving Cert Course (P, L, C) or Further Education Training (F, E, T) within the sport and physical activity faculty within a qualifying institution in Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- Courses in colleges of further and higher education (other than those courses which are at higher national diploma level or higher).

For the avoidance of doubt, the following full time undergraduate courses are excluded:

- Courses provided in a college which are offered in private commercial third level colleges in Ireland, and which are validated by that college,
- Courses provided elsewhere in colleges akin to private commercial colleges in Ireland.
- Courses which **DO NOT** fall under the sport and physical activity faculty.

**For further information on the Vision Sports Ireland
Bursary scheme, please contact Vision Sports Ireland on
01 405 6030.**

