



1,000 third level places for students with disabilities

SCHOOL leavers with disabilities are to be offered a fast track to third level education, according to Deputy Beverley Flynn.

The Mayo T.D. say over 1,000 places are being reserved by the State's 11 colleges (which includes the seven universities) to school leavers who, because of disability, cannot meet the normal required Leaving Certificate points for their preferred course.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for students who do not meet the points needed for the course of their choice," she said.

"Under this system, these students will be able to take up places at third level without reaching the required points."

Known as DARE (Disabled Access Route to Education), the scheme recognises and makes allowance for the impact of disability on educational attainment and on progress to higher education.

"The purpose of the DARE initiative is to double the number of students at third level with sensory, physical or multiple disability," said said.

"Current participation rates in third level for people with disability are very low. The objective is to provide equality of opportunity for those with disability by making entry to third level that much easier."

Deputy Flynn said it was important to publicise the scheme so as to encourage the highest possible number of applicants.

"Last year, 300 students accepted places in college through the DARE access scheme. This year we hope the take up will be much greater."

A dedicated website, www.accesscollege.ie, has been developed which contains full details of the scheme and which will assist students in making their applications.