



## New changes to give increased access to third level education

A THIRD level access scheme, which enables disadvantaged students to enter university, even with reduced points, is being extended to all secondary schools in Ireland.

Deputy Beverley Flynn said that the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) scheme is to be made available to all 730 secondary schools in Ireland.

Deputy Flynn said that up to now the scheme had been confined to DEIS schools only.

Now any student from a disadvantaged background will be entitled to apply for a place in university through HEAR, even where their Leaving Cert points are less than the normal requirement.

Deputy Flynn said: "Under HEAR universities and other third level colleges allocate a quota of places on a reduced points basis to students from a disadvantaged background.

"Last year, 682 students entered college through the HEAR route. These students would not have had the required points to gain a college place under standard CAO requirements."

Deputy Flynn said she warmly welcomed the extension of the scheme to all secondary schools.

"Many deserving students

fail to make it to third level because they start from a situation of disadvantage.

"The HEAR system is a means of addressing that inequality. It offers a route to third level for students whose background has made it difficult for them to reach their full potential under the conventional points system," she added.