



## Academia 2010



My name is Sinéad Rafferty and I am delighted to be a part of the Academia 2010 exchange programme for guidance practitioners. I am originally from Donegal and I have been living in Dublin for the past 10 years.

My primary degree was in Music, Italian and Psychology in UCD. I completed the postgraduate diploma in Guidance and Counselling in UCC in 2008 and I found it to be an extremely enjoyable and challenging course – I learned a lot about myself and about the need for reflective guidance practitioners in the Irish education system.

Currently I work with the Trinity Access Programmes (TAP) serving two roles simultaneously. These are as **educational guidance officer** and as **project officer** of the foundation course for young adults.

As **Ed Guidance tutor** I facilitate weekly guidance classes with both young adults (age 17-22) and mature students (23 – 65), 54 students in total.

The aim of the guidance module that I have devised is to provide a forum for students to embark on a journey of self-discovery and self-direction in order to make informed decisions and realise their goals. The module prepares students for entry to third level undergraduate studies through guidance and facilitation of the selection of foundation course modules (which they study for one year with us) and degree choices for the coming academic year. The skills required to match self-knowledge and knowledge of courses/careers are identified and examined. I also provide year-round confidential support both academically and personally on an individual basis in a counselling role.

The module's content includes the following:

Personal development and goal setting, Course research projects: - exploring third level options, Career interests/Career directions, Self assessment: identifying strengths and skills.

CAO/Application procedures to third level institutions, Presentation & Interview Skills, Time Management - Self-Confidence & Self-discipline, Stress Management, 'Learning to Learn' – An Active Approach etc...

As **project officer** for the foundation course for young adults my main concern is with the welfare of the students academically, financially and emotionally as well as overseeing the smooth running of the programme on a daily basis. I work closely with the co-ordinator of the mature programme, our research and evaluation staff and our access officer to ensure that we are continuously improving our standards and learning from our experience. I feel this is key to any successful guidance practise.

We have close links with the disability service as some of our students have particular learning needs. It is my job to ensure that their needs are being met and any extra supports necessary for them are put in place in an accessible

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manner as well as keeping the appropriate communication lines open with their tutors throughout the year.

I am very much looking forward to sharing knowledge and ideas with colleagues in France and I trust it will be an enjoyable and productive experience for all involved.

