

EirQuest

The Student Workbook



Parent Brochure



Why a careers programme?

It is important at this stage for young people to select suitable leaving certificate subjects, to develop a greater awareness of possible careers areas, to organise work experience and to understand the effects of rapidly changing trends in national and global employment. More than ever they need a clear sense of purpose towards higher education and to be strongly motivated in their approach to academic and vocational work. A good careers education and guidance programme can help in achieving these objectives by:

- Identifying a range of well matched potential career and higher education course areas
- Providing a framework for careers and higher education research
- Helping students to understand the nature, needs, requirements, challenges and opportunities of potential careers
- Helping avoid costly mistakes when making Leaving Certificate subject choices
- Providing a focal point for interviews and discussions
- Offering objective and impartial career and educational guidance
- Developing enthusiasm and motivation

EirQuest is a careers guidance programme designed to meet these criteria, and introduce young people to the world of work and higher education.

Cambridge Occupational Analysts

Cambridge Occupational Analysts have operated in the fields of careers and higher education guidance for 27 years. They serve 1,500 schools and colleges across Eire, the UK and internationally.

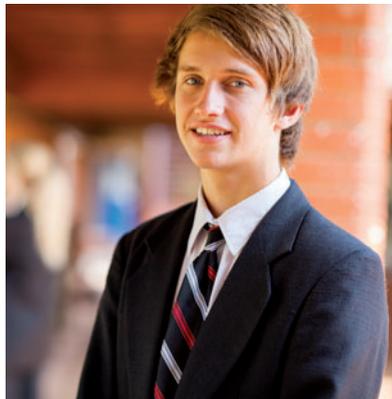
COA's guidance team are professionally qualified advisers, with many years experience of careers work in schools, careers services, or careers consultancy.



How does EirQuest operate?

Students complete a questionnaire about their interests, abilities and personal qualities without pressure of time. Their answers are then used to produce a careers guidance workbook covering over 40 broad career areas.

Students are encouraged to complete their workbooks using their Action Plan, Career Analysis Forms, The Careers Directory and by acquiring relevant work experience and advice.



How is the effectiveness of EirQuest assessed?

COA place the technical quality of their careers programmes and aptitude tests high on their list of priorities. The services of a well-established occupational psychologist, Dr Charles Johnson, are used to evaluate the technical characteristics and properties of all COA careers programmes and to ensure they meet acceptable standards of reliability.



What do students and parents receive?

- A ***Careers Workbook*** based on data provided by the student and staff via the EirQuest questionnaire
- Access to the ***MyCareersRoom*** online resource
- A copy of ***The Careers Directory***
- Access to ***WORKBRIEF*** (online version of The Careers Directory)
- Access to the ***COA Information Helpline***
- Optionally the ***Cambridge Profile Aptitude Tests***

What does the EirQuest workbook contain?

The EirQuest workbook reveals a picture of the young person's stronger occupational and academic interests, related abilities and personal qualities. In addition to covering careers the student is already familiar with, it can also list many completely new possibilities.

Important sections of the workbook include:

Careers Selection Worksheets

Each worksheet covers a well-matched career area (e.g. law), and related careers (e.g. barrister, solicitor etc). Each worksheet contains:

- An overview of the career area
- Important academic subjects required for entry to relevant HE courses
- Page references to *The Careers Directory* providing the basis for further careers and higher education research
- Overall Match bar graphs showing relative strengths of important supporting areas of interest, and comments explaining their relevance
- A 20-point Career Check Questionnaire, listing important interests, skills and abilities likely to be required

Subject Selection

A Subject Selection Chart helps the student choose subjects to meet the entry requirements of their more likely higher education and careers needs. A Subject Availability Chart lists the subjects available at their present school.

Investigating Careers

My Action Plan acts as a focal point for the student's research. It includes Career Analysis Forms which allow careers to be researched systematically and on a comparative basis. My Action Plan is fully co-ordinated with *The Careers Directory* to make further research straightforward.

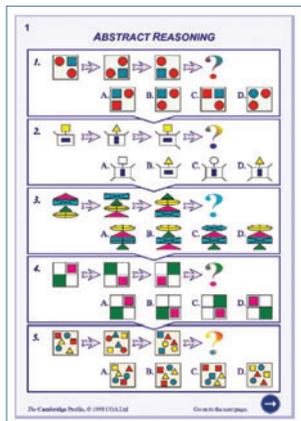


The Cambridge Profile Aptitude Tests - optional

If a school has asked to take these aptitude and ability tests, the results can be incorporated in the EirQuest workbook. The tests comprise:

- Verbal Reasoning
- Numerical Reasoning
- Abstract Reasoning
- Spatial Reasoning
- Spelling
- Arithmetic Calculation
- Working Quickly & Accurately

The results are relevant in making university course and careers decisions. They also throw light on a student's thinking and learning styles and can be used as a pointer to numeracy and literacy skills.



The Cambridge Profile Aptitude tests are on the Irish Government's Approved Aptitude Test list.

Other Languages

The Verbal Reasoning tests are available in most other major languages. Each can be taken in addition to the English test. This allows students to reveal their true academic potential in their mother tongue and shows how this compares with their results in the English test.

Careers Interviews

After handover sessions with guidance counsellors, students should be capable of explaining their workbooks to parents. This feedback enables guidance counsellors and parents to contribute to the discussion of careers and Leaving Certificate subjects.

A wide range of career opportunities is revealed but further research is essential. The objective is for students to be ready to make their own subject selections and also to develop future career and course plans.



MyCareersRoom

This useful online portal allows students to log in and access the feedback from their own EirQuest workbook. It has links to different career areas enabling the student to investigate, access, bookmark and rate websites of interest.

It links with an online version of The Careers Directory and facilitates note-making so that students can refer back to their findings. In addition there is a very useful Portfolio section, which helps students keep a record of their skills, achievements and work experience to date.

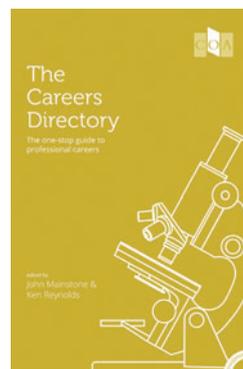


Students can continue to use the MyCareersRoom portal up to the age of 24. It is an excellent resource for not only creating their personal statement but also recording skills and achievements in readiness for composing their targeted CVs.

The Careers Directory

The Careers Directory contains up-to-date information on some 425 different careers. Laid out in an innovative double-page format, it uses the acronym 'WORKBRIEF' to cover the sub-headings:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| W hat is involved? | B road outlook |
| O pportunities for training | R elated occupations |
| R equirements for entry | I mpact on lifestyle |
| K ind of person | E arnings potential |
| | F urther information |



The Careers Directory is an indispensable resource for anyone seeking careers information.

COA Information Helpline

COA advisory staff will answer questions from parents or students promptly, should they require help in interpreting EirQuest or have any other career-related queries - please contact COA. The COA Information Helpline is available free of charge for school leavers up to the age of 24, who have taken EirQuest.

What people say about COA Careers Programmes

"For less than the cost of a meal out – it completely changed my son's motivation and commitment to his work and his outlook on his future."

Parent

"We have been using EirQuest & Cambridge Profile for a number of years now and have always had very positive feedback from students and parents. It is extremely useful in helping students to identify the appropriate range of subjects to choose for their Leaving Certificate. It also gives a precise and clear picture to parents which they find helpful in understanding their son or daughter's subject choice process."

St Andrew's College

"EirQuest is of great benefit to the students as they finalise their subject choice for the Leaving Certificate Examination. It introduces the students to the world of work and further education, and enables them to identify and explore future careers and consequently the routes to those careers."

Blackrock College

"Before I did this I was totally unsure about myself and where I was going. I have now turned a corner and feel really good about myself and my future."

Student

