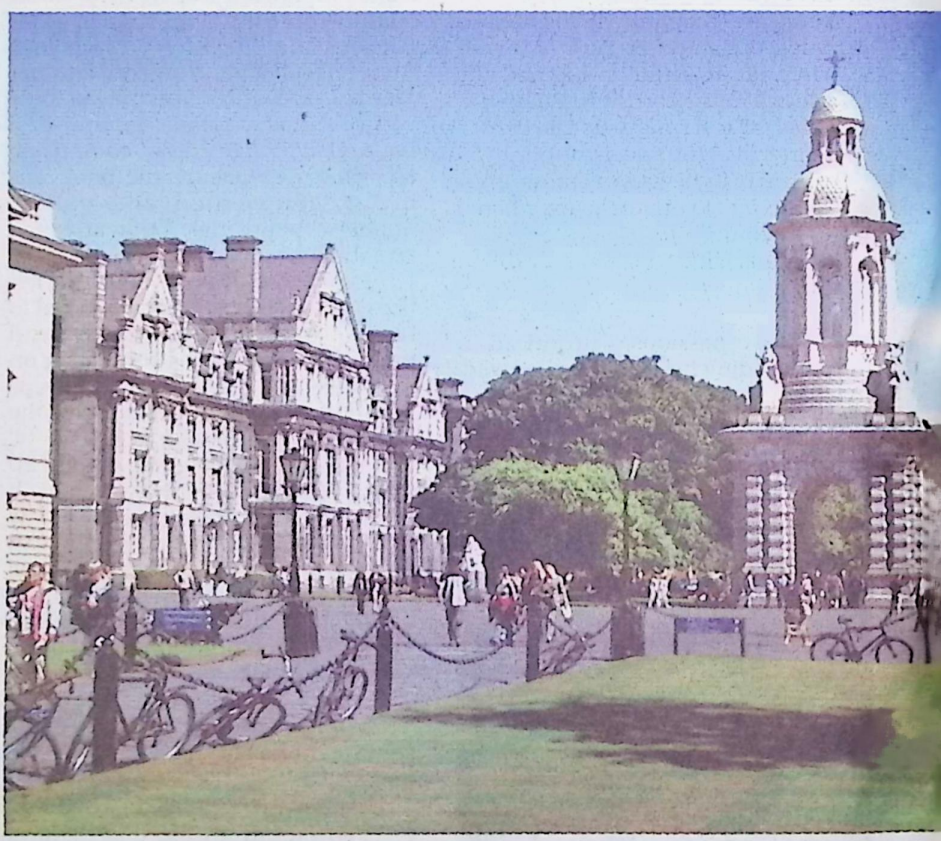
Higher Education in Ireland: Opportunities and Scholarships

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IRELAND, officially known as the **Republic of Ireland** is a sovereign country located in the north-western part of Europe. Having Dublin as its capital, it occupies more than eighty percent land area of the Ireland Island and shares a border only with the United Kingdom or more specifically with Northern Ireland. Higher Education System in Ireland is organized into seven universities and some tertiary level institutes for technology and business. Currently Ireland is going through a massive economic boom, which eventually motivated its think-tanks to open the door of higher education to the international students. In recent days, Irish government under the *National Development Plan* is providing huge scholarships and grants for international students in science, engineering, technology, humanities and social science subjects.

Irish Universities

The University of Dublin, Trinity College is the oldest university in Ireland. Established in 1592 by Queen Elizabeth I, this university is regarded as one of the seven most prestigious ancient universities in the English-speaking world. In October 2007, *Times Higher Education Supplement (THES)* ranked Trinity 53rd in the world, 13th in Europe and 1st in Ireland. *The Financial Times*, in their latest MBA-ranking ranked this university 70th in the world and top in Ireland. *The Sunday Times* in their regional ranking for Irish universities also ranked Trinity as the best university in Ireland. Though Trinity is quite strong in the area of Science and Engineering, but its main strength lies in Humanities and Arts.

University College Dublin (UCD) - also known as the *National University of Ireland, Dublin* is the largest university in Ireland. Founded in 1854, UCD is one of the four constituent universities that form the National University of Ireland system. *THES* ranked this university 177th in the world and 2nd in Ireland whereas *The Financial Times* ranked it 98th globally and 2nd in Ireland for MBA. UCD's main strength lies in business and engineering related subjects with a diverse range of programs that no other university in Ireland is providing right now.

Founded in 1845, *University College Cork (UCC)* or *National University of Ireland, Cork*, is another prominent university in Ireland. In *THES* latest ranking it jumped 100 places from its previous position and ranked 286th globally. *The Sunday Times* placed this university 2nd in Ireland just after Trinity and commented that UCC will be the next Irish university that will start beating Trinity in different league tables. *Dublin City University (DCU)*, established in 1975, is the youngest university in the country. In spite of being a new university, DCU is doing very well in research based subjects. It is considered as the most modern university in the country and also the leading institution to attract international students. *University of Limerick*, *National University of Ireland, Galway* and *National University of Ireland, Maynooth* are the other three universities located in Ireland.

Irish Higher Education System

Irish higher degrees are mainly of two types: *Degree by course work* or sometime referred as *Taught Degree* and *Degree by research work and thesis* or also called *Research Degree*. It takes one year to complete a taught degree at master's level whereas research degrees are extendable up to two years depending on the depth of the thesis. But in most of the cases it becomes extremely difficult to extend a scholarship for a master's degree.