

INFORMATION EVENING FOR THE CLASS OF 2025-2026



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POINTS FOR DISCUSSION TONIGHT

- Higher Education Institutes
- Apprenticeships
- Colleges of Further Education: PLCs and Tertiary Degree Courses
- CAO Application Procedure
- CAO Offers
- Restricted Courses
- Researching Courses
- Challenges of Career Decision Making
- Studying Abroad: UCAS and EUNICAS
- Grants: SUSI
- Scholarships
- Access Routes: HEAR and DARE*
- General Advice



AT A GLANCE

Many paths can lead to a happy life.
Some of your options include:

Third Level
Education



Post Leaving Cert
Courses (PLCs)



Apprenticeships



Graduate
Programmes



Employer
Sponsored
Programmes



Study
Abroad



Work



Work
Experience



Volunteering



Gap Year



Repeat Leaving
Certificate





Options after school

Apprenticeship
(Level 5 up)

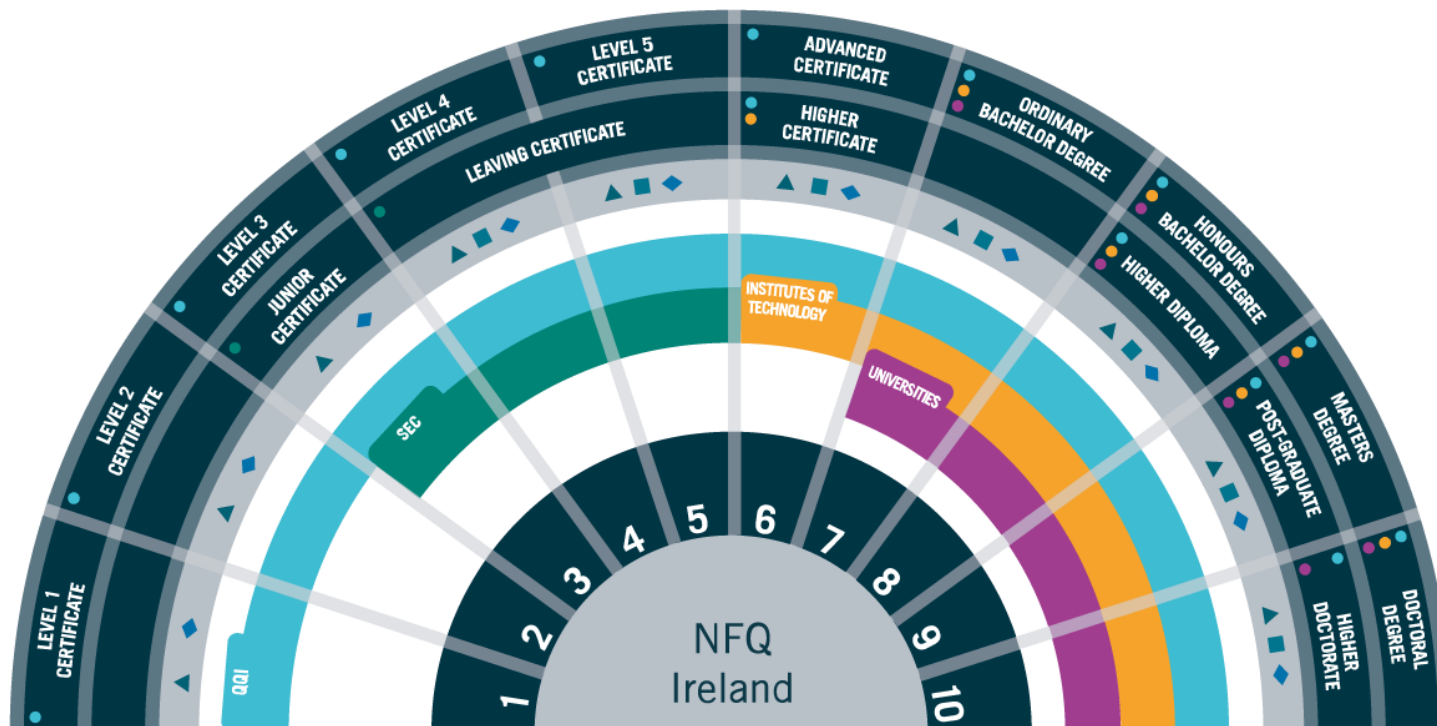
PLC (Levels 5 & 6)

IT/ TUs (mainly
degree 7 & 8, some
6)
Tertiary Degrees also*

University (Levels
7 & 8)

Work

Year out



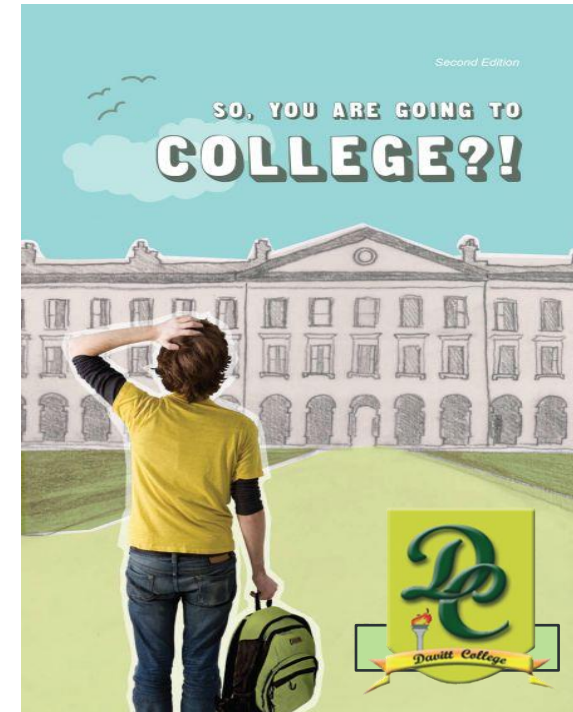
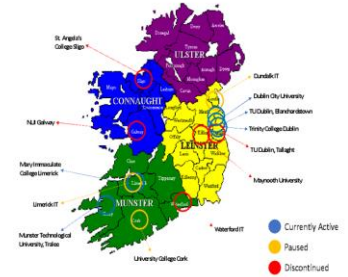
TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITIES

- **5 Technological Universities**
(former ITs merged in recent years)
 - **ATU** (9 campuses across Mayo, Galway, Sligo and Donegal),
- **TUS** (Athlone, Limerick, Clonmel, Ennis and Thurles)
- **SETU** (Carlow, Wexford and Waterford)
- **MTU** (5 campuses in Cork and Kerry)
- **TUDublin** (5 sites in the Dublin area)



The Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Republic of Ireland

1. Atlantic Technological University
2. Dublin City University
3. Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art and Design & Technology
4. Dundalk Institute of Technology
5. Mary Immaculate College
6. Maynooth University
7. Munster Technological University
8. National College of Art & Design
9. RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences
10. Royal Irish Academy
11. South East Technological University
12. St Angela's College
13. Technological University Dublin
14. Technological University Shannon Midlands Midwest
15. Trinity College Dublin
16. University College Cork
17. **University College Dublin**
18. University of Galway
19. University of Limerick





- **College of Further Education (PLC courses and Tertiary**

- Degree Courses)** – Examples include

Mayo College of Further Education and Training, Galway Technical Institute, Cavan Institute, Etc.

- **Apprenticeships** - You can find apprenticeship jobs for craft and new apprenticeships on apprenticeship.ie. Apply directly to the employer before the closing date, SOLAS approval required by employer in advance.

- **World of Work**

- **Other**



WAYS OF APPLYING TO COURSES

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

CAO

- Universities
 - New Technological Universities
 - Other HEIs
 - Private colleges
-
- **Colleges of Further Education**
 - Apply directly to colleges
 - QQI FET awards levels 5 and 6 (PLC)
 - Tertiary Degrees through NTO.ie level 8



ABROAD



UCAS

Universities/colleges in the U.K (England, Scotland , Wales and Northern Ireland)
(deadlines Oct 15th 2024* and January 29th 2025)

EUNICAS

Universities/Colleges in Europe with courses taught through English



Focus on University and Technological University Entry

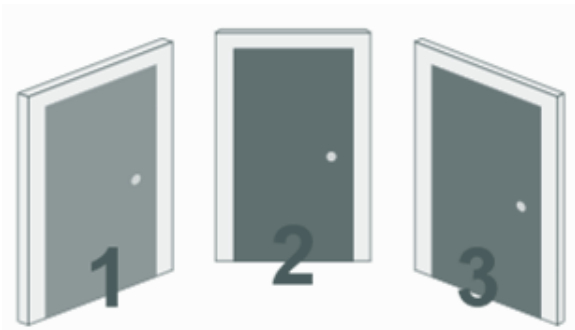
Out of all of the options available after school, this is the one that has the most stringent criteria required to gain access. For this reason, it needs the most attention at this stage.

CAO

- The national database for sorting students' college applications.
- Each student fills in their own CAO application in 6th year, choosing the courses they are most interested in, in order of preference.
- In autumn, the CAO offer places if the student meets 3 criteria.

3 CRITERIA REQUIRED FOR ENTRY

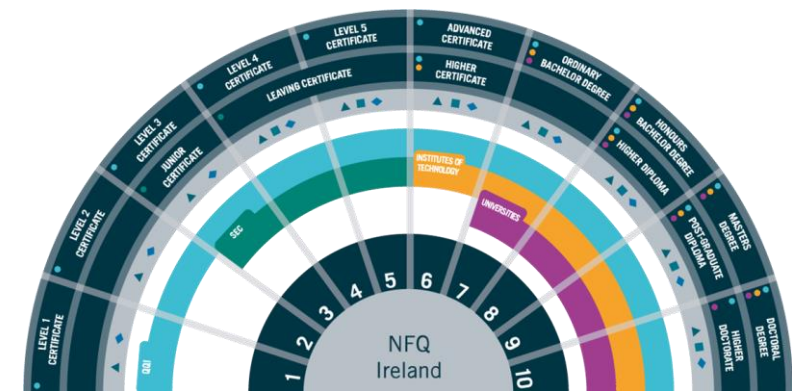
- The 3 Doors



- 1 -Minimum Entry Requirements
- 2 -Subject Specific Requirements
- 3-Points requirement



Matriculation Requirement



- Since 2017-
- The requirements for level 6 and 7 Courses are 5 O6/H7 grades.
- The requirements for Level 8 Honours Degrees are 2 H5 and 4 O6/H7 grades.
- In **Trinity College Dublin** the requirements became **3 H5** and **3 O6/H7 grades***.



Important Dates:

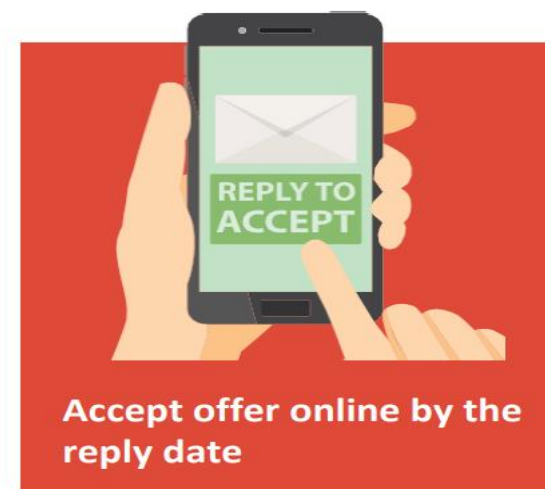
- CAO is now open for applications.
- **20th January 2026**— CAO Apply online by this date to avail of the discounted application fee of €30 - HPAT applications close
- **1st February 2026** (5.00pm) — CAO Normal closing date for application (Final date for all RESTRICTED COURSES e.g. art, drama, music and medicine, etc.)
- **May 6th 2026** — CAO online change of mind facility becomes available (free)
- **July 1st 2025** — CAO change of mind closes



• CAO FEES

- Online discount rate by January 20th €30
- Normal application (online/paper) €45

Your role as a parent/guardian



Throughout this guide, we use the terms 'parent', 'guardian', and 'child', but please note that this document has been prepared for a parent, step-parent, guardian, carer or supporter of someone applying to CAO.

- [LINK TO DOWNLOADABLE PARENTS GUIDE TO CAO - https://www2.cao.ie/downloads/documents/CAOparentsguide.pdf](https://www2.cao.ie/downloads/documents/CAOparentsguide.pdf)



TWO APPLICATIONS IN ONE



- There are two course choice lists (Level 8 and Level 7/6) and applicants may make up to 10 course choices on each list.
- Your choices on one list do not in any way affect your choices on the other list. They may be considered two separate applications on one form.
- It is possible to receive an offer on both lists. You may then decide to accept either your Level 7/6 or your Level 8 offer.



COMPLETING THE CAO APPLICATION

During class we will use the Demo Application facility in the Student Resources section of the website to become more familiar with the process before starting an application.



- ☐ Apply online via www.cao.ie
- ☐ Enter personal details carefully, particularly date of birth and email address.
- ☐ Once registered on the system, applicants will receive an application number which must be kept safe. This number will be needed for all future correspondence with CAO.
- ☐ Applicants should check emails regularly for correspondence from CAO and/or the HEIs.
- ☐ Applicants must remember to **place course choices in genuine order of preference.**

Order of Preference

- If you learn nothing else from this presentation let it be this...

PLACE YOUR
COURSES IN
GENUINE ORDER
OF PREFERENCE!



1



2

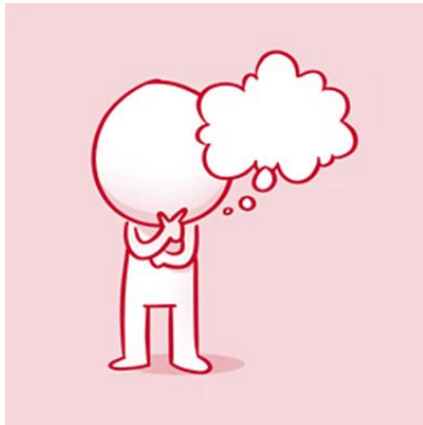


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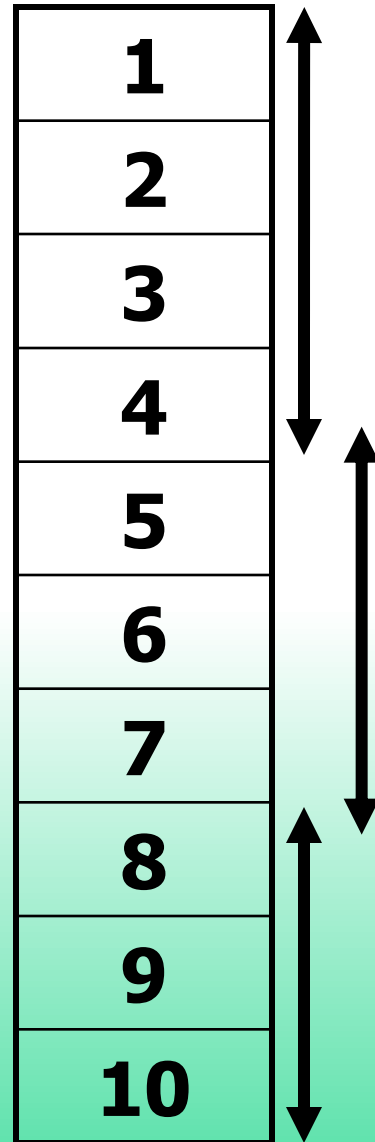


To do otherwise is a
grave mistake.

- Ensure that your son/daughter is putting down their genuine course preference as number one on their list!
- You do not need to guess what the points are going to be as points can go higher or lower than last year.
- **Simply list your courses in genuine order of preference from the highest preference at no. 1 to the lowest preference at no. 10.**
- Be conscious of points further down. If aiming for points over 500, ensure they also have courses with lower points as a safety net lower down on their order of preference.
- Take a realistic look at your son/daughter's CAO form again after their mocks



So – what is the best way to fill in the courses

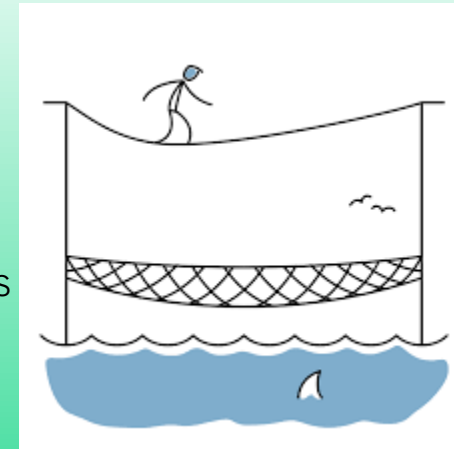


Dream Courses

Realistic Courses

Banker Courses

AKA -Your safety net courses



CAO GOLDEN RULES



- ☐ You can move up but never down
- ☐ You can only accept one offer in each round
- ☐ Treat any offer as if it is your last!
- ☐ Available Places (listed after round 1)
- ☐ Deferrals
- ☐ Choose in genuine order of preference.



Order of Preference

• If you learn nothing else from this presentation let it be this...

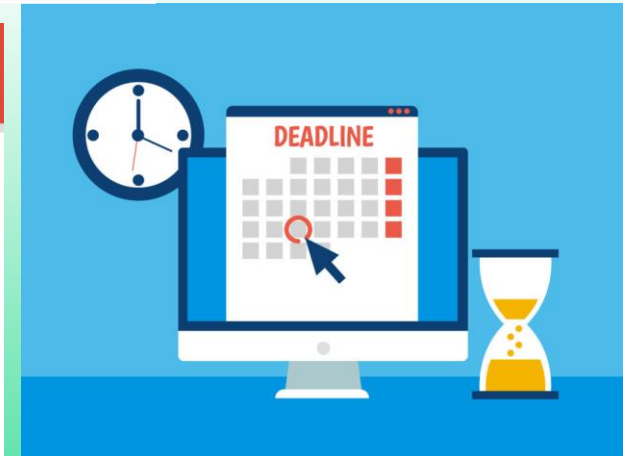
PLACE YOUR COURSES IN GENUINE ORDER OF PREFERENCE!

1 2 3

To do otherwise is a grave mistake.

www.cao.ie

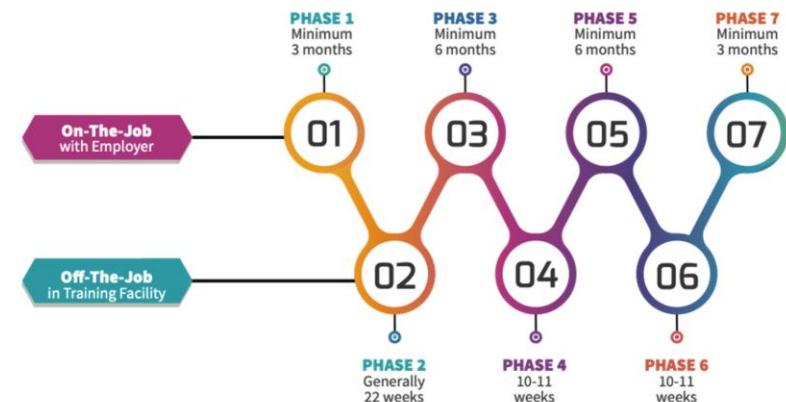
CAO



APPRENTICESHIPS



- Combined way of learning in your place of work, with learning in an education or training centre.
- On successful completion of a number of phases of training, apprentices become recognised craftspeople or professionals
- Apprenticeships currently available include those in the traditional areas of Construction, Electrical (ESB), Engineering, and now the new areas of Finance, Hospitality, Computer and ICT, MedTech, Insurance, Accountancy and Motor.
- Many more apprenticeships are in the process of development at the moment.
- Deadlines can vary so it's important to research when they are.
- Full list of apprenticeships can be found on www.apprenticeship.ie





25 Traditional or 'Craft'- 7 phases



51 'New' Apprenticeships- 2-4 years. 50% on the job



GENERATION APPRENTICESHIP

www.apprenticeship.ie

Apprenticeship
Real-life Learning 

Generation Apprenticeship is a major expansion project to more than double the number of learners taking the apprenticeship route. It is a bigger and bolder new talent platform.

 @apprenticesirl  facebook.com/apprenticeshipireland

 CONSTRUCTION

 ELECTRICAL

 ENGINEERING

 FINANCE

 HOSPITALITY

 ICT

 MOTOR

 + MUCH MORE

HELPING PEOPLE DISCOVER AND DEVELOP THEIR TALENTS THROUGH TRAINING

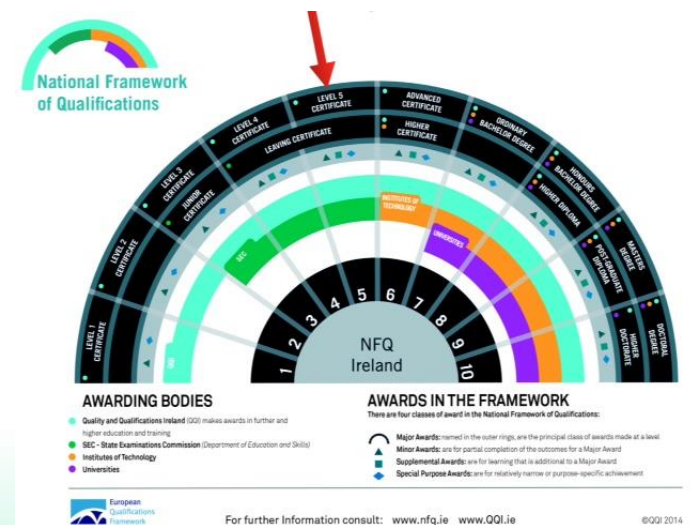
Apprenticeship is a programme of structured education and training which formally combines and alternates learning in the workplace with learning in an education or training centre. It is a dual system, a blended combination of on-the-job employer-based training and off-the-job training.





FURTHER EDUCATION - PLC

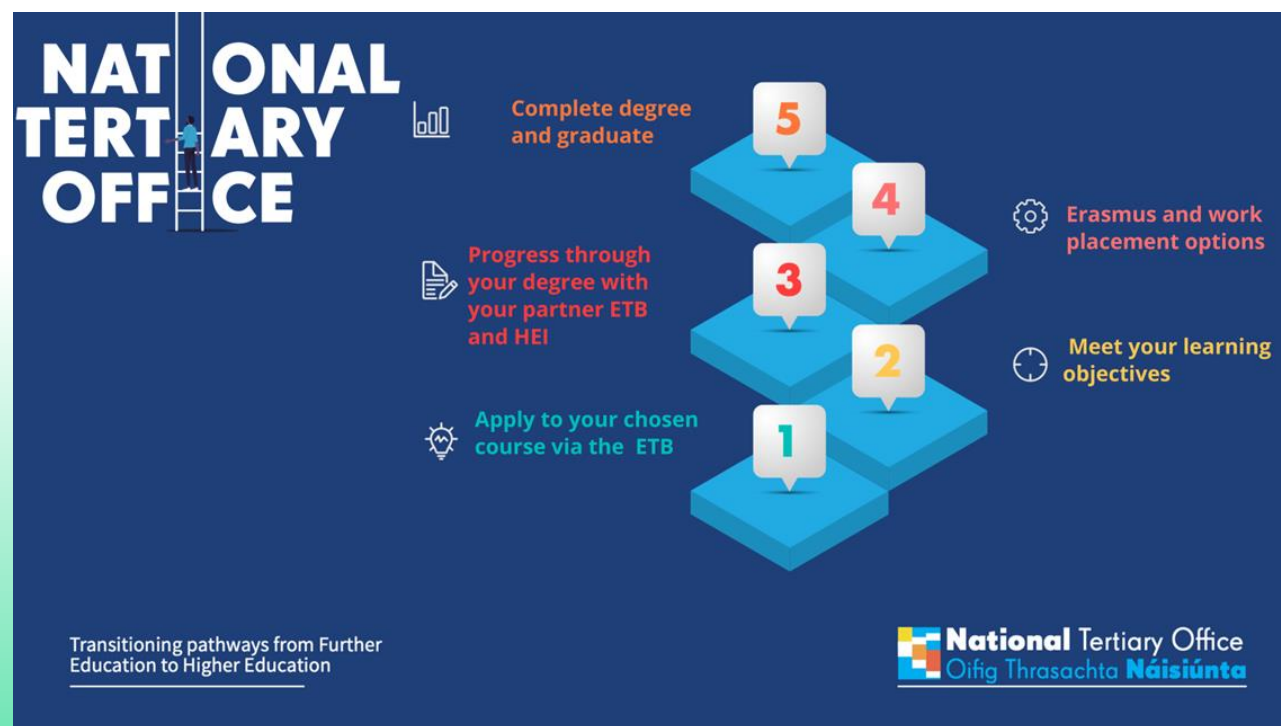
- Post Leaving Certificate Courses are one year initially at level 5 (full time or part time) and cover a broad range of subject areas with opportunities for progression to level 6 PLC and beyond.
- Entry requirements: completion of the Leaving Certificate or Leaving Cert Applied (no points considered).
- Application Process: - Apply directly to the college from January onwards. - Possibility of interview, reference and portfolio if required. - Students will know if they are successful before the Leaving Cert. Suits students who are not sure of what career they want to pursue or are not ready to attend third level college.
- Back up option for students also applying through the CAO as most Colleges of Further Ed have progression links with Universities.





- ❑ A course starts in a further education college, usually an **Education and Training Board** (ETB) and you remain there for 1 to 2 years depending on the course.
- ❑ The student then **progresses to third level** to complete their degree in a higher education college or university.
- ❑ All courses lead to a degree at Level 7 or 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).
- ❑ There are no fees when attending an ETB but course fees do apply while attending third level HEI.

TERTIARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME



HOW TO APPLY FOR A TERTIARY COURSE?



- ☐ Students do not apply through the CAO and do not need the same Leaving Certificate points.
- ☐ There are entry requirements to get on a course and each course has its own entry requirements
- ☐ Courses include degrees in:
 - ☐ Business
 - ☐ Nursing
 - ☐ Engineering
 - ☐ Construction
 - ☐ Music and Sound Production
 - ☐ Software Development
- ☐ Information on the course and the entry requirements can be the course provider or coordinator, National Tertiary Office (NTO) website and on social media



<https://nto.heai.ie/courses/?province%5B%5D=connacht&q=>



Congratulations Graduate - A new route to a Degree outside the CAO system



No CAO points required
Open to all

1

Apply on NTO.ie

- 1 Find a course that interests you on NTO.ie
- 2 Check the requirements for the course
- 3 Hit the **Apply** Button

Easy Steps

2



- > Applications assessed
- > Eligible applicants interviewed
- > Places offered

3



Tertiary degree students are registered in their ETB and University for the duration of their course

4

- 1 Smaller class sizes in ETB
- 2 Use of university facilities
- 3 Access to clubs and societies
- 4 Step Back awards
- 5 ERASMUS and work placement options

Enjoy the benefits of being a student in both campuses

5



Graduate with a degree awarded by the university

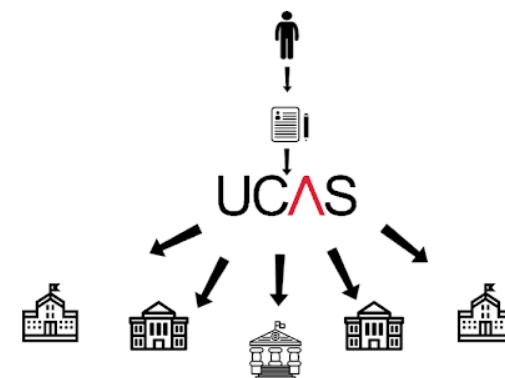
6



STUDYING ABROAD -



- **UCAS is the application process for Colleges and Universities in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.**
- **Deadlines:** 15th October (for courses in medicine, veterinary medicine/ science and dentistry, Cambridge and Oxford) and 15th January (for all other undergraduate courses).
- **Reasons for applying to universities in the UK:**
 - There are many colleges in the UK where it is much easier to get into a desired course than in Ireland. (i.e. lower points/grades than Ireland)
 - Ease of Access (i.e. travel distance, flights, ferries, etc.)
 - Cost of living may be cheaper than Ireland
 - College Reputation (i.e. word of mouth, friends, siblings, past pupils, university league tables etc.)
 - Financial Cost * NOW IN REGION OF £10,000 per year. New arrangements for Health Science in progress, particularly in NI.

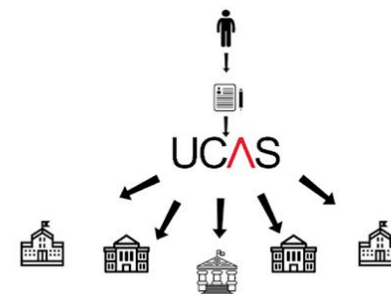




UCAS- APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- Consider **entry requirements for each course!**
- Students can apply for **5 courses** and they do not need to be in order of preference.
- Some colleges may require a reference from the Guidance Counsellor/Tutor/Year Head/Subject Teachers.
- Students must submit **predicted grades** of what their teachers believe they will achieve in the Leaving Certificate and a **Personal Statement** outlining why they are suitable for the course.

UCAS



UCAS
Application



STUDYING ABROAD-

EUNiCAS

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY
CENTRAL APPLICATION
SUPPORT SERVICE

- EUNiCAS enables Irish students to apply to up to eight-degree programmes that are taught through English, in universities across Europe.
- Places are available on degree programmes, including Medicine and Veterinary, Arts & Humanities, Life Sciences, Social Sciences, Engineering & IT and Business.
- Entry requirements are often significantly lower than Irish universities, but vary depending on each university.
- The cost of attending many universities is often much lower than registering for an equivalent programme in Ireland/ Irish students studying in the four Scandinavian countries, or Germany. In the Netherlands, fees are just over €2000 pa. Fees are also low in Italy.



SUSI: Key Eligibility Criteria

- **Nationality:** Irish, EU, EEA, Swiss nationals or have specific leave to remain in the State.
- **Residency:** 3 of last 5 years in Ireland, EU, EEA or Switzerland.
- **Progression** in education – NFQ levels 5-10.
- **Approved College/Course**
- **NEED to TICK BOX on CAO Application for be considered for SUSI**
- **'Reckonable' Income** (Class -Dependent/Independent)

www.susi.ie/undergraduate-income-threshold-and-grant-award-rates/

- **Eligibility reckoner – a good place to start also**

<https://www.susi.ie/eligibility-reckoner-app-irish/>



Budget 2025: changes to student contribution and grant thresholds



It was announced in Budget 2025 that:

- The Student Contribution fee will be reduced by €1,000 for students in the 2024-2025 academic year
- The Standard Rate Maintenance Grant income thresholds and Student Contribution Grant income thresholds for the Student Grant will increase by 15% (September 2025).
- The income threshold for the special rate of maintenance grant will increase from €26,200 to €27,400 (September 2025)



Register for a SUSI account

Personal Details

Your PPS no

Your surname

Your first name(s)

Your date of birth

Your e-mail address

Confirm e-mail address

Telephone Number

Previous

Next



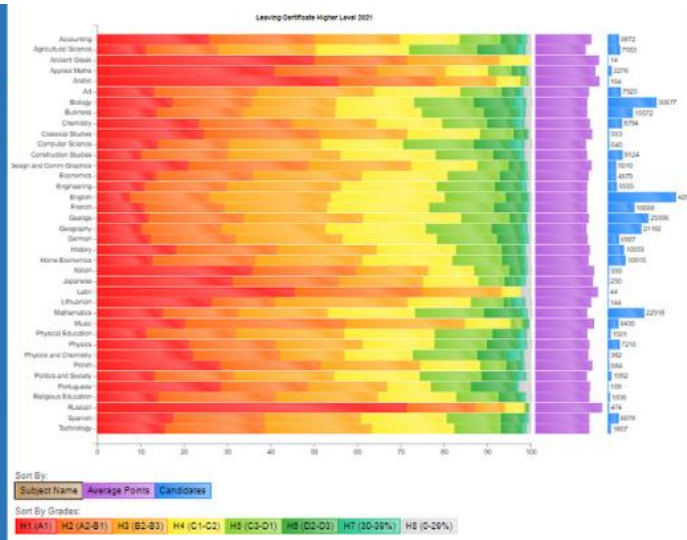
Overcoming the challenges of Career Decision Making -

- A career is a lifelong developmental process.
- It is not a decision for life.
- Important to get on the right track and select a sector that's right for you.
- Base your choices on your aptitudes, interests and personality.
- Use the bank of knowledge you've gathered through self-assessments, school assessments, reflections and research (Careersportal and Strengths Profiling).
- We're here to help and support you on your journey!



Careers Portal - Reach Plus Profiles

What a fantastic resource for career and course research!



https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408



The screenshot shows the careersportal.ie website interface. The top navigation bar includes links for Home, Reach Admin, Student Demo File, GA, EN, Accessibility Tools, My Account, and Log out. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Progress Indicator:** A section showing progress for six categories: Career Planning, Self-Assessment, Study Performance, World of Education, World of Work, and LCVP. Each category has a progress bar.
- My Recent Favourites:** A section for CAO Courses, PLC Courses, and Careers / Apprenticeships, with an Advertising Account Manager link.
- Quick Links:** A grid of icons for Points Calculator, CourseFinder, Career Explorer, Apprenticeships, Progression Routes, Career Sectors, and Scholarships.
- Apps & Research Tools:** A section for Career Planning and Research, Self Assessment, and various tools like Career Sector Profiler, Career Interests, and Career Skills.
- Noticeboard:** A section for Davitt College, Guidance Counselling Website, and Recent School Files.

The bottom of the page features a Windows taskbar with a search bar and system tray showing the date and weather.

Parents Page and
Guides available on

<https://careersportal.ie/parents/index.php>

The screenshot shows the CourseFinder search results page. The search criteria are: Max CAO points 0, French, and Minor Award. The results show 30 courses found. The table below lists the top results:

Course	Course Title	College	NFQ Level	Duration	QQI Links	Points (r2)
DC115	Accounting and Finance	Dublin City University - DCU	Level 5	3 Years	Link	509 ▼ -20
SE200	Arts - English	SETU Waterford Campus (formerly WIT)	Level 5	3 Years	Link	210 ▲ 10
LM002	Arts - History	University of Limerick - UL	Level 5	4 Years	Link	326 ▼ -21
SE200	Arts - Irish	SETU Waterford Campus (formerly WIT)	Level 5	3 Years	Link	210 ▲ 10
LM002	Arts - Music and Dance	University of Limerick - UL	Level 5	4 Years	Link	326 ▼ -21
SE200	Arts - Sociology	SETU Waterford Campus (formerly WIT)	Level 5	3 Years	Link	210 ▲ 10

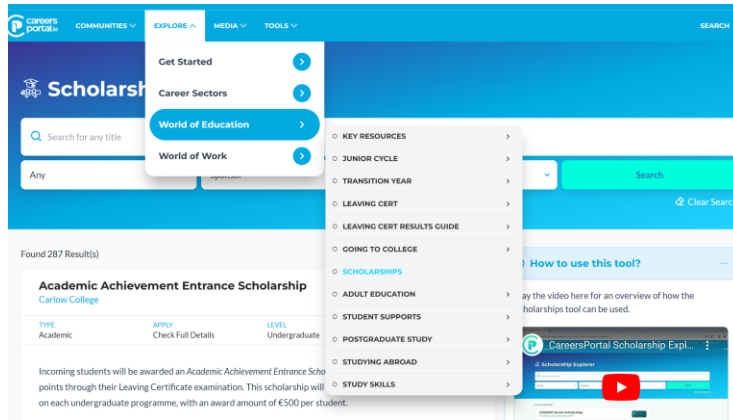


Scholarships

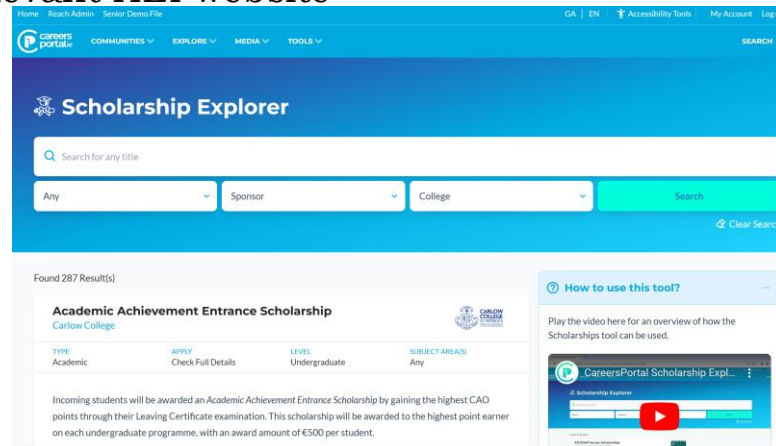


Play the video here for an overview of how the Scholarships tool can be used.

1. Select Scholarships from the drop down CP menu



2. Generates a list of up to 287 results, key details found then on relevant HEI website



<https://careersportal.ie/scholarships/index.php?search=&Area=Any&Sponsor=&college=&userid=1136579&token=eea3ed18494d5438e2cf2cf760a7a930>



KEY LINKS



<https://www.cao.ie/>



<https://careersportal.ie/>



<https://www.susi.ie/>



<https://www.qualifax.ie/>

<https://accesscollege.ie/HEAR/DARE>



<https://1916bursary.ie/>



<https://apprenticeship.ie/>



<https://eunicas.ie/>



<https://www.ucas.com/international/international-students>



Language Exemptions Information -

<https://www.cao.ie/index.php?page=exemptions&b=studentresources>

PARENTS HUB ON CAREERS PORTAL

<https://careersportal.ie/parents/index.php>

PARENTS GUIDE TO THE CAO

<https://www2.cao.ie/downloads/documents/CAOparentsguide.pdf>



PREPARING FOR LIFE AT COLLEGE

- **Accommodation**

-
All information on Accommodation is available on each college website.

Applications start in the coming months so please keep an eye on websites and news alerts weekly published on careersportal.



PREPARING FOR LIFE AT COLLEGE



- Costs and Budgeting

-
-
- - Meal Planning
- - Budgeting



- Health

- - Physical health
- - Healthy Minds
- - Alcohol
- - Drugs
- - Personal safety



HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR LEAVING CERTIFICATE STUDENT

SOME PRACTICAL STEPS THAT YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP THINGS GO AS SMOOTHLY AS POSSIBLE

1. Try to be understanding and reassuring.
2. Be organised and have a good place to study.
3. Practice good time management.
4. Keep a calm house.
5. Stay interested and ask how things are going.
6. Be a positive outlet.
7. Keep them well nourished!
8. Be there
9. Read Up!
10. Remember , you've got this!



<https://careersportal.ie/news/parents-how-you-can-support-your-leaving-certificate-student>

• <https://careersportal.ie/parents/index.php>



THANK YOU
for listening!

- Remember we are always available to support and assist your Son/Daughter in this next stage of their life.
- Guidance Counsellors for 6th Year Students are Ms Carney, Mr Larkin, Ms Lennon and Ms Morley
- Thank you for your time and attention.

