

Options after the Leaving Certificate

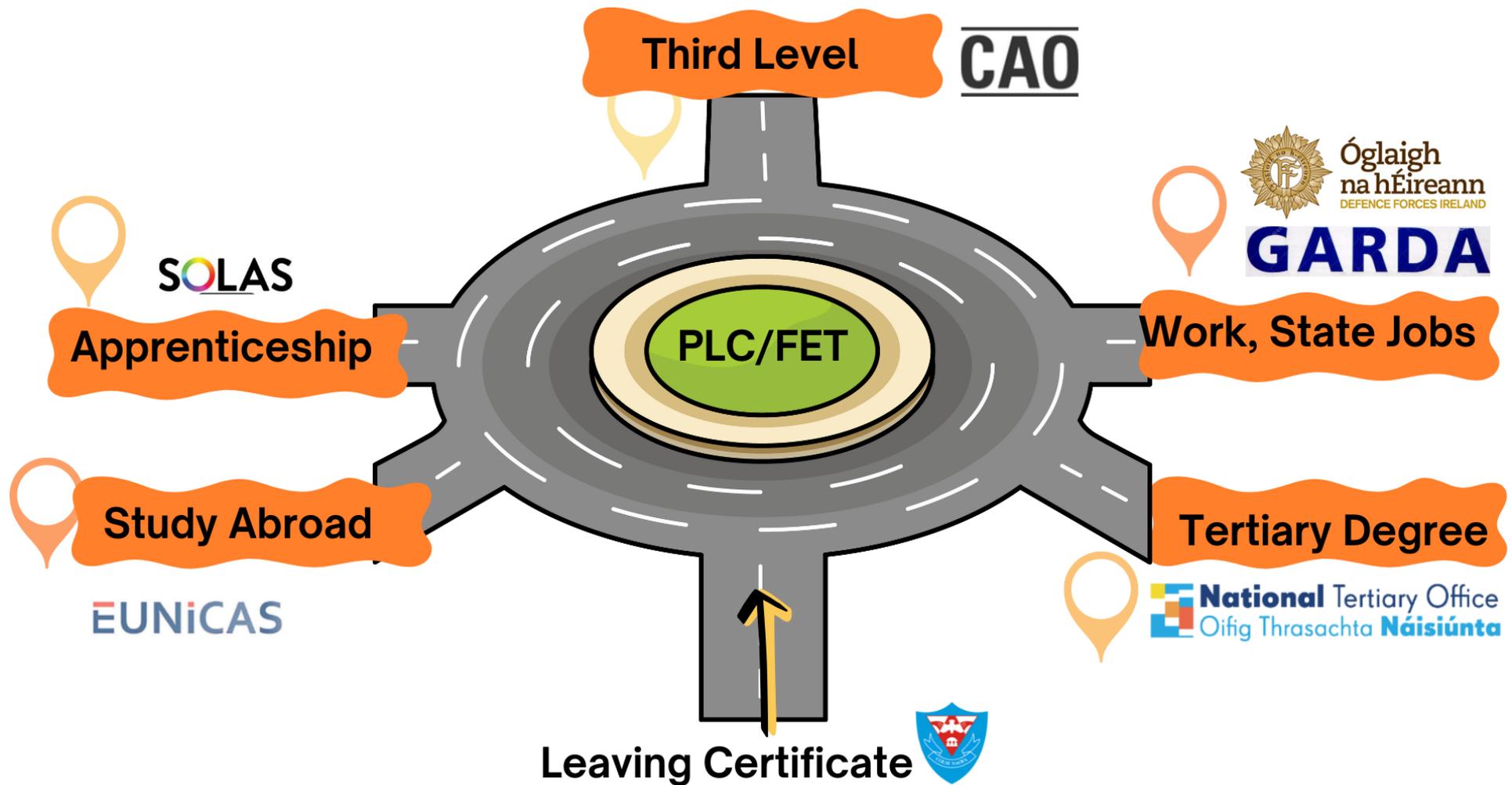


Theresa Burke

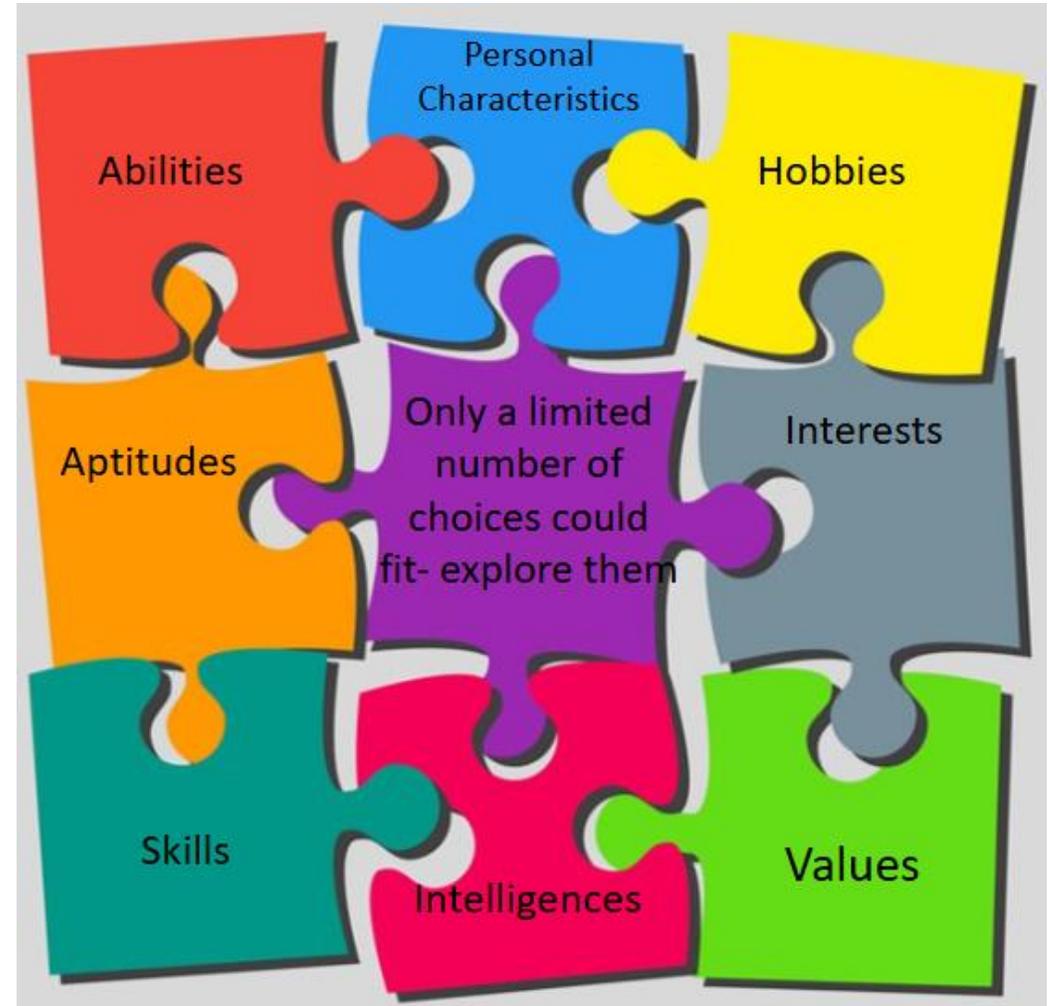
B.A., B.Sc., Grad. Dip., M.Ed.

Guidance Counsellor

Pathways



What to choose?



Agenda:



- Apprenticeships/Job Seeking – Garda/Defence Forces
- PLC and Tertiary Degrees
- Third Level
 - UCAS (UK)
 - Study in Europe
 - Study in Ireland (CAO)
 - Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)
 - Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)
 - Finance and Budgeting

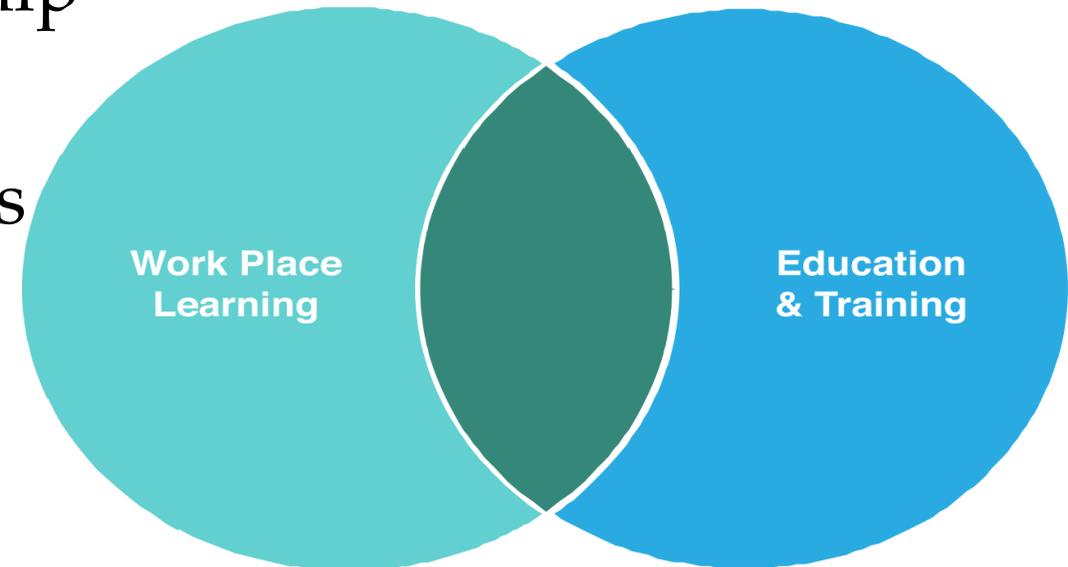
1. Apprenticeships



An 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.

There are now two types of apprenticeship

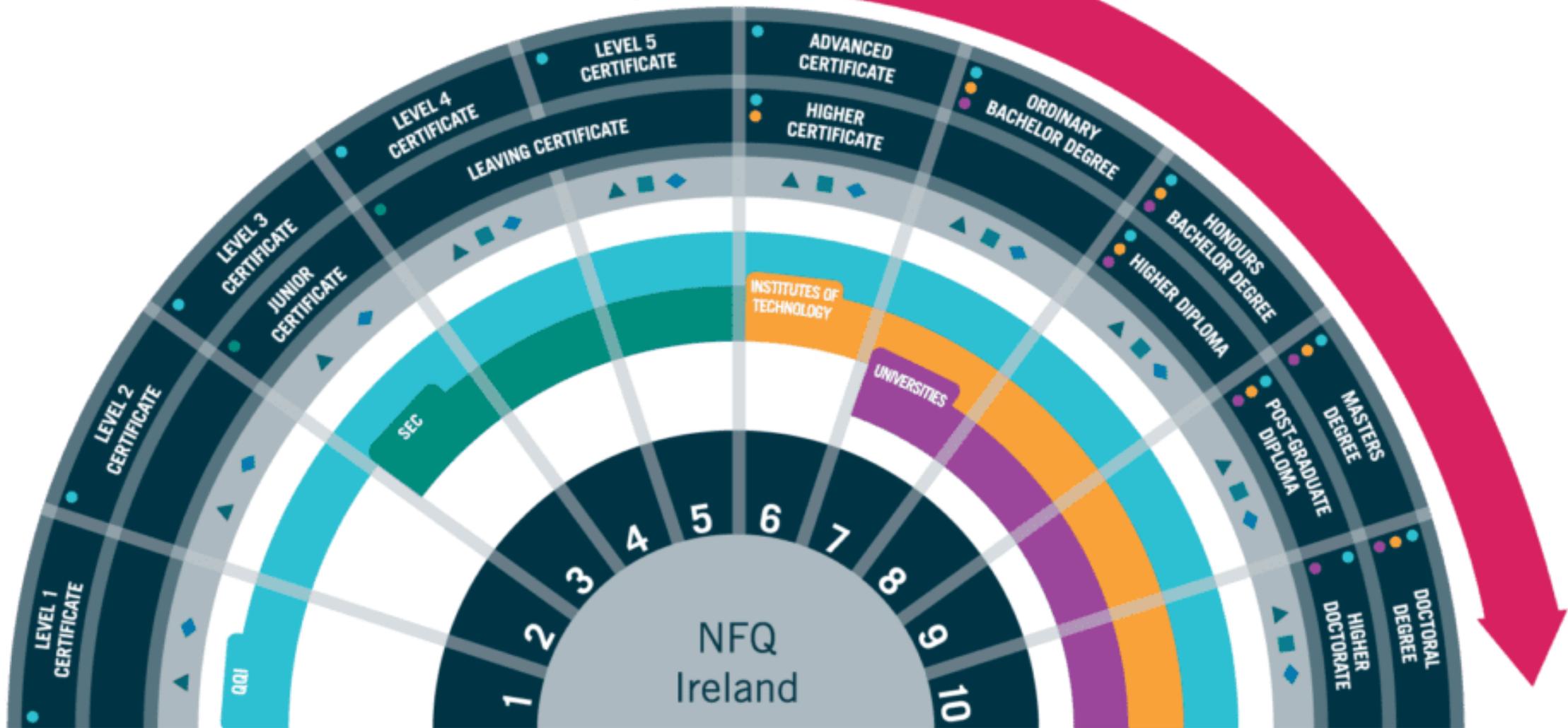
1. The traditional craft apprenticeship
2. The new industry led apprenticeships



1. Apprenticeships



GENERATION
APPRENTICESHIP



1. Pre 2016 Apprenticeships



Craft apprenticeships were developed before 2016, and are generally made up of seven phases: three off-the-job and four on-the-job. There are some exceptions to this, check out www.apprenticeship.ie for more information.



1. Post 2016 Apprenticeships



Apprenticeships developed after 2016 have varied on-the-job and off-the-job requirements. Examples of new apprenticeships are Hospitality, Finance, Engineering, Biopharmachem, ICT, Logistics and Hairdressing with lots more in development.

Check out:

www.apprenticeship.ie for more information on apprenticeships and for current advertised vacancies

Or www.careersportal.ie for more information on apprenticeships and career sectors

www.apprenticeship.ie



**GENERATION
APPRENTICESHIP**



Hospitality & Food

View More →

A banner for Hospitality & Food featuring a photo of hands preparing food. A yellow wireframe tower icon is overlaid on the image. The bottom of the banner is a solid yellow triangle.

ICT

View More →

A banner for ICT featuring a photo of a person working at a computer. A blue wireframe tower icon is overlaid. The bottom is a solid blue triangle.

Insurance

View More →

A banner for Insurance featuring a photo of hands signing a document. A red wireframe tower icon is overlaid. The bottom is a solid red triangle.

Logistics

View More →

A banner for Logistics featuring a photo of a large warehouse with many boxes. A green wireframe tower icon is overlaid. The bottom is a solid green triangle.

Agriculture and Ho...

View More →

A banner for Agriculture and Ho... featuring a photo of a forest. A purple wireframe tower icon is overlaid. The bottom is a solid purple triangle.

BioPharma

View More →

A banner for BioPharma featuring a photo of laboratory glassware. A blue wireframe tower icon is overlaid. The bottom is a solid blue triangle.

Construction

View More →

A banner for Construction featuring a photo of a construction worker. A yellow wireframe tower icon is overlaid. The bottom is a solid yellow triangle.

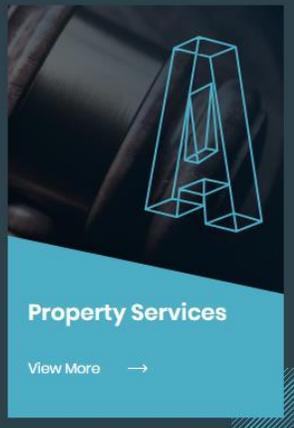
Electrical

View More →

A banner for Electrical featuring a photo of an electrical worker. A red wireframe tower icon is overlaid. The bottom is a solid red triangle.

Motor

View More →

A banner for Motor featuring a photo of a person in a workshop. A blue wireframe tower icon is overlaid. The bottom is a solid blue triangle.

Property Services

View More →

A banner for Property Services featuring a photo of a person in a car. A green wireframe tower icon is overlaid. The bottom is a solid green triangle.

Recruitment

View More →

A banner for Recruitment featuring a photo of two people talking. A purple wireframe tower icon is overlaid. The bottom is a solid purple triangle.

Sales & Marketing

View More →

A banner for Sales & Marketing featuring a photo of a person in a meeting. A yellow wireframe tower icon is overlaid. The bottom is a solid yellow triangle.

Engineering

View More →

A banner for Engineering featuring a photo of a person working with tools. A blue wireframe tower icon is overlaid. The bottom is a solid blue triangle.

Finance

View More →

A banner for Finance featuring a photo of a person at a computer. A red wireframe tower icon is overlaid. The bottom is a solid red triangle.

Hairdressing

View More →

A banner for Hairdressing featuring a photo of a hairdresser. A green wireframe tower icon is overlaid. The bottom is a solid green triangle.

Health and Social

View More →

A banner for Health and Social featuring a photo of a person in a uniform. A purple wireframe tower icon is overlaid. The bottom is a solid purple triangle.

www.apprenticeship.ie

Microsoft Word - 2025-09-22 List of Apprenticeships as of Sep.docx



GENERATION
APPRENTICESHIP



AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE

- 1 Arboriculture
- 2 Farm Manager
- 3 Farm Technician
- 4 Horticulture
- 5 Sportsturf Management

BIOPHARMA

- 6 Laboratory Analyst
- 7 Laboratory Technician

CONSTRUCTION

- 8 Advanced Quantity Surveyor
- 9 Brick and Stonelaying
- 10 Carpentry and Joinery
- 11 Geo-Driller
- 12 Painting and Decorating
- 13 Plastering
- 14 Plumbing
- 15 Scaffolding
- 16 Stonecutting and Stonemasonry
- 17 Wood Manufacturing and Finishing

ELECTRICAL

- 18 Aircraft Mechanics
- 19 Electrical
- 20 Electrical Instrumentation
- 21 Electronic Security Systems
- 22 Industrial Electrical Engineer
- 23 Instrumentation
- 24 Refrigeration and Air Conditioning

ENGINEERING

- 25 Advanced Manufacturing Engineer
- 26 Civil Engineering Technician
- 27 Civil Engineering
- 28 Engineering Services Management
- 29 Equipment Systems Engineer
- 30 Farriery
- 31 Industrial Insulation
- 32 Lean Sigma Manager
- 33 Manufacturing Engineering
- 34 Manufacturing Technology
- 35 Mechanical Automation and Maintenance Fitting
- 36 Metal Fabrication
- 37 OEM Engineer
- 38 Pipefitting
- 39 Polymer Processing Technology
- 40 Principal Engineer
- 41 Sheet Metalworking
- 42 Toolmaking
- 43 Wind Turbine Maintenance

FINANCE

- Accounting Technician
- Accounting Technologist
- International Financial Services Associate
- International Financial Services Specialist

HAIR

- Hairdressing

HEALTH & SOCIAL

- Advanced Healthcare Assistant Practitioner
- Social Work

HOSPITALITY & FOOD

- Bar Manager
- Butcher
- Chef de Partie
- Commis Chef
- Sous Chef

ICT

- CGI Technical Artist (Animation, Games, VFX)
- Cybersecurity
- Cybersecurity Practitioner
- Computer Networking Associate
- Software Development Associate
- Software Solutions Architect
- Telecommunications and Data Network Technician

INSURANCE

- Insurance Practitioner

LOGISTICS

- Logistics Associate
- Supply Chain Associate
- Supply Chain Manager
- Supply Chain Specialist
- Transport Operations and Commercial Driving

MOTOR

- Agricultural Mechanics
- Construction Plant Fitting
- Heavy Vehicle Mechanics
- Motor Mechanics
- Vehicle Body Repairs

PROPERTY SERVICES

- Auctioneering and Property Services

RECRUITMENT

- Recruitment Executive

SALES & MARKETING

- Digital Marketing
- Retail Supervision
- Sales



GENERATION APPRENTICESHIP | Instructor Careers | **Career Seekers** | Career Advisors | Employers | News / Events | More ▾

LOCATION | **APPRENTICESHIP** | **KEYWORD**

Select a location ▾ | Select a type ▾ | E.g. Manufacturing | **Search** →

REF.	ORGANISATION	LOCATION	APPRENTICESHIP	STATUS	CLOSING
4569	connolly kevin car sales ltd	Ballina (urban)	Vehicle Body Repairs	Open for Application	12 Nov 2025
4573	s f engineering	Multiple locations	Electrical	Open for Application	14 Nov 2025
4581	tribesmen construction	Multiple locations	Brick and Stonelaying	Open for Application	14 Nov 2025
3970	Cental Engineering Ltd	Carlow Town	Metal Fabrication	Open for Application	14 Nov 2025

1. Apprenticeships/Job Seeking



Apply for a Job (this also applies to Apprenticeship applications)

To get a job one needs

1. An excellent CV and cover letter. This is aimed at getting the candidate an interview.
2. To have a knowledge of the skills needed for the job, and a knowledge of how to show you have developed these skills. This is aimed at helping a candidate to secure the job at interview stage.

1. Job Seeking- Network



1. Job Seeking



Contact	Action	Contact Log
Who? Address? Tel. No.	What did I do?	What follow up is needed, and when?
Joe Ryan Local Electrician, 124 Offaly Street, Tullamore. Tel: 087123456	Sent CV and Cover Letter Via email to joeryan@electric.ie on 01 November 2025	Phone Mr Ryan on November 3 rd to follow up. Have a meeting on Nov 6th

Garda



A permanent position that offers a generous salary, career progression & respect. You will be making a positive contribution to your community too.



1. Job-seeking- Garda

[Garda-Trainee-Candidate-Information-Booklet-2024.pdf](#)



What are the age requirements?

The exact date range that applicants need to be born are specified for candidates as follows:

Be 18 years of age but not yet 50 years of age at midnight on the closing date of the competition.

What are the educational requirements for a Leaving Certificate Student?

By the closing date of the competition applicants must:

(a) have obtained an Irish Leaving Certificate with a grade D3 or O6 minimum in five subjects at Ordinary Level*

AND

(d) be proficient in **either or both** of the following: i) the Irish language ii) the English language

There is no longer a requirement to have a second language.

What are the physical requirements?

All applicants will undergo a Physical Competence Test as part of the application process and their subsequent training. Applicants must pass all elements of the test and there is strictly no deviation from the format of the test.

Usually opens in Spring, and successful applicants start training in Winter.



Defence Forces

- Army
- Navy
- Air Corp

When it comes to job security, promotional opportunities, and even education, the military is second to none.



1. Job-seeking- Defence Forces

[Current Recruitment Opportunities - Defence Forces](#)



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES



Current Vacancies

Army Recruit - General Service

Naval Service Recruit - General Service

Air Corps Recruit - General Service

Direct Entry Military Dental Nurse

Defence Forces Motor Technician Fitters

Naval Service Electrical Engineering Officer

Naval Service Marine Engineering Officer

Defence Forces Operations Branch Officers

Defence Forces Medical Officer

Naval Service Carpenter/Hull Artificer [Carpenter-Joiner / Shipwright]

Naval Service Electrical Artificer [Electrical Technician / Electrician]

Naval Service Engine Room Artificer [Maintenance Engineer / Technician]

Naval Service Direct Entry Chef

Reserve Defence Forces

Upcoming Vacancies

Army Cadetship

Naval Cadetship

Air Corp Cadetship

Entry Level Jobs

Many companies hire leaving cert graduates into basic positions.

Look for jobs in retail or the service industry for the most opportunities.



Entry Level Jobs

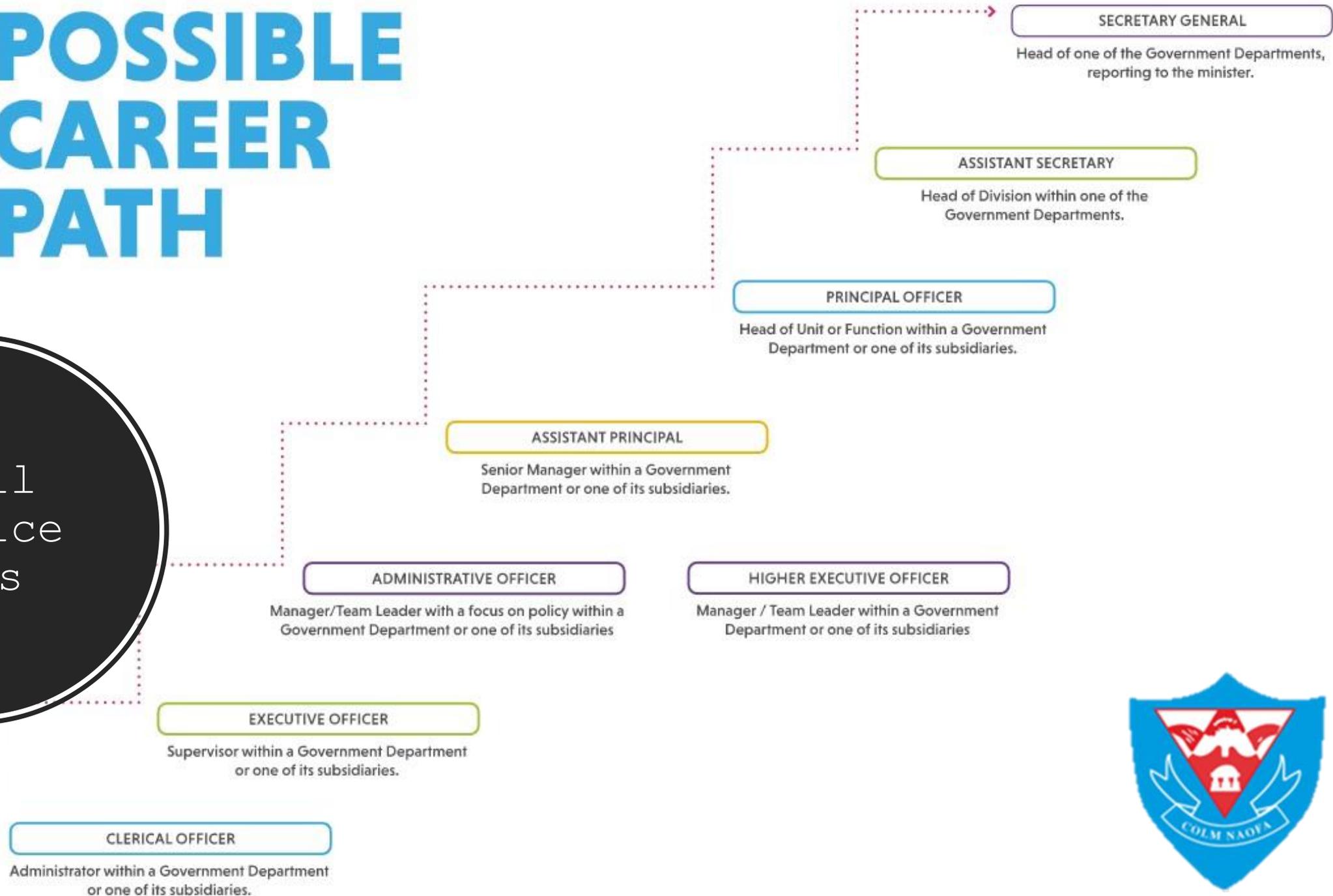
A retail manager can pay €40,000 or more.

INKEA



POSSIBLE CAREER PATH

Civil Service Jobs



2. Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) excl. Teagasc



- Entry Requirements: Leaving Certificate with 5 passes and Interview
- One Year (level 5)/(level 6)
- Budget 2024 abolished fees for PLC (Fees charged for Teagasc €990)
- Maintenance grants available through SUSI (Teagasc run their own grant)
- Apply directly to the college
- Possibility to use this qualification to start working or obtain further education
- Excellent preparation for college

2. Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)



Traditional
Third Level

Apply to CAO

Leaving Certificate
Subjects, Grades and Points

Alternative
Third Level

Apply to CAO

FETAC Level 5/6 Award,
Modules, Grades

2. Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)



Progression can be made to third level Universities or Institutes of Technology courses via specific FETAC awards or in some cases any FETAC Award

This route is not available for every course – for example, primary education and medicine do not have a FETAC/QQI entry route at present.

2. Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)



2026 QQI FET/FETAC Requirements Look-up (CAO Courses only)

QQI FET/FETAC level 5/6 major awards are made up of a number of component awards. Different sets of components lead to different major awards.

The applicant must be getting a **FULL** major award. Some courses require a specific major award and/or a specific grade in specific components.

For information on the evaluation of QQI FET/FETAC qualifications, click [here](#).

QQI FET/FETAC requirements are provided where supplied. For HEIs not listed, you may wish to view 2025 entry requirements by clicking [here](#).

Enter a CAO course code and click on **Go**:

Course Code :

Select by Institution and click on **Go**:

Institution :

For HEIs not listed, you may wish to view 2025 entry requirements by clicking [here](#).

Go to www.cao.ie

Click on “Applicants”

Click on “QQI FETAC/FET Information”

Click on “QQI FETAC/FET Entry Requirements”

Search for course links based on the course code (in CAO handbook) or my college/institution

2. Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)



TUS
example

Course	Course Title	Level	Essential major awards	Essential component awards	Notes (Info)
US610	Accounting and Finance [Limerick Campus]	6	Any	None	Qta/One/- (10 places)
US612	Business Studies (Marketing and Management) [Limerick Campus]	6	Any	None	Qta/One/- (10 places)
US631	Culinary Arts [Limerick Campus]	6	Any	None	Qta/One/- (10 places)
US640	Sports Development and Coaching [Limerick Campus] ⓘ	6	Any	None	Qta/One/- (10 places)
US651	Agricultural Mechanisation (in Year 1 students - four days at Pallaskenry Ag College and one day at TUS Limerick) [Limerick Campus] ⓘ	6	Any	None	Qta/One/- (10 places)
US660	Pharmacy Technician [Athlone Campus] ⓘ	6	Any	C20174 or 5N1833 or 5N0556 or LCE Maths and C20006 or 5N2746 or LCE Science	Qta/One/- (10 places)
US661	Dental Nursing [Athlone Campus] ⓘ	6	Any	C20174 or 5N1833 or 5N0556 or LCE Maths and C20006 or 5N2746 or LCE Science	Qta/One/- (10 places)
US700	Graphic Design (portfolio)	7	Any	None	Qta/One/Art

2. Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)



Uni of
Galway
example

GY350	Computer Science and Information Technology	8	5M0536 CITXX 6M0695 5M0529 6M0691	5 Distinctions. The qualification must include a distinction in 5N1833 or 5N0556 or 5N18396 or C20139 or C20174 or C20175 .	Qta/One/- (4 places)
GY402	Civil Engineering	8	5M3807 5M2061 5M5010	5 Distinctions. The qualification must include a distinction in 5N1833 or 5N0556 or 5N18396 or C20139 or C20174 or C20175 .	Qta/One/- (4 places)
GY405	Mechanical Engineering	8	5M3807 5M2061 5M5010	5 Distinctions. The qualification must include a distinction in 5N1833 or 5N0556 or 5N18396 or C20139 or C20174 or C20175 .	Qta/One/- (4 places)
GY406	Electronic and Computer Engineering	8	5M3807 5M2061 5M5010	5 Distinctions. The qualification must include a distinction in 5N1833 or 5N0556 or 5N18396 or C20139 or C20174 or C20175 .	Qta/One/- (4 places)
GY408	Biomedical Engineering	8	5M3807 5M2061 5M5010	5 Distinctions. The qualification must include a distinction in 5N1833 or 5N0556 or 5N18396 or C20139 or C20174 or C20175 .	Qta/One/- (4 places)
GY410	Project and Construction Management	8	5M3807 5M2061 5M5010	5 Distinctions. The qualification must include a distinction in 5N1833 or 5N0556 or 5N18396 or C20139 or C20174 or C20175 .	Qta/One/- (4 places)
GY413	Energy Systems Engineering	8	5M3807 5M2061 5M5010	5 Distinctions. The qualification must include a distinction in 5N1833 or 5N0556 or 5N18396 or C20139 or C20174 or C20175 .	Qta/One/- (4 places)
GY414	Electrical and Electronic Engineering	8	5M3807 5M2061 5M5010	5 Distinctions. The qualification must include a distinction in 5N1833 or 5N0556 or 5N18396 or C20139 or C20174 or C20175 .	Qta/One/- (4 places)

Commence your Tertiary Degree in
Further Education and Training,
guaranteeing progression to Higher
Education.

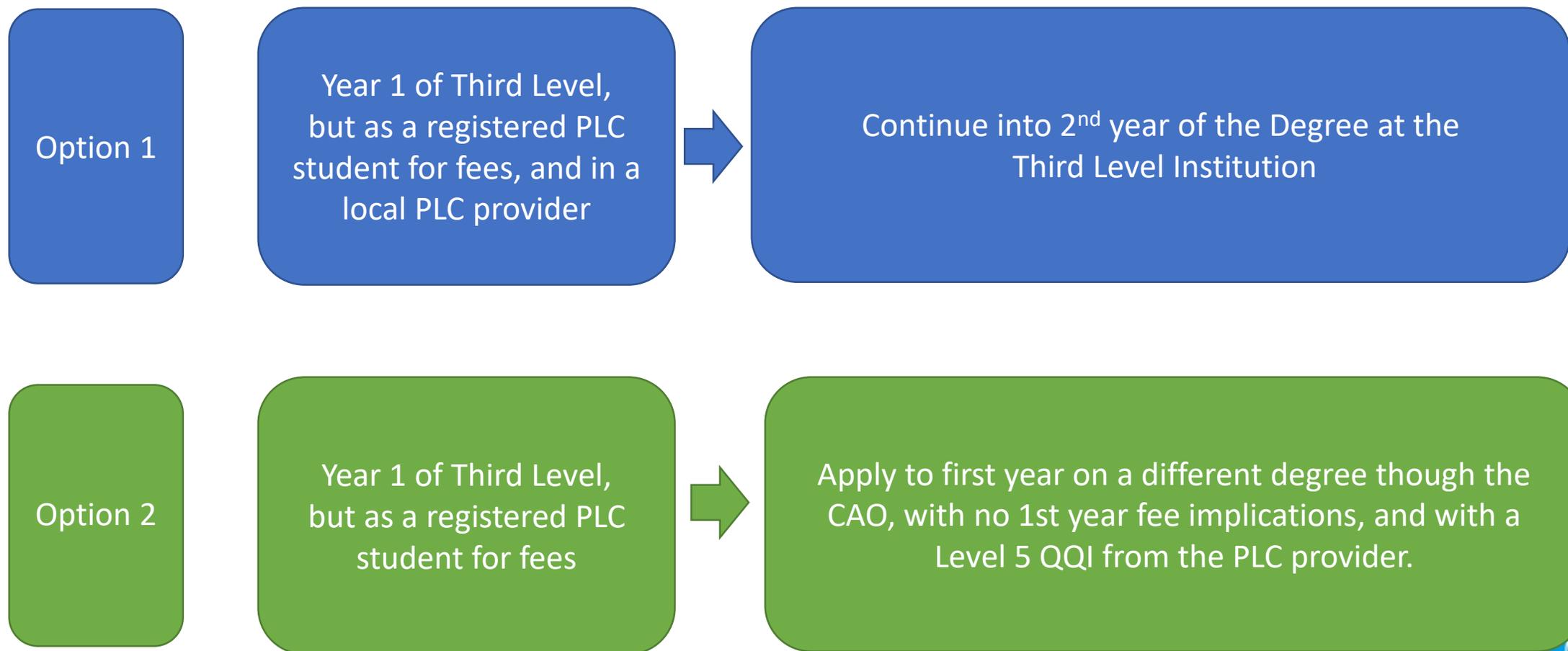
Find out more about the new
Tertiary Degrees for 2024



Tertiary Degrees – Linking FET and Higher Ed



Tertiary Degrees – Linking FET and Higher Ed



Local Links

[https://nto.heai.ie/
courses/](https://nto.heai.ie/courses/)

South East Technological University (SETU) and Laois
and Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB)



Bachelor of Business (Hons).

Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Information Technology
Management

Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Software Development



3. Third Level- UCAS



UCAS (Admissions to UK Universities)

- The application process is long, and there is usually an interview.
- Closing date is January 29th 2026 (Oct 15th 2025 for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary, Oxford and Cambridge)
- 5 courses to choose from one career area
- Personal Statement is very important
- Offers - refusal, conditional and unconditional
- **Extra and Clearing systems**



3. Third Level-UCAS



Tuition fees by region for courses starting in 2025 to 2026

Student's home region	Studying in England	Studying in Scotland	Studying in Wales	Studying in Northern Ireland
England	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535
Scotland	Up to £9,535	No fee	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535
Wales	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535
Northern Ireland	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535	Up to £4,855
EU and other international*	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable

*** This will not apply to Irish nationals living in the UK and Ireland whose right to study and to access benefits and services will be preserved on a reciprocal basis for UK and Irish nationals under the Common Travel Area arrangement.**



3. Third Level-Europe



- Over the years more and more Irish and Colaiste Choilm students are choosing to study abroad.
- Many study in other EU countries, but through English.
- Students may find the competition for places is a little less competitive in other EU countries in courses such as Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Physiotherapy, Dentistry, Agriculture etc.
- Tuition fees vary considerably from one college to the next, as do entry requirements. Sometimes aptitude tests, personal statements, interviews are used for entry.

3. Third Level-Europe



EUNICAS

PROGRAMMES UNIVERSITIES STUDYING ABROAD NEWS ABOUT US

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PROGRAMMES

Home » Programmes

Search

Keyword:

physiotherapy

Level

- Select -

Discipline

- Select -

Country

Netherlands

Submit

× Clear all filters



Bachelor of Health: Physiotherapy

Fontys University of Applied Sciences

Duration: 4 Years

Tuition fee: € 2695 p/a

ADD TO SHORTLIST



Bachelor of Health: Physiotherapy

Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen

Duration: 4 Years

Tuition fee: € 2695 p/a

ADD TO SHORTLIST



Bachelor of Health Sciences: Physiotherapy

Saxion University of Applied Sciences

Duration: 4 Years

Tuition fee: € 2695 p/a

ADD TO SHORTLIST

Entry Requirements

UK

2 A-Levels and 4 GCSEs or relevant BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma

Ireland

Five subjects at Leaving Certificate (minimum 200 points) OR relevant QQI/FETAC Level 5

Entrance Exam

No

Interview

Sometimes

Personal Statement

No

Other Requirements

Please note: if you wish to apply for housing through Fontys, the application deadline is June 15

Application Open

01/10

Application Deadline

01/08

No CAO points



3. Third Level-CAO

Apply to the CAO for :

Honours Degree (3/4 years)
Level 8

Add-on Level 8
Ordinary Degree (3 years)
Level 7

Add-on Level 8
Add-on level 7
Higher Certificate (2 years)
Level 6



All CAO courses require certain subjects at leaving certificate level.
Most also require a certain number of CAO points

3. Third Level-CAO



You must satisfy 3 requirements

1. Meet **College Entry Requirements**
2. Meet **Specific Course Requirements.**

If all **Entry Requirements** are met → applicant is deemed **'Qualified'** to apply.

3. Now they must **compete** against other qualified applicants. This is where **points** become relevant.

NUI Additional Requirements



Ollscoil na hÉireann
National University of Ireland



O6/H7 minimum in :

Irish

English

Mathematics (some arts, social science, law, exempt)

Third Language (this requirement has been dropped for Engineering and some Science courses, Primary Teaching, Nursing, and in the NCAD Art or DCG can be used in place of a third language, Maynooth University has also dropped this requirement for Business and Law)

Two additional subjects

Colleges in NUI:

University College Dublin

University College Cork

University of Galway

Maynooth University

Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI)

National College of Art and Design (NCAD)

Shannon College of Hotel Management





3. Third Level- Other Colleges

- **Trinity College Dublin**
- **University of Limerick/MIC**
O6/H7 minimum in:
 - ✓ **English**
 - ✓ **Mathematics**
 - ✓ **A Second Language** (Irish or another language)**
 - ✓ **3 additional subjects**



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH



- **Dublin City University**
- **Technological Universities, and Institutes of Technology (Hons Degrees)**
O6/H7 minimum in
 - ✓ **English or Irish**
 - ✓ **Mathematics**
 - ✓ **4 additional subjects**



****Note:** If you have an Irish Exemption as a result of coming to Ireland after the age of 11, you must study a Spanish/French to meet the second language requirement

3. Third Level- Applying for Exemptions (This is separate and in addition to DARE)



Exemptions from Minimum Entry Requirements

Some HEIs have language matriculation requirements. If you are seeking an exemption from minimum entry requirements such as Irish (ROI applicants only) or a third language you must do the following:

- **Apply for exemptions without delay. You must go to cao.ie/exemptions for full details on seeking an exemption from minimum entry requirements.**
- If applying to TCD, University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College you must contact the Admissions Office directly - see cao.ie/admissions for contact information
- In the case of **NUI Institutions***, applicants must apply online. The form is accessible at exemptions.nui.ie.



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



Although CAO a section relating to exemptions on the CAO form, it is the student's responsibility to apply for all necessary exemptions. The CAO does not know you have an exemption, unless the candidate applies to the college in question and the college informs the CAO that they have granted an exemption.

- NUI colleges use an online application form: <https://exemptions.nui.ie/>
- UL use an online exemption form: <https://www.ul.ie/academic-registry/leaving-certificate-students>
Deadline July 1st Mary Immaculate College: <https://www.mic.ul.ie/current-students/student-information/access-disability?index=5>
- Trinity College Dublin online form (also includes an application for a math's exemption)
<https://www.tcd.ie/study/apply/alternative-paths-to-trinity/> Deadline July 1st

3. Third Level



College requirements vary significantly. An example

Veterinary (ATU Letterkenny)

- 6 subjects at O6/H7 to include:
- English or Irish at O6/H7
- Maths at O6/H7
- Chemistry or Physics & Chemistry at H4
- Biology or Agricultural Science or Physics at H4
- Complete the required work experience (minimum 60 hours) by end of January of the year of entry (extended to the end of July for applicants for September 2026)
- Complete an online Situational Judgement Test called '[Casper](#)' by end of February of the year of entry (€40)
- Moderated grades after 550 point (1 point for every 5) combined with Casper (max 300 points)

Veterinary (SETU Waterford)

- Biology or Chemistry: H4
- 1 other subject: H5
- 4 subjects: O6/H7
- English or Irish: O6/H7
- Mathematics: O6/H7
- 60 hours of relevant veterinary or animal handling work

Veterinary (UCD)

- H5 Chemistry
- O6/H7 in English, Irish, Mathematics, a third language and one other recognised subject.
- At least 60 hours practical experience relevant to animal handling

3. Third Level- Specific Course Requirements



- Gaeilge - Grade H4 • Mathematics - O4 or H7 • English - O4 or H7 are required for Primary Teaching
- H4 in Maths and O6 in a Science/DCG/Construction/Engineering subject for most Engineering courses
- A minimum of one science subject is required for courses in the areas of Nursing, Medical, Science, and Engineering
- Most Business courses state a requirement in Maths - not a business subject (typically O4/H7 maths).
- An Art portfolio is required for most art courses - Art itself may not be required.
- Similarly Music is not always a requirement for entry into Music courses, but an audition/assessment usually is.

3. Third Level- CAO



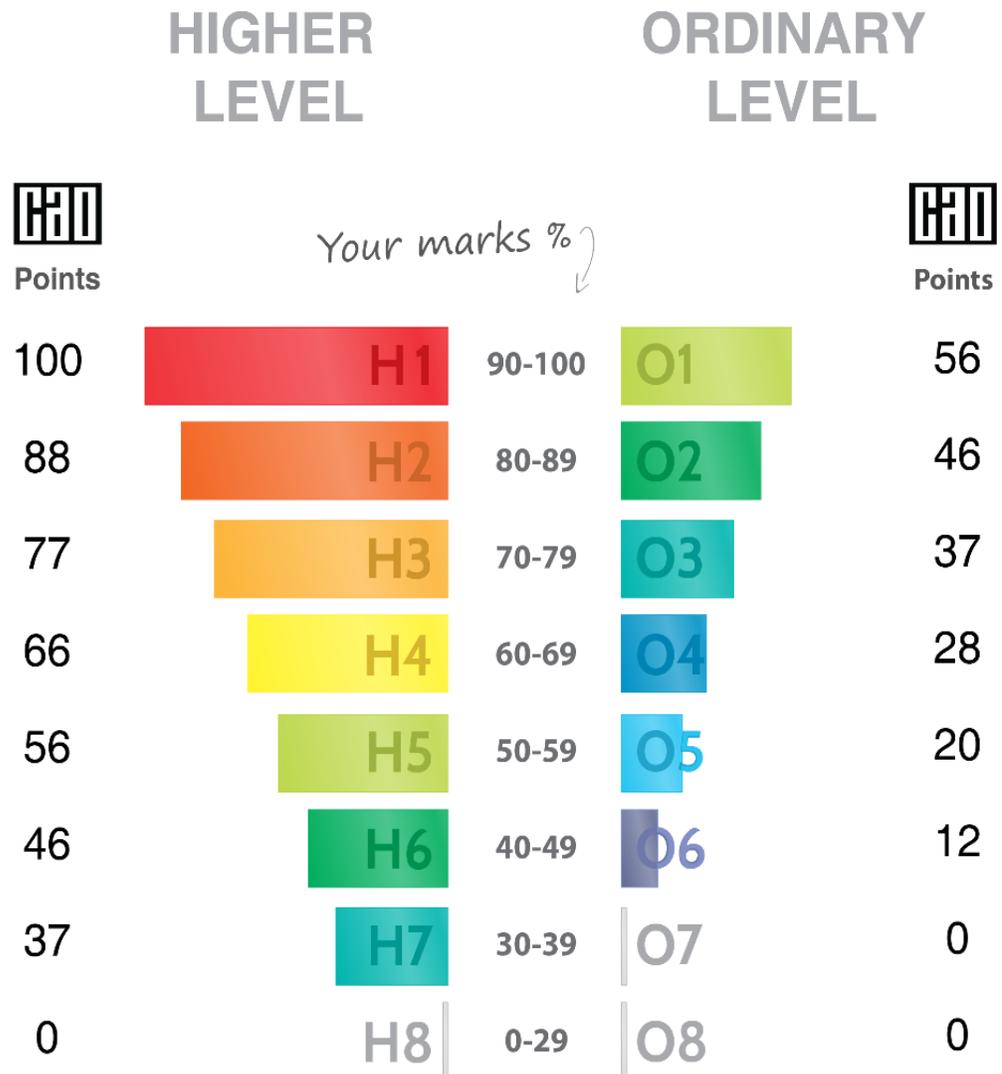
In the CAO system, the number of qualified applicants is greater than the number of course places, and therefore a selection system is needed.

The selection system used in Irish 3rd Level Colleges is the Points System

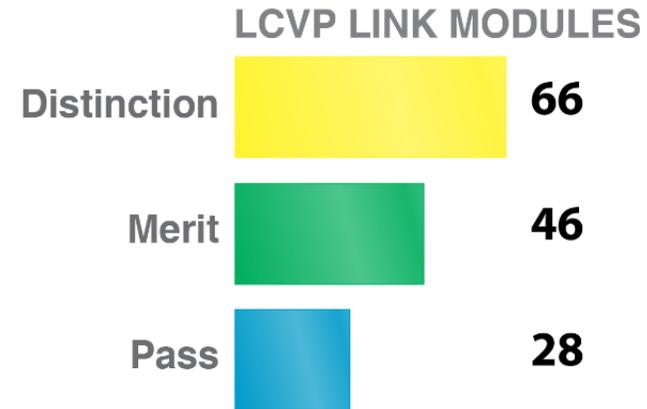
Points are calculated from **ONE** sitting of the Leaving Certificate only; Entry Requirements can be satisfied over more than one sitting of the Leaving Certificate (with the exception of Medicine)

Points total are calculated from **SIX** best subjects

3. Third Level- CAO Points System



+25 Bonus Points for H1-H6 Maths



3. Third Level- Medicine



Table 1: Summary of Minimum Entry Requirements for EU Admissions for Each Medical School¹

Medical programmes			Minimum SUBJECT Requirements ¹						Minimum POINTS Requirement
Institution	CAO Code	Duration	Minimum Entry Requirements	English	Irish	Third Language	Maths	Science	480 points from the same sitting of the Leaving Certificate Examination or equivalent.
University of Galway	GY501	6 Years	2 x H5 and 4 x O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7 in one of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physics/Chemistry, Agricultural Science	
		5 Years	2 x H4 and 4 x O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	H4 in two of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physics/Chemistry, Agricultural Science	
University of Limerick	LM301	6 Years	2 x H5 and 4 x O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7 in a language other than English		O6/H7	O6/H7 in one of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physics/Chemistry, Agricultural Science	
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)	RC001	6 Years	2 x H5 and 4 x O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7 in one of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physics/Chemistry, Agricultural Science	
		5 Years	2 x H4 and 4 x O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	H4 Chemistry and H4 in either Biology or Physics	
Trinity College Dublin (TCD)	TR051	5 Years	1 x H3 1 x H4 1 x H5 and 3 x O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7 in a language other than English		O6/H7 or O4/H6 if no Physics	H3 and a H4 from Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physics/Chemistry, Agricultural Science	
University College Cork (UCC)	CK701	5 Years	2 x H4 and 4 x O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	H4 Chemistry and H4 in either Biology or Physics	
University College Dublin (UCD)	DN400	6 Years	2 x H5 and 4 x O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7 in one of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physics/Chemistry, Agricultural Science	



In addition, all students will be required to satisfy the Garda Vetting, Medical Clearance and Fitness to Practise requirements as required by each institution.¹

3. Third Level- Medicine – 2026 entry only



Applies to
Veterinary in
ATU

HPAT-Ireland Score

For school-leaving applicants who meet the minimum entry requirements and the 480 points criterion in the same sitting of the Leaving Certificate, allocation of places for medicine will be determined on the basis of a combination of the Leaving Certificate and HPAT-Ireland scores. Before the scores are combined, Leaving Certificate Examination points above 550 will be moderated as per Table 3 below.

Table 3: Moderated Leaving Certificate Points from 550 Points (table applies to EU/EEA school Leaving exams also)

Normal LCE points	Moderated LCE points	Normal LCE points	Moderated LCE points	Normal LCE points	Moderated LCE points
551-555	551	576-580	556	601-605	561
556-560	552	581-585	557	606-610	562
561-565	553	586-590	558	611-615	563
566-570	554	591-595	559	616-620	564
571-575	555	596-600	560	621-625	565

3. Third Level- Medicine- 2026 entry only



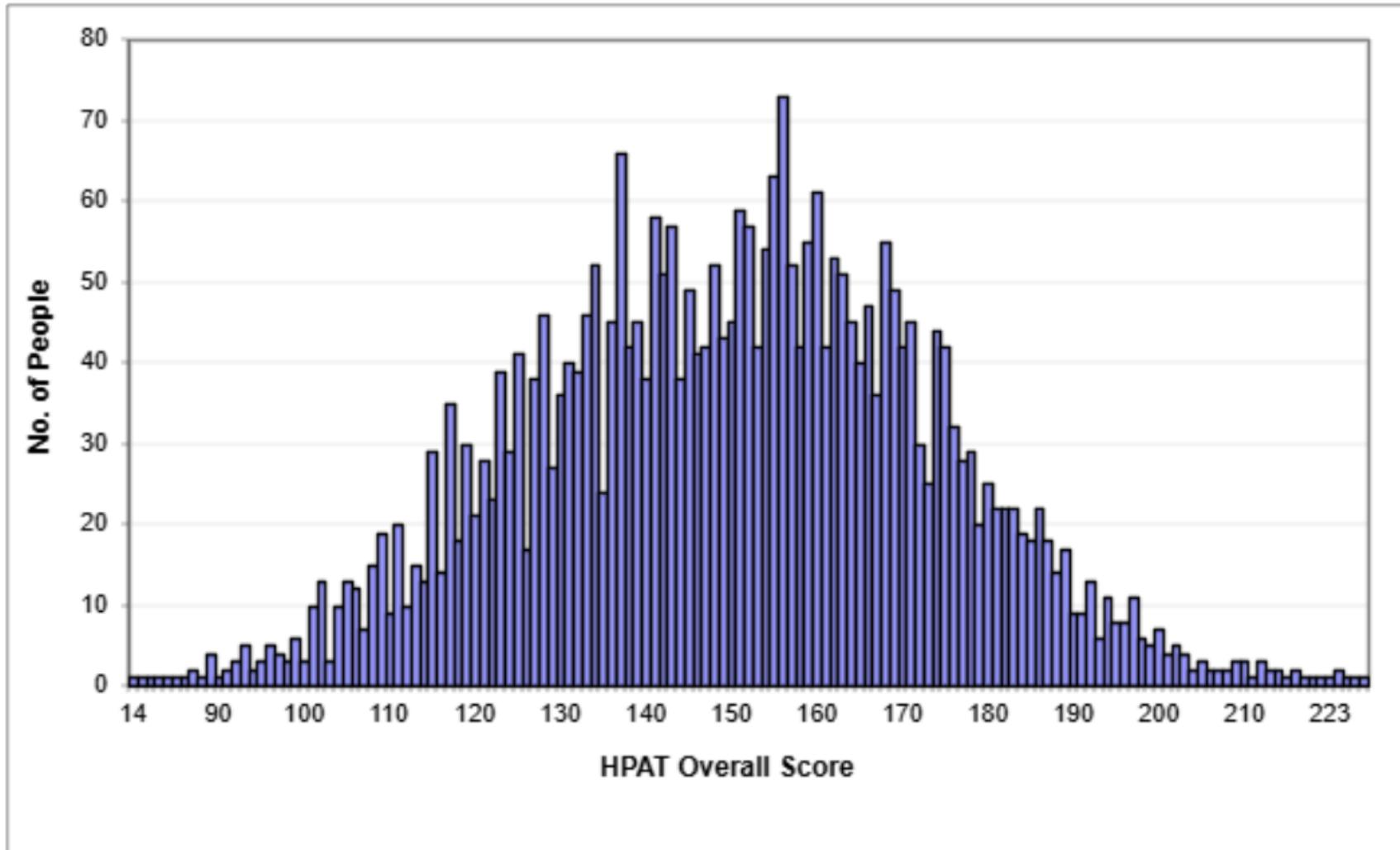
Table 4: Sample Combination Scores

L Cert score moderated	HPAT scored to a maximum of 300											College	Cut-Off 2025
	150	160	170	180	190	200	210	220	230	240	250		
524	674	684	694	704	714	724	734	744	754	764	774		
530	680	690	700	710	720	730	740	750	760	770	780		
536	686	696	706	716	726	736	746	756	766	776	786		
538	688	698	708	718	728	738	748	758	768	778	788		
540	690	700	710	720	730	740	750	760	770				
542	692	702	712	722	732	742	752	762	772			Trinity	739
548	698	708	718	728	738	748	758	768	778			RCSI	732*
553	703	713	723	733	743	753	763	773	783			UCD	738
555	705	715	725	735	745	755	765	775	785			UCC	730
559	709	719	729	739	749	759	769	779	789			UG	728*
565	715	725	735	745	755	765	775	785	795			UL	New

3. Third Level- Medicine HPAT 2025



[HPAT - Ireland 2025 Candidate Performance.pdf](#)



College	Cut-Off 2025
Trinity	739
RCSI	732*
UCD	738
UCC	730
UG	728*
UL	New

3. Third Level- Medicine – 2027 entry changes



[Entry to Medicine | Irish Universities Association](#)

Entry in 2027 and beyond for Irish, EU and UK Students

Irish Universities with Medical Schools are modifying the calculation of points applied for admission through the Central Applications office (CAO) to all Undergraduate (Direct Entry from School) Medicine programmes in Ireland.

This change will come into effect for students seeking admission to undergraduate medicine degree programmes from August / September 2027.

The changes are as follows –

- Leaving Certificate scores above 550 points will no longer be moderated – full points scored by candidates will be applied in the calculation.
- Points scored in the HPAT assessment will be weighted to 150 maximum (down from 300 currently). HPAT results from a sitting in the year of admission to a medicine programme will continue to be a requirement.

The changes will not be applied until 2027, in order to facilitate secondary school student decision making at the commencement of their senior cycle school programmes in autumn 2025.

3. Third Level- What to Research



Check the relevant college/employer literature

- check the overall college requirements

- check the course requirement: what subjects and grades are needed for entry

Check the course content

This is very important . Courses with the same title may not include the same modules, opportunities to travel, work experience etc. This check will also highlight what subjects are predominant

Good websites include (use filters to choose course type)

- www.qualifax.ie

- www.careersportal.ie



3. Third Level- What to Research



The business degrees at ATU Galway allow students to explore a range of business areas during the first part of their degree. Students can move between any of the following programmes at the end of their second year:

- Business
- Business in Marketing and Sales
- Business with Entrepreneurship
- Business in Finance and Economics

ATU Level 8 Business example

Research – Year 1 and beyond –
What modules are compulsory and which are electives?

Are there work Experience/Study abroad opportunities?

Can I specialize in an area of interest to me?

Semester	Module Details	Credits	Mandatory / Elective
1	Computer Applications	05	Mandatory
1	Management Principles and Business Environment	05	Mandatory
1	Academic and Professional Skills (SC:BS)	05	Mandatory
1	Cultural Studies: Ireland	05	Elective
1	Cloud Computing Infrastructure and Services	05	Elective
2	Fundamentals of Entrepreneurship	05	Mandatory
2	Principles of Marketing	05	Mandatory
2	Sustainability	05	Mandatory
2	World Cultures and Etiquette	05	Elective
2	Introduction to Business Analytics	05	Elective
Year	Principles of Economics	10	Mandatory
Year	Fundamentals in Financial and Management Accounting	10	Mandatory
Year	Academic Writing	10	Elective
Year	Gaeilge Language and Culture 1	10	Elective
Year	French Language and Culture 1	10	Elective
Year	German Language and Culture 1	10	Elective
Year	Spanish Language and Culture 1	10	Elective



3. Third Level- What to Research

If you are accepted into LM050 you must first choose which programme you would like to study. This will influence the modules and pathways available to you throughout your time studying. The available programmes are:

- Bachelor of Business Studies
- Bachelor of Business Studies with French (advanced)
- Bachelor of Business Studies with German (advanced)
- Bachelor of Business Studies with Japanese (beginners)
- Bachelor of Business Studies with Spanish (beginners)
- Bachelor of Business Studies with Spanish (advanced)



Degree major options

Accounting and Finance Major Option

Economics and Finance Major Options

Human Resource Management Major Option

Marketing Major Option

Risk Management and Insurance Major Option



Minor options

In year 3, you will also take a **minor option** which is offered:

- Business Informatics
- Globalisation – An Economic Perspective
- Entrepreneurship
- Financial Services
- Law
- Management
- Organisational Psychology
- Sociology
- Supply Chain Management

UL Level 8 Business example

Research – Year 1 and beyond –
What modules are compulsory and which are electives?

Are there work Experience/Study abroad opportunities?

Can I specialize in an area of interest to me?

3. Third Level- CAO

[CAO Handbook2026_web.pdf](#)



Centralised application system for Irish 3rd level institutions, including **fee-paying** colleges. (Dublin Business School, Griffith College (Dublin, Limerick and Cork), Irish College of Humanities and Applied Sciences, American College, IBAT College Dublin, ICD Business School, College of Computing Technology CCT, St Nicholas Montessori College, Dorset College, Galway Business School, Setanta College, Early Childhood in NCI, Psychology in NCI and Carlow College)

The CAO no longer provides a published CAO Handbook for students.

They have an interactive flip digital document:

[Central Applications Office \(cao.ie\)](#)

CAO
www.cao.ie

Handbook 2026

The purpose of the Central Applications Office (CAO) is to process centrally applications for undergraduate courses in Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and to deal with them in an efficient and fair manner. The HEIs retain the function of making decisions on admissions. This handbook has been prepared to provide information about the CAO application process. By reading this handbook carefully you will find out the information that you need to assist you with your application.

Create yours now

Search Courses

Read My Handbook

Table 1.1 Application dates and fees

APPLICATION TYPE	FEE	CLOSING DATE
Early online application (discounted)	€35	20 January 2026 at 5pm
Normal online application	€50	1 February 2026 at 5pm
Late online application – restrictions apply (see page 3)	€65	1 May 2026 at 5pm
Change of Mind – restrictions apply (see page 3)	Nil	1 July 2026 at 5pm

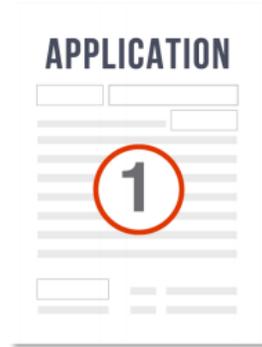
3. Third Level- CAO



There are 3 types of courses students can apply for under the Nat. Framework of Qualifications.

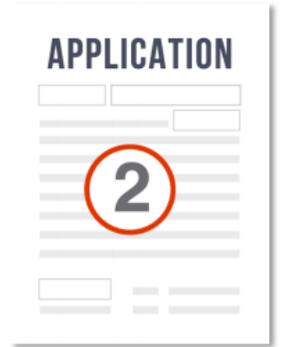
These are applied for on 2 separate lists on a single form:

- **Level 6 & 7 Courses**
- Ordinary Degrees (7)
- Higher Certificates (6)
- Up to 10 Course Choices



- **Level 8 Courses**
- Honours Degrees (8)

Up to 10 Course Choices



- The courses are clearly labelled in the CAO Handbook
- N.B. – Care must be taken with courses marked '*Restricted*'. (Interview, Portfolios, Music Tests, Aptitude Tests). These courses must be applied for before February 1st due to extra assessments required.

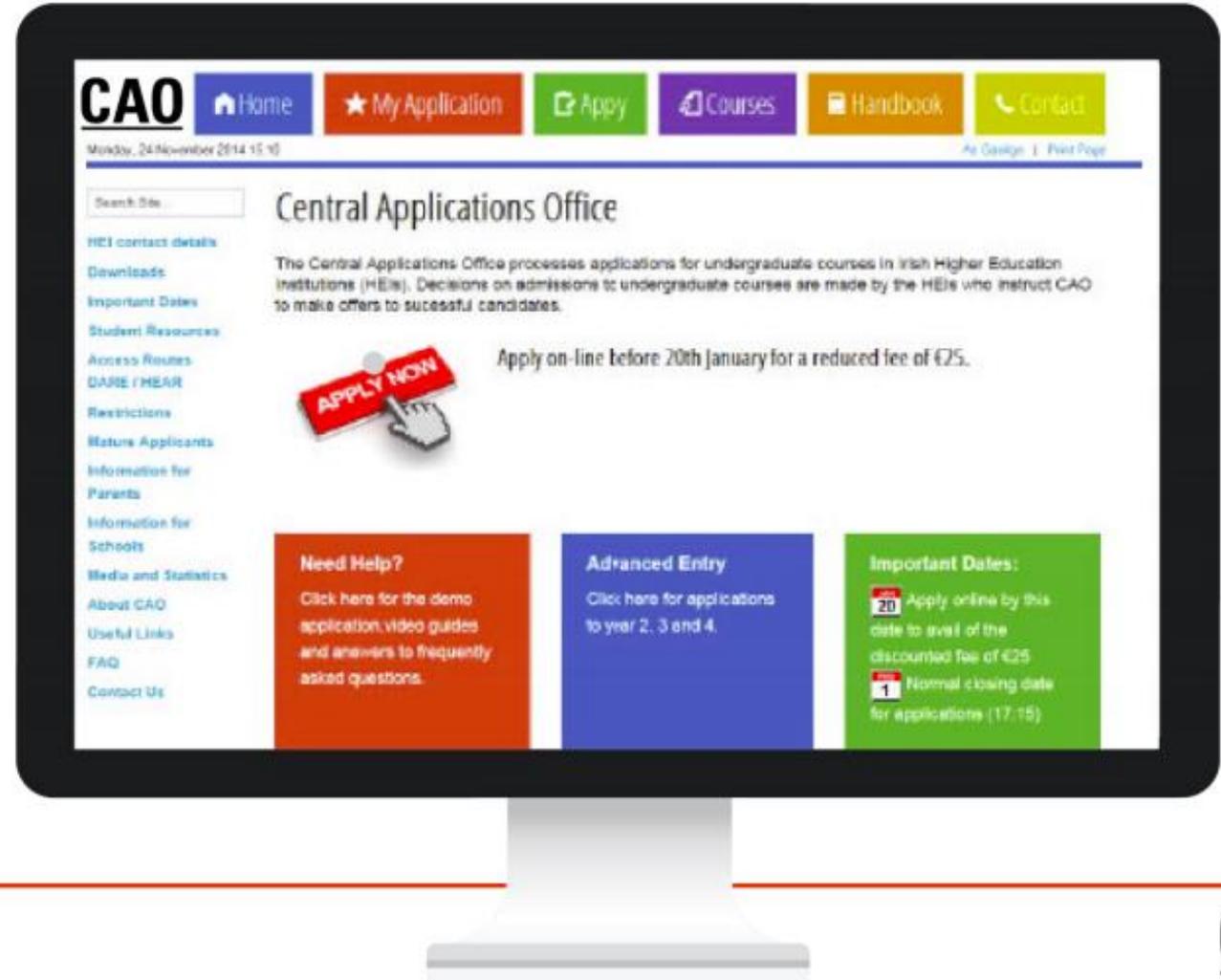


3. Third Level- Applying to CAO

Applicants are encouraged to apply online.

The website address is **www.cao.ie**

Click on 'Apply' and enter the information requested.





3. Third Level- Applying to CAO

Students must fill out both course lists in **Genuine 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

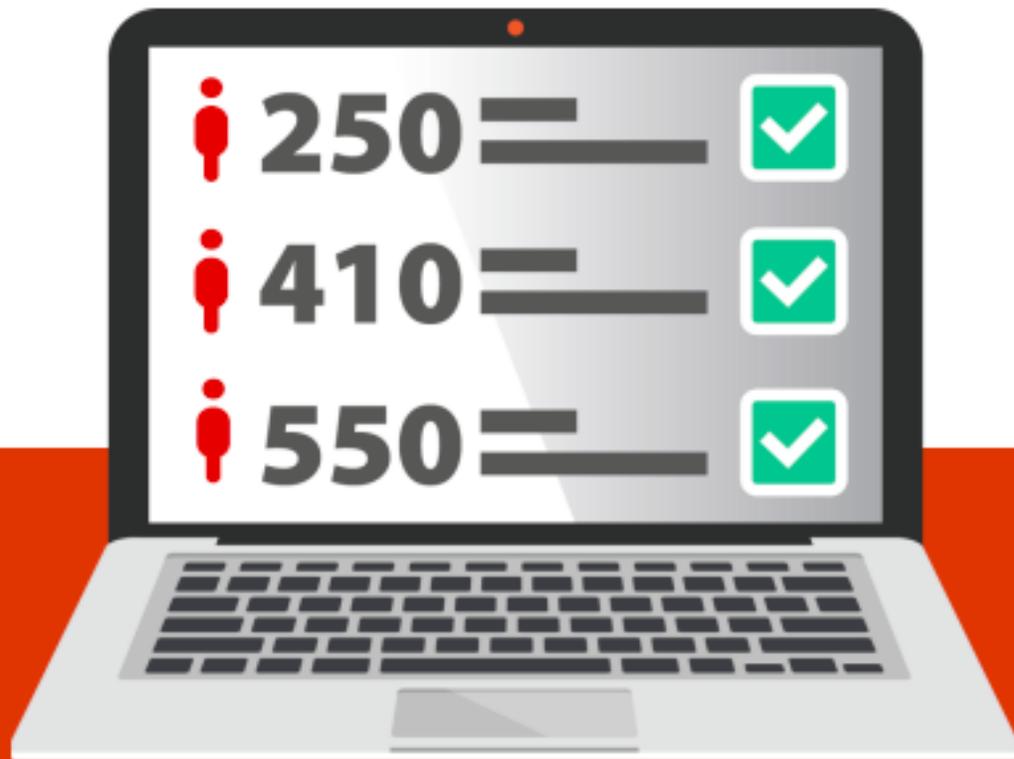
To do otherwise is a grave mistake.

They should **not** put down courses on the basis of their predictions of next years cut off points or their own points scores.

- Why? – Look at how places are allocated.



3. Third Level- Applying to CAO



- When examination results are released in August they are entered into the CAO computer.
- The computer checks each applicant's results.

For each course the applicant has applied for, the computer first determines if the applicant has the minimum entry requirements for the course.



3. Third Level- Applying to CAO

If the applicant meets the minimum entry requirements for the course, the applicant's points are calculated for this course choice.

All eligible applicants are then placed on a list, in order of academic merit, for each course that they applied for.

Minimum Entry Requirements + Points
Score = **Position on Order of Merit List**



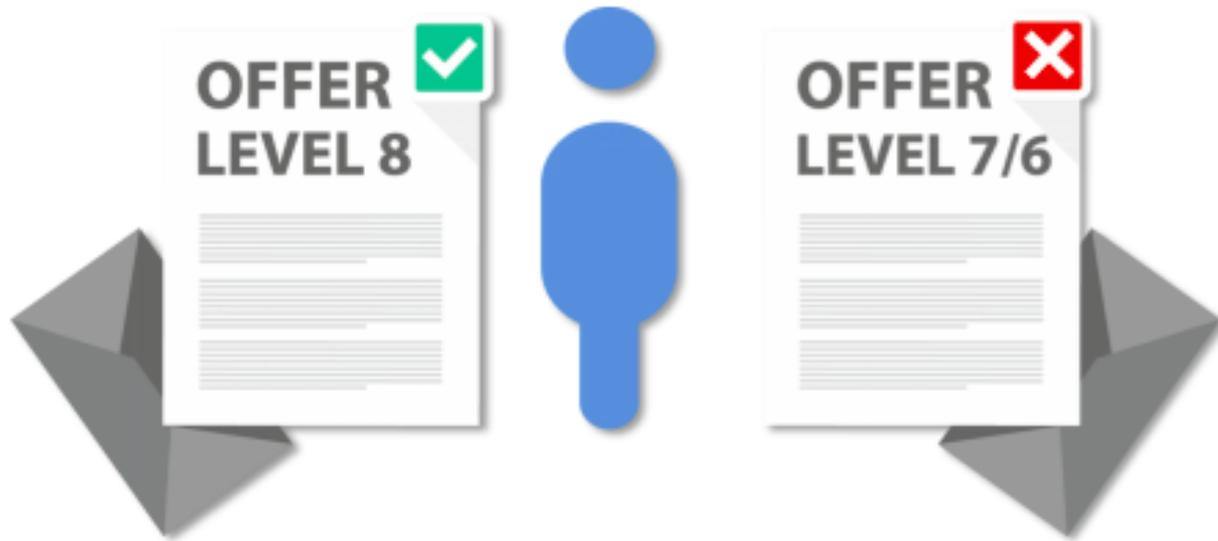
3. Third Level- Applying to CAO



- The admissions officers of the Higher Education Institutions tell CAO how many places are to be offered on each course.
- CAO then makes offers to the required number of applicants on each course, starting with the applicant with the highest points and working down until enough places have been offered.



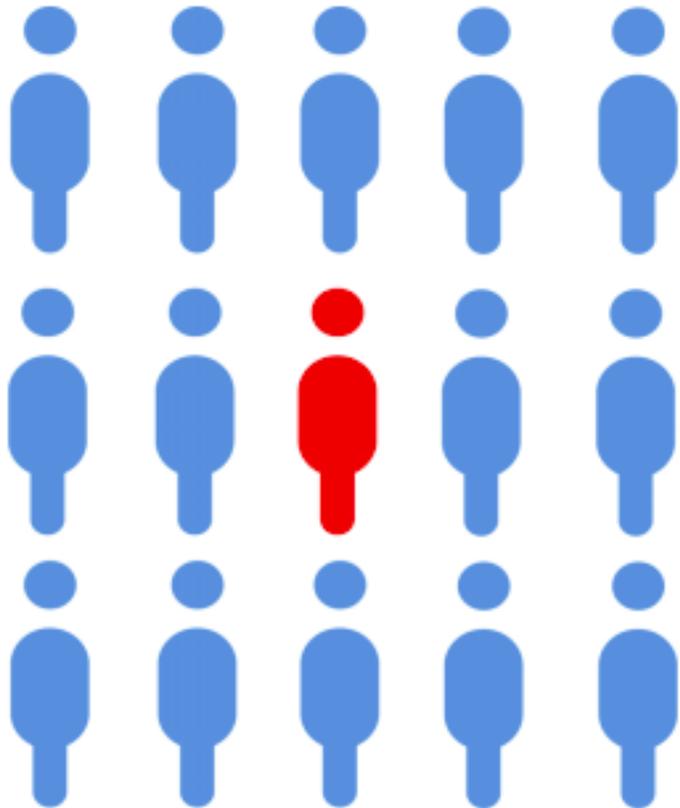
3. Third Level- Applying to CAO



- **Should some applicants decline to accept their offers these places become available in the next round of offers.**
- **They will be offered to the next applicants on the Order of Merit list. This process continues until all of the places on the course are filled or until all of the eligible applicants on the Order of Merit list have been offered places.**



3. Third Level- Applying to CAO



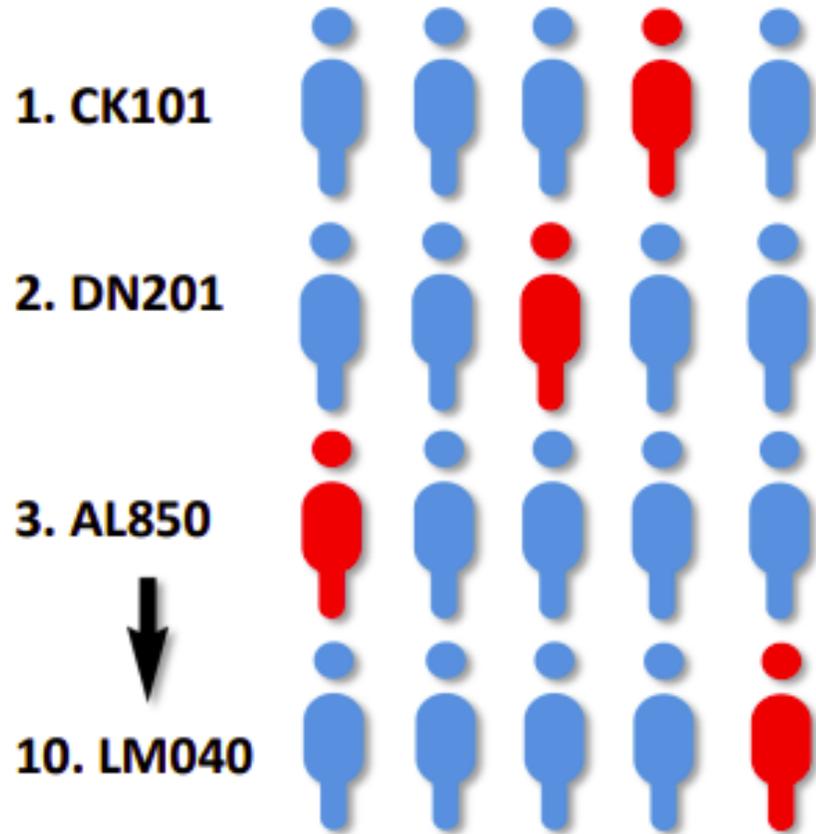
EXAMPLE

– no results yet!

- These are the applicants for CK101 - Arts in UCC.
- The examination results have not yet been released, so these applicants are in no particular order.
- We are going to trace the progress of the applicant marked in **red**.



3. Third Level- Applying to CAO



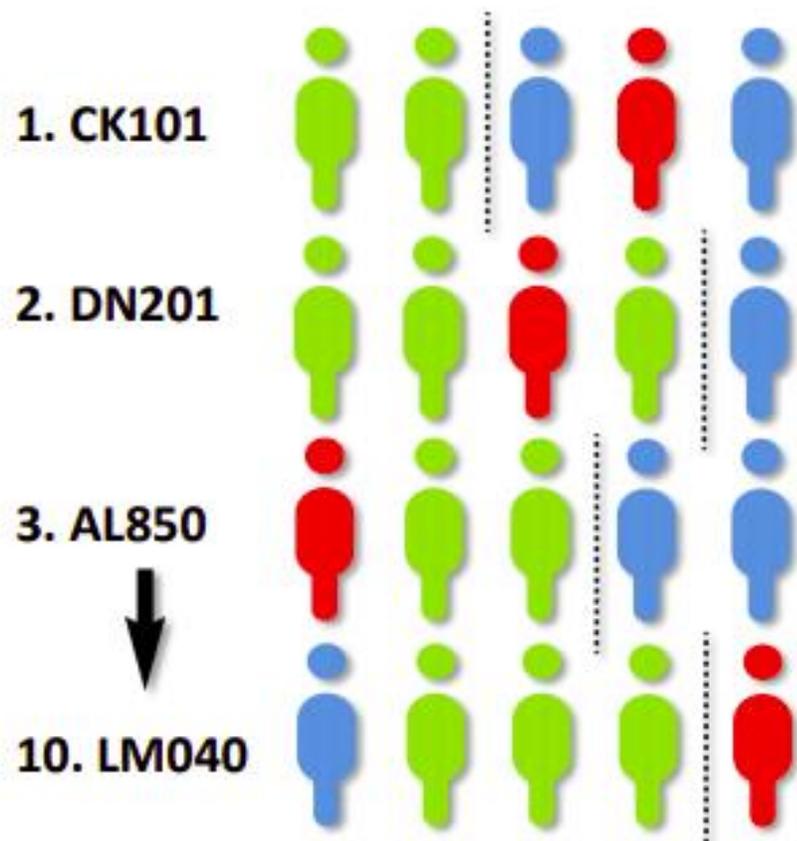
EXAMPLE

– LC results have been released.

- Applicants are placed in a queue for each course they applied for. Their position in the queue is determined by their points.
- The applicant with the highest points is placed at the top of the queue. The points achieved by the applicant in red determines her position in the queue for each course she has applied to.



3. Third Level- Applying to CAO



EXAMPLE
– HEIs issue R1 offers

- The applicants marked in **GREEN** have enough points to be offered places.
- The applicant marked in **RED** has enough points for her second preference.

3. Third Level- Applying to CAO



All other courses disappear, and the applicant is removed from the lists

EXAMPLE

– HEIs issue R1 offers

- The applicant in **RED** is offered her second preference, the highest preference course that she has enough points for, and she will now disappear from the queue for all her lower choices.
- Placing DN201 as her second preference meant that she would prefer to receive an offer on DN201 than on any other course except CK101 - which is her first preference.



3. Third Level- Applying to CAO

1. CK101



EXAMPLE – R2 offers

- After Round 2 offers are issued, our applicant is now in first place on the waiting list for her first preference course.
- She has already accepted her 2nd preference course. **Accepting or not accepting** her 2nd preference course will not prevent her from receiving an offer of her 1st preference course if she is deemed eligible by the institution in a later round.



3. Third Level- Applying to CAO

1. CK101



EXAMPLE – An offer is issued in R3 for her 1st preference!

- In the third round of offers two more offers are made on CK101 and our applicant, who was at the top of the queue, now receives an offer.
- She may do nothing and remain in DN201 or she may accept the offer.



3. Third Level- Applying to CAO

Genuine Order



- You do not need to guess what the points are going to be for the courses you are interested in.
- Simply list your courses in genuine order of preference from the highest preference 1, to the lowest preference 10.
- If you are entitled to an offer, you will be offered the highest preference that you are entitled to.



3. Third Level- Applying to CAO



- If you are entitled to an offer, you will be sent an email with details of your offer(s). You may receive more than one email if you have received an offer off both your Level 8 and Level 7/6 lists.
- You will also receive an SMS text message if you have selected this option.
- You should check that all of the details on the Offer Notice are correct and that there are no omissions.
- Offers will also be available on the CAO website.
- You may check for and accept offers on the website.

IN FACT, MOST APPLICANTS NOW RECORD ACCEPTANCES ONLINE.

3. Third Level- Applying to CAO



Level 8 Course Choices:

1. **LM094** Materials and Architectural Technology with Teacher Education
2. **GA980** Education (Design Graphics and Construction) - Letterfrack Campus
3. **LM095** Materials and Engineering Technology with Teacher Education
4. **GA981** Furniture Design and Manufacture - Letterfrack Campus
5. **GA982** Furniture and Wood Technology - Letterfrack Campus
6. **GA680** Mechanical Engineering
7. **CW548** Mechanical Engineering
8. **LC288** Mechanical Engineering
9. **DN120** Landscape Architecture
10. **TA222** Mechanical Engineering

[Change Level 8 Course Choices »](#)

Level 7/6 Course Choices:

1. **GA970** Furniture Design and Manufacture - Letterfrack Campus
2. **GA971** Furniture and Wood Technology - Letterfrack Campus
3. **DT169** Timber Product Technology
4. **AL713** Engineering (Common Entry to Mechanical/Renewable/Mechatronic Eng)
5. **AL710** Mechanical Engineering
6. **AL602** Mechanical Engineering
7. **AL711** Mechanical Engineering and Renewable Energy
8. **GA670** Mechanical Engineering
9. **CW517** Mechanical Engineering
10. **SG333** Mechanical Engineering

3. Third Level- Applying to CAO



Students can change their course choices from

- November 5th to February 1st at 5 pm, and
- May 5th to July 1st at 5 pm



It can be used to change the order in which courses are placed on their application, to take out a courses or to include new courses.

It cannot be used for courses marked '**Restricted**' as an assessment (test, interview, audition etc.) will have been undertaken with all applicants sometime between February and May. (Medicine, Music, Art and Design, Performing Arts, Architecture, Film and TV etc. are in may cases marked 'restricted')



3. Third Level- Applying to CAO

Q

I have received an offer of my 2nd preference course – if I accept this offer does this mean I won't get any further offers?

Q

I received my 3rd preference course but I would prefer my 4th, what should I do?

Q

I have the points, why didn't I receive an offer?

Q

I have not received any offers, what are my options?



3. Third Level- Applying to CAO



CAO Timetable of Events*

2025

September • CAO 2026 Interactive Handbook available online at www.cao.ie

October

November • CAO online application facility opens on **5 November at 12:00 noon**
• Facility to add/change course choices opens on **5 November at 12:00 noon**

December





3. Third Level- Applying to CAO

2026

January	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discounted application fee (€35 fee) available up to 20 January at 5pm
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Normal closing date for applications (€50 fee) is 1 February at 5pm• Online Change of Course Choices (free) facility closes 1 February at 5pm• Online facility to amend course choices becomes available (€10 fee) on 5 February at noon
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Closing date for amending course choices is 1 March at 5pm• Most tests and interviews for restricted courses are held in March and April• Closing date for final completion of online DARE/HEAR forms is 1 March at 5pm• Closing date for completion of Mature Applicant section of CAO form is 1 March at 5pm• Late application facility opens on 5 March at 12:00 noon• DARE/HEAR supporting documentation to arrive in CAO before 10 March at 5pm
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most tests and interviews for restricted courses are held in March and April
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Closing date for late applications is 1 May at 5pm• Online Change of Mind (free) facility becomes available on 5 May at 12:00 noon (expected date)• Statement of Application Record email sent to all applicants before end of May. Inform CAO if you do not receive it.





3. Third Level- Applying to CAO

June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leaving Certificate examinations• DARE and HEAR eligibility outcomes issued to applicants (late June)
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change of Mind Closes on 1 July at 5pm• Round A offers for certain categories of applicant e.g. mature, deferral, etc. are issued in early July
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Round Zero offers for certain categories of applicant issued in early August• Current year Leaving Certificate results issued (date to be confirmed)• Round One offers (date to be confirmed)• HEIs begin registration
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HEIs begin registration• Results of Leaving Certificate appeals released (date to be confirmed)• Offer season ends (date to be confirmed)



3. Third Level- Applying to CAO



Publications

College Prospectuses – 2026 Entry
CAO Handbook 2026

Internet

Qualifax – www.qualifax.ie Irish courses database
CAO – www.cao.ie Contains video on how to apply
Careers Portal – www.careersportal.ie
College websites (Addresses in CAO Handbook) and virtual open days

People

Relatives; Past pupils
Admissions/Academic staff of colleges

Guidance Counsellor

Career interest tests
Access to sources of information

Other websites

www.accesscollege.ie (HEAR and DARE)
www.studentfinance.ie and www.susi.ie



Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)



The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is a college and university **admissions** scheme which offers places at **reduced points** to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds

It has been established by 16 Higher Education Institutions based on evidence that socio-economic disadvantage negatively impacts on educational attainment at school and progression to higher education

Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)



Why apply to HEAR?

- **Reduced points CAO offers** in the participating colleges provided you meet the minimum entry requirements.
- **Post-entry supports** such as financial, academic, social and personal (some HEAR candidates receive a scholarship of between €1,100- €2,000). But the main source of student finance is still the SUSI grant, which must be applied for separately.

Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)



- School leavers who present satisfactory evidence relating to their socio-economic circumstances and satisfy matriculation and subject requirements are eligible to **compete** for reduced Leaving Certificate points places available in each of the participating institutions through HEAR
- Each college or university taking part in the HEAR scheme has set aside a quota of places on a reduced points basis for students entering through the scheme.
- This quota is different for each third level institution. Details of quotas can be found on the participating colleges

Should I Apply to HEAR?

HEAR HIGHER
EDUCATION
ACCESS
ROUTE



If you answer yes to three or more of the following questions, you could make a HEAR application: [Eligibility Criteria - Access College](#)

Indicator 1. Was your household income (before tax & PRSI) on or below €46,790 in 2024 (for 4 dependents. The amount is higher if you have a higher number of dependents)?

Indicator 2. Did your family have a medical card that was in date on 31 December 2025?

Indicator 3 Did your parents/ guardians receive a means-tested social welfare payment in 2024?

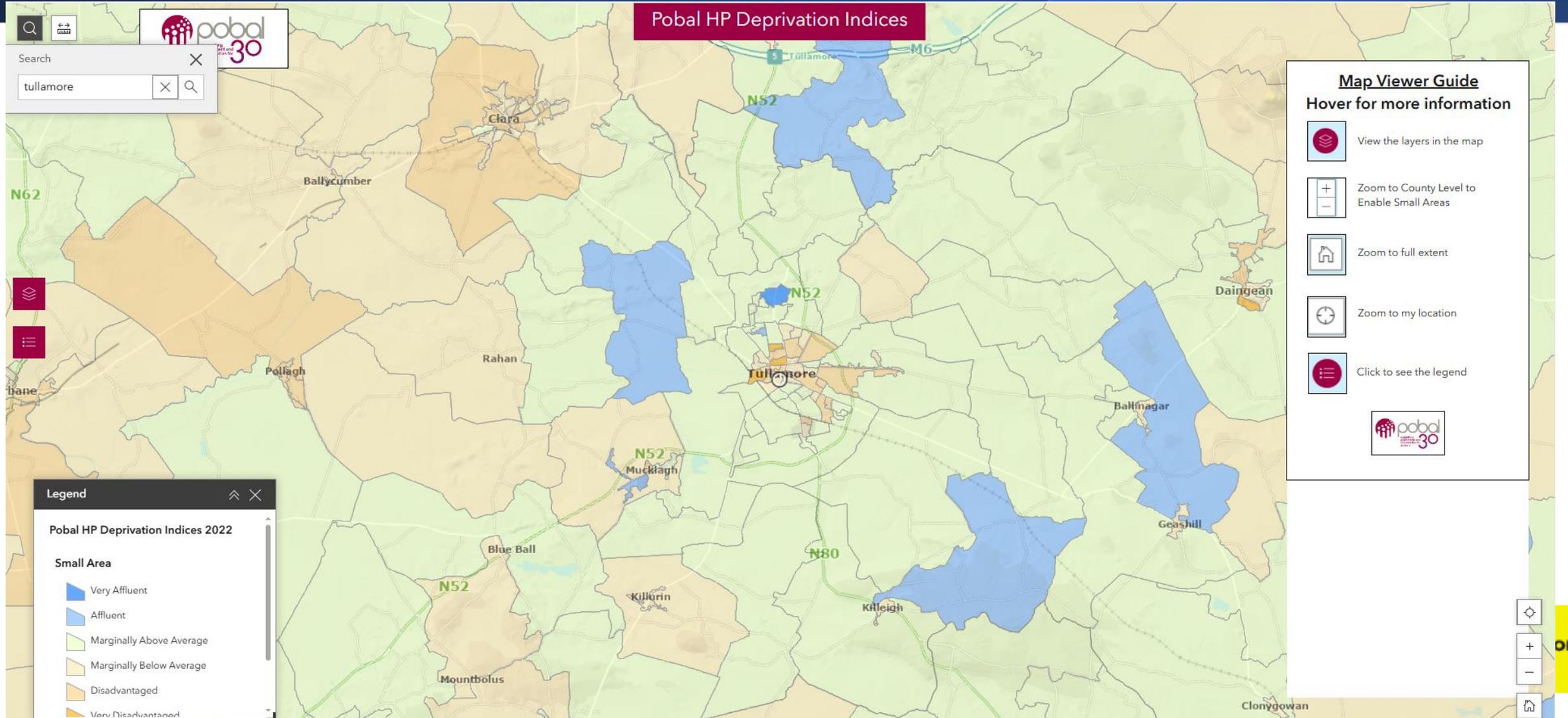
Indicator 4. Have you attended a DEIS school for 5 years of second level education?

Indicator 5. Do you live in a disadvantaged area?

<https://data.pobal.ie/portal/apps/experiencebuilder/experience/?id=3boacba7eb694ffa85340a60f81d516c>.

Indicator 6 Are you in a priority group?
Care-Experienced Applicants; A Member of the Traveller Community; A Member of the Roma Community ;Young Parents; Applicants who are both HEAR and DARE eligible.

Eligible Indicator- Area



Eligible Indicator Scoring (NEW for 2026)



Criteria	Score
1. Income (Mandatory)	All applicants to HEAR need to meet the low-income criteria (no score awarded)
2. Medical Card	Medical card in date on 31st December 2025 Yes = 1 No = 0
3. Means-Tested Social Welfare Benefits	Yes = 2 No = 0
4. Area (Deprivation Index Score)	Extremely Disadvantaged = 2.5 Very Disadvantaged = 2.5 Experienced homelessness = 2.5 Disadvantaged = 1.5 Marginally Below Average or higher = 0
5. DEIS School Status	Yes = 1.5 No = 0
Maximum Achievable Points	7

Total HEAR Criteria Score	Eligibility Status
5.5 - 7	HEAR Priority
2.5 - 5	HEAR Eligible but not HEAR Priority
2 or lower	Not Eligible for HEAR



Where can I go to college?

- ATU, Donegal
- ATU, Sligo
- St. Angela's College, Sligo

TUS, Athlone

- ATU, Galway
- University of Galway

- SETU, Carlow and Wexford

- TUS, Limerick
- Mary Immaculate College
- University of Limerick

- MTU, Kerry Campus

- Maynooth University
- Pontifical University

- Dublin City University
- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Institute of Art, Design & Technology, Dún Laoghaire
- Marino Institute of Education
- National College of Ireland
- NCAD
- RCSI
- Trinity College, Dublin
- TU Dublin
- University College, Dublin

- SETU, Waterford

- MTU Cork Campus
- University College Cork

Sample Supporting Documents

- **Statement of Liability or Self Assessment Letter – Chapter 4 for 2024**
- **Social Welfare Form/Statement for 2024 Signed and Stamped by Social Welfare Official**
- **RP50 Notification of Redundancy**
- **Retirement Lump Sum Letter for 2024**
- **Letter from TUSLA for Children in Care**



Did you know?

The most common reason for ineligible applications to HEAR in 2025 was because the applicant submitted the wrong Revenue document.

HEAR seeks financial documents for **2024**

- Statement of Liability or Self-Assessment Letter or
Notice of Assessment





Individual College Access

In addition to the HEAR scheme, other colleges runs their own individual access programme to promote the inclusion of non-traditional groups in Higher Education

Mature students, students with disabilities, students from schools designated as socio-economically disadvantaged, members of the travelling community, and ethnic minorities are eligible to apply to access offices of various HEI's.

Reduced points or direct entry may/may not apply
Additional personal and academic support are usually provided.
Grants/financial assistance is usually provided.



Individual College Access



University of limerick Access course

This Free 13 week course commences in January and is for students who achieved the minimum entry requirements for the University (2H5, 4O6/H7).

It's assessed similar to the HEAR but cases are assessed on an individual basis and dependant on circumstances, subjected to meeting criteria/ providing supported documentation to outline change of circumstances. <https://www.ul.ie/student-affairs/access-office/routes-to-3rd-level/access-to-university-course-auc>

Disability Access Route to Education



What is the Disability Access Route to Education?



The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a supplementary admissions scheme for school leavers with disabilities which operates on a reduced points basis. DARE has been established as clear evidence shows that disability can have a negative impact on educational attainment at school and progression to higher education.

All students with a disability, irrespective of whether they come through DARE or not, are offered a variety of academic, personal and social supports while studying at third level. Individual institutions will determine the nature and delivery of such supports in accordance with their own policies and practices and subject to the availability of resources.

Disability Access Route to Education



DARE DISABILITY
ACCESS
ROUTE TO
EDUCATION

Who Should Apply to DARE?

Applicants whose disability had a significant impact on educational performance in school.

Applicants who may not be able to meet the points for their preferred course due to the impact of disability.

Some disabilities eligible for consideration include: Asperger's Syndrome/Autism, ADD/ADHD, Blind/Vision Impaired, Hearing Impaired, Dyspraxia, Mental Health Condition, Neurological Conditions (Brain Injury, Speech & Language Disabilities), Significant Ongoing Illness, Physical Disability, Specific Learning Difficulty (Dyslexia & Dyscalculia)

Disability Access Route to Education



School leavers who wish to be considered for DARE must:



Apply online at www.cao.ie as part of the CAO application process by 1 February.

Disclose a disability or specific learning difficulty on the appropriate section of the application form. Applicants will then be directed to the separate online Supplementary Information Form which will ask them to provide additional information about their disability or specific learning difficulty (Sections A-C).

Applicants must indicate their wish to be considered for DARE (final Section on Supplementary Admissions Routes).

Applicants must submit supporting documentation by 10th March

Where can I go to college?

- ATU, Donegal
- ATU, Sligo
- St. Angela's College, Sligo

TUS, Athlone

- ATU, Galway
- University of Galway

- SETU, Carlow and Wexford

- TUS, Limerick
- Mary Immaculate College
- University of Limerick

- MTU, Kerry Campus

- Maynooth University
- Pontifical University

- Dublin City University
- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Institute of Art, Design & Technology, Dún Laoghaire
- Marino Institute of Education
- National College of Ireland
- NCAD
- RCSI
- Trinity College, Dublin
- TU Dublin
- University College, Dublin

- SETU, Waterford

- MTU Cork Campus
- University College Cork

3. Third Level- Access



By 1st February - You must apply to the CAO at www.cao.ie

By 1 March You must complete the HEAR and DARE Online Application Form (embedded in CAO form)

By 10 March - you must submit supporting documents to CAO

June (when LC exams end) - you will be notified about the outcome of your application

For more information go to www.accesscollege.ie and go to downloads for a guide and to access video's explaining the schemes.

Priority is given to applicants who are eligible for both HEAR and DARE and to DARE applicants with physical and sensory disabilities.

Changes for the 2017: From 2017 onwards only applicants presenting with the following disabilities will require a report dates less than three years ago: ADD/ADHD; Mental Health Condition, and Significant Ongoing Illness.

3. Scholarships



Scholarships

Careers Portal has a useful database:

<https://careersportal.ie/scholarships>

Careers information class on scholarships will be held in January when dates and links are more available, but students are also encouraged to research scholarships that may be applicable to them.

E.g. Sports Scholarships

Naughton Scholarship for STEM

Creative Writing/Music/Drama/Citizenship

Aim High Medicine (RCSI)

3. Third Level- Grants



Students can apply online for grants

Rates of Ordinary Maintenance Grant applicable for the 2025/2026 academic year (*Budget 2026 increased the non adjacent rate by between €200-€430 deepening on the band – no further details at the moment)

2024/25	Non-adjacent Rate	Adjacent Rate
Special Rate	€ 7,586*	€ 3,230
Full Maintenance (100%)	€ 4,292*	€ 1,774
Part Maintenance (75%)	€ 3,332 *	€ 1,343
Part Maintenance (50%)	€ 2,502*	€ 975
Part Maintenance (25%)	€ 1,666*	€ 612

Adjacent rate is for students whose home address is within 30km of their college

3. Third Level- Grants



No. of Dependant Children	Special Rate Maintenance and Full fees	Full Maintenance and Full SCC	Part Maintenance (75%) and Full SCC	Part Maintenance (50%) and Full SCC	Part Maintenance (25%) and Full SCC	100% SCC Paid	50% SCC paid	€500 reduction in SCC
< than 4	€27,400	€47,010	€48,270	€51,040	€58,470	€64,315	€71,300	€115,000*
4-7	€30,030	€51,520	€52,900	€55,940	€64,080	€70,490	€78,145	€126,040
8 or more	€32,555	€55,850	€57,345	€60,635	€69,465	€76,410	€84,710	€136,630

- * Budget 2026 increased the top band from 115,000 to 120,000, but no other details as of yet.
- SCC: Student Contribution Charge- €2,500 in 2026 and 2027
- For **Maintenance and Exemption from Student Services Charge**, where two or more children (or the candidate's parent) are pursuing a course of approved study in third level or further education, the reckonable income limit may be increased by increments, of **€4,950 or €4,785**

3. Third Level- Grants



Grant applications are centralised and application is made online through SUSI. www.susi.ie, or from the student finance website (www.studentfinance.ie)

Applications opens in Spring (usually in April) and usually closes on August 1st. There is a priority closing date (usually in early July).

A tutorial video is available online at: <http://www.susi.ie/SUSI-information/SUSI-Information.aspx>



3. Third Level- Other financial assistance

Student Assistance Fund

- provides financial support to full or part-time students who are experiencing financial difficulties while attending college (in addition to a SUSI grant).
- is available to help with costs such as: books and class materials, rent, heating and lighting bills, Food , essential travel, childcare costs, medical costs.
- is not available for tuition fees, registration fees, student loan repayments or any costs borne by your college.
- Applications are made, in confidence, to the college access or student services office. Some colleges have a closing date for applications.



3. Third Level- Other financial assistance

Vincent De Paul Education and Training Bursary Fund

established to support students of all ages who may financially struggle to access or stay in third level education and training programmes.

Postgraduate studies (Master or PhD) or private colleges are not eligible. Students must demonstrate that they have applied for all available state funding or other grants. For the academic year 2022/2023, 1,115 students received assistance of approx. €1600 each, with SVP spending over €1.5m, with demand increasing each year.

Applications to Saint Vincent de Paul, Mid West Region, Ozanam House
Hartstonge Street, Limerick V94 W2D3 061-310320 info.midwest@svp.ie

3. Third Level- Budgeting



TU Dublin Cost of Living Guide 2025/26

Living Away from Home	Monthly (€)	Annual (€)
Rent (Student Accommodation)	1372	12,348
Rent (Digs 5-day stay)	559	5031
Food	201	1809
Travel	48	432
Books & Class materials	72	639
Clothes/Medical	40	351
Mobile	14.99	135
Social life/Misc.	95	765
Student Charge	278	2500
Total	1308- 2121	12,107 – 19,424

Students living at home	Monthly (€)	Annual (€)
Other living expenses	82	738
Food	201	1809
Travel	48	432
Books & Class Materials	72	648
Clothes/Medical	40	360
Mobile	14.99	135
Social Life/Misc	95	855
Student Charge	278	2500
Total	831	7922

Source: TU Dublin, 2025

[Financial Support | Cost of Living Guide | TU Dublin](#)



3. Third Level- Accommodation

Most Expensive:

- UCD Roebuck Castle €12,119

Least Expensive:

- Corrib Village (twin room): €3,258

UCD Range	€5,702-12,119 (paid monthly)
UL range	€5,416-7,905 (paid monthly)
UCC range	€6,176-9,235 (paid monthly)
TCD range	€6,336-10,296 (paid monthly)
Maynooth range	€5,411-7,003 (paid monthly)
DCU range	€6,036-6,873 (utilities not included)
Uni of Galway range	€3258-7929 (paid monthly)

On Campus Accommodation Costs vary considerably from one college to another. Its worth considering this when applying to the CAO



3. Third Level- Accommodation

Accommodation Links:

[University of Limerick](#)

[UCD](#)

[Maynooth](#)

[UCC](#)

[TCD](#)

[DCU](#)

[Uni of Galway](#)

Dates for application also vary 2026 TBC:

Maynooth University – round 1 offers
(Express Interest from 1st May to the day
after leaving cert results)

DCU- February to March (2026)

UL- March

University of Galway - February/March

TCD – Feb – March (Spring 2026)

UCC – March - April

UCD – April 7th

3. Third Level- CAO errors



- Lack of Information about the courses applied for or the colleges applied to. Research is so important to identify the course content, included options like work placement and study abroad, progression thereafter (NB in engineering for example where a Masters is necessary)
- Trying to guess points, and not adhering to the order of preference on the CAO application form
- Not considering all the options available. For example applying only to level 8 honours degree courses in Universities, or applying to colleges in only a specific geographic area.

Order of Preference

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

**PLACE YOUR
COURSES IN
GENUINE ORDER
OF PREFERENCE!**



To do otherwise is a
grave mistake.



Don't Forget... Self Care



B Body care

- exercise
- eat healthy
- treat illness
- rest + sleep



A Achieve

- work
- chores
- study + learn
- set goals

HOW TO STAY
balanced
DURING DIFFICULT TIMES



C Connect

- call/text loved ones
- journal
- facetime
- contribute (if possible)



E Enjoy

- play
- create
- pamper
- have fun

@wakeupandsmelltherosay



My son is unsure what to do....

We have a factsheet for this on our Website:

[Choosing a Career Factsheet.pdf](#)

Thank you for being here tonight

Theresa Burke

B.A., B.Sc., Grad. Dip., M.Ed.

Guidance Counsellor

CAO Course Choices

DOs and DON'Ts

DOs

- Do list your courses in genuine order of preference. This means putting your dream course in first place, your second favourite in second place, and so on.
- Do check that you meet the minimum entry requirements for the courses that you wish to include on your application. If you don't meet these requirements you will not be offered a place, regardless of your points score.
- Do add courses to your Level 7/6 list as well as your Level 8 list; give yourself plenty of options at the offers stage.
- Do research your courses carefully, taking note of the course content and other information provided on the colleges' websites and in their prospectuses.
- Do attend open days and education events where you can ask questions about the course, the institution, campus life, etc.
- Do take note of the restrictions outlined on page 3 of the CAO Handbook.
- Do check your course choices carefully before the Change of Mind facility closes on the 1 July at 5.15pm.

CAO Course Choices

DOs and DON'Ts

DON'Ts

- Don't list your courses based on assumptions about what the points are going to be or how well you think you are going to do in your examinations. Points can vary significantly year on year based on demand, supply and applicant performance.
- Don't list a course on your application higher up than the course that you really want – if you get the higher preference offer you will not be offered anything lower.
- Don't apply for a course that you're not interested in just because you have the points for it.
- Don't place a course on your application if you do not meet the minimum entry requirements. This will be a wasted course choice as you will not be considered for a place if you do not meet these requirements (regardless of your points score).
- Don't leave your Level 7/6 list blank . You should spend some time researching Level 7/6 courses to give yourself plenty of options at the offers stage. Level 7/6 courses offer qualifications in their own right and most offer progression pathways into Level 8 courses.