



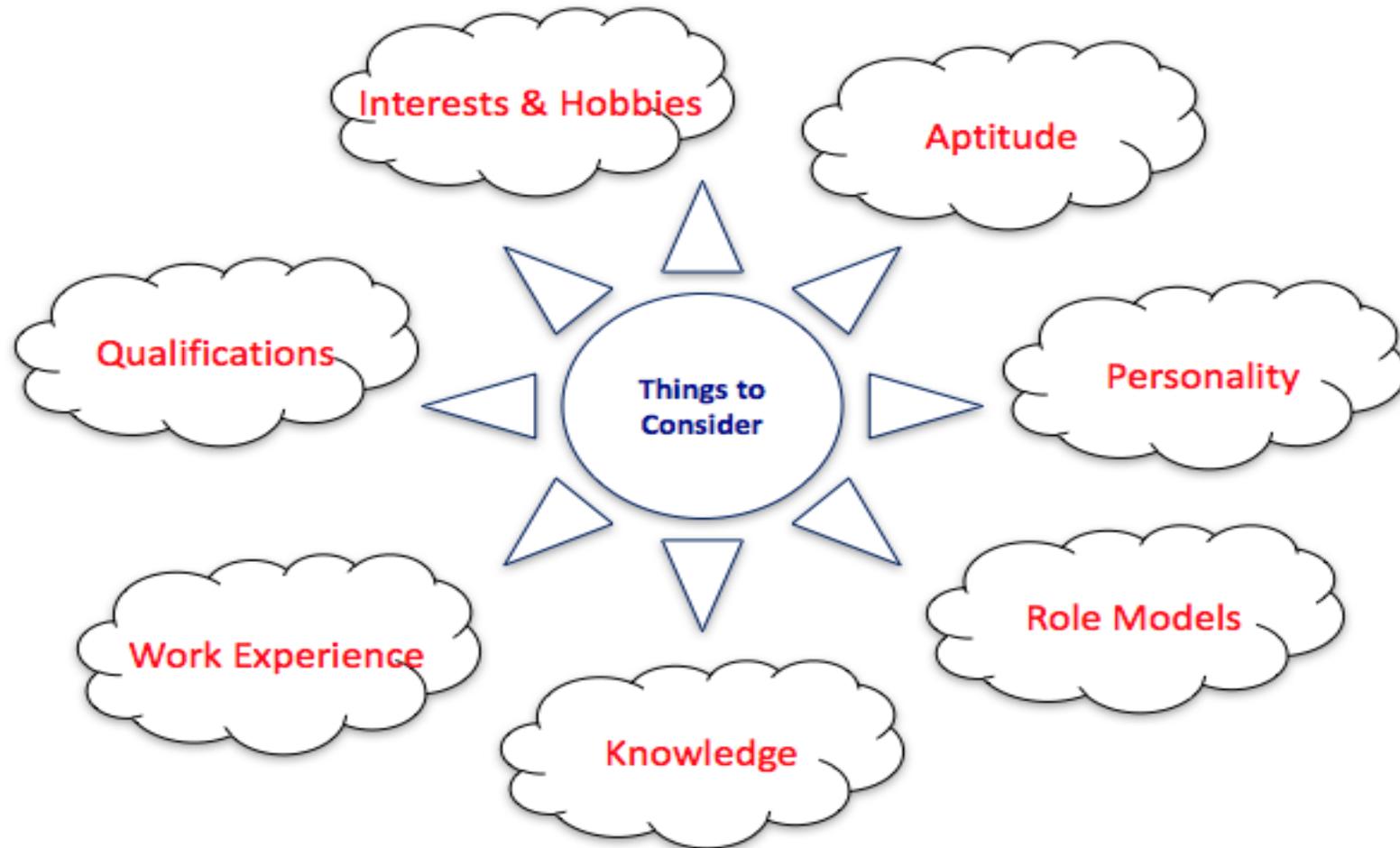
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6<sup>th</sup> Year Parents' & Students

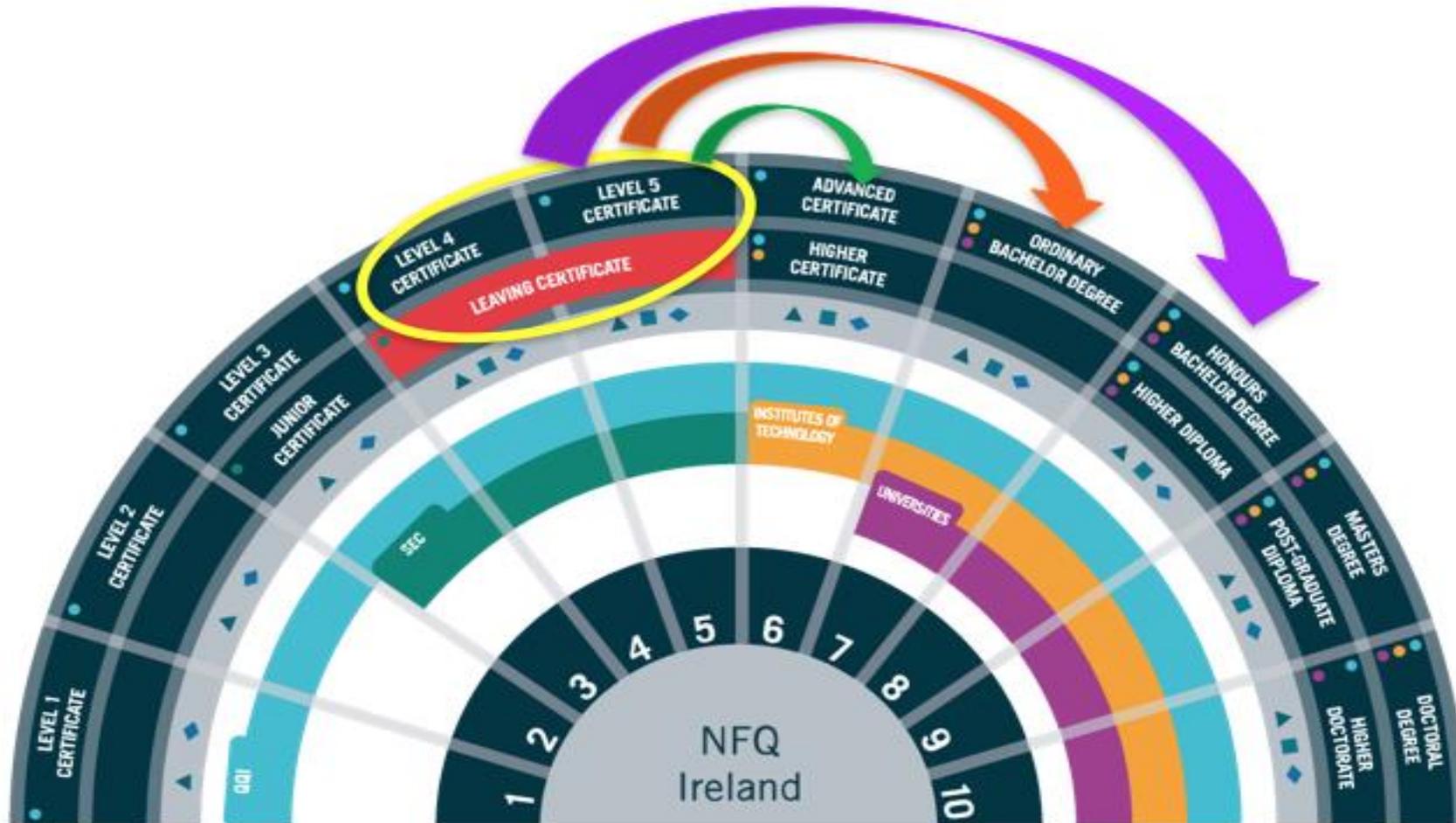
CAO

Information

# Decision Making

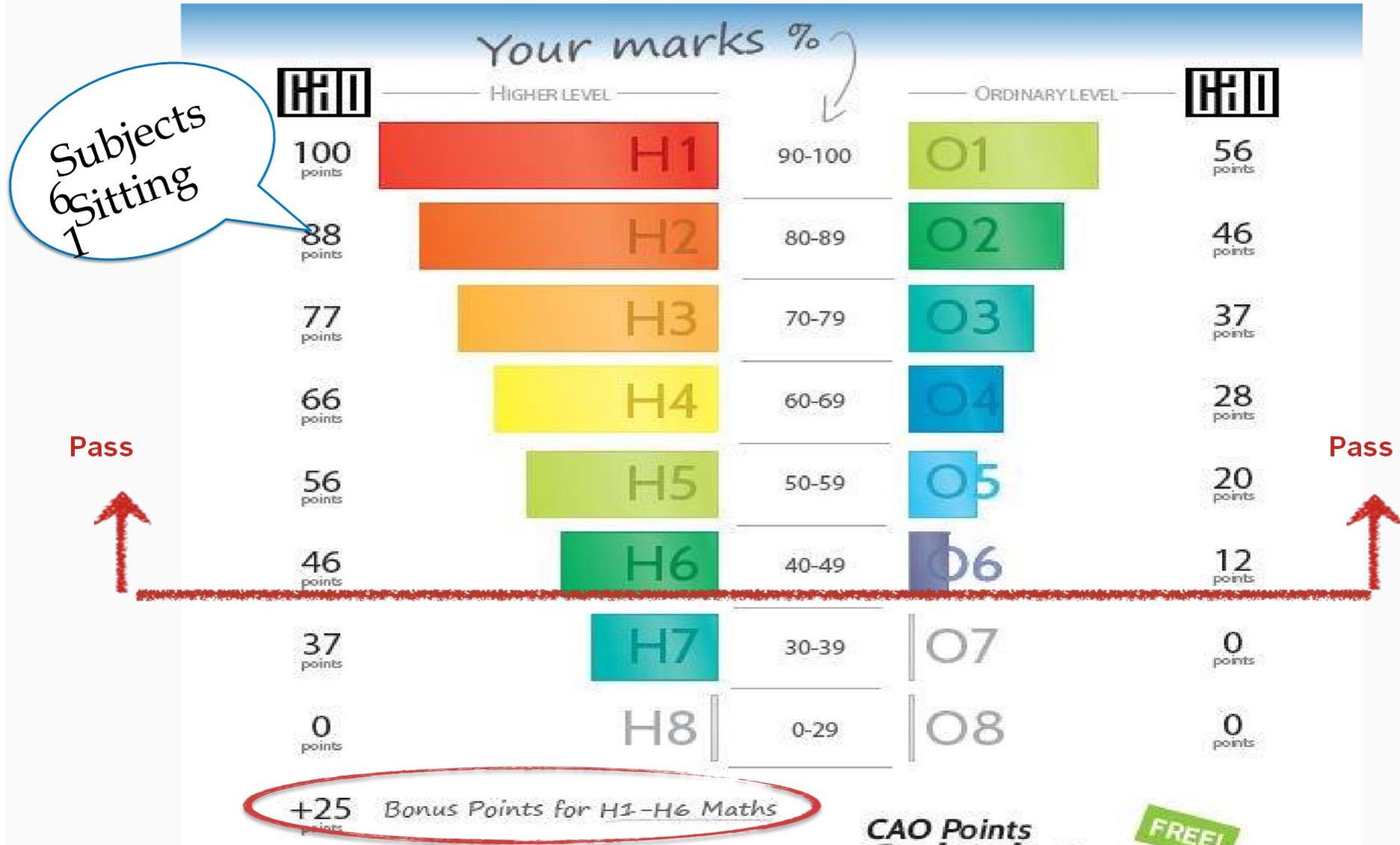


# The National Framework of Qualifications



# CAO

## Points Requirements



# Introduction to the CAO Application

- The CAO is responsible for processing applications and recording acceptances for HEIs, but all decisions on admissions are made by the individual institutions and not by CAO.
- Students must carefully read the CAO Handbook which contains information on all of the courses, restrictions, deadlines, fees and application guidelines.
- A copy of the handbook is available to download at [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie). Each student can have personal online book



# Outline

Decision Making [qualifax.ie](http://qualifax.ie), [careersportal.ie](http://careersportal.ie),  
[careersnews.ie](http://careersnews.ie) , [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)

The CAO Application

DARE & HEAR Schemes /SUSI Grant Scholarships

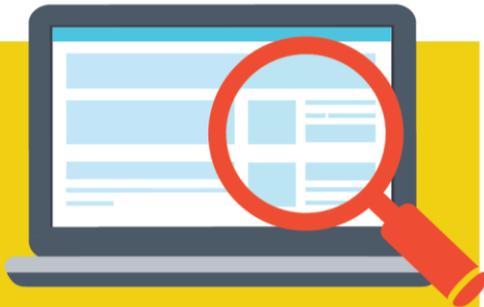
Other options after the Leaving Certificate

**Information sent to email, notice board & Text**



# Your role as a parent/guardian

Help your child to research their courses



Encourage your child to apply early



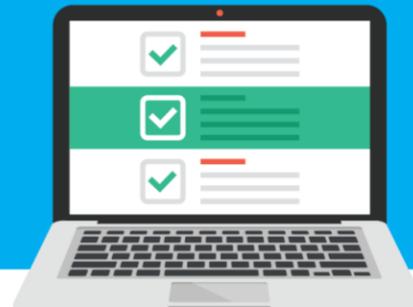
Make sure your child lists their courses in Genuine order of preference



Watch out for important deadlines



Remind your child to review all CAO correspondence carefully



Return offer acceptance notices on time



# Choosing your higher education courses

- Courses are listed in the HEI prospectuses, the CAO Handbook and can also be searched for using the 'Courses' facility at [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)
- Make sure to check for minimum entry requirements.
- Watch out for restrictions – see page 3 of the CAO Handbook.
- Talk to family members and friends, especially those who have attended the institution or who have studied the course of interest.
- Research course content, number of contact hours, assessment etc.
- Consider the financial implications - the cost of accommodation, food, and travel expenses for every year of study



# Completing the application form

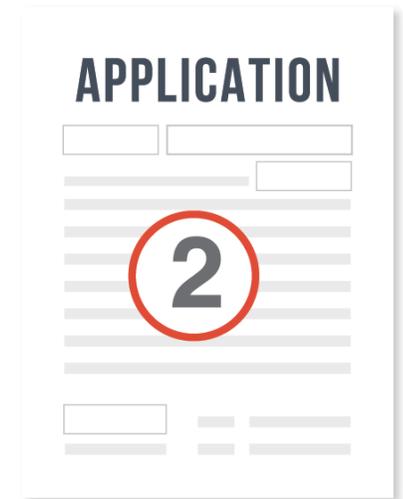
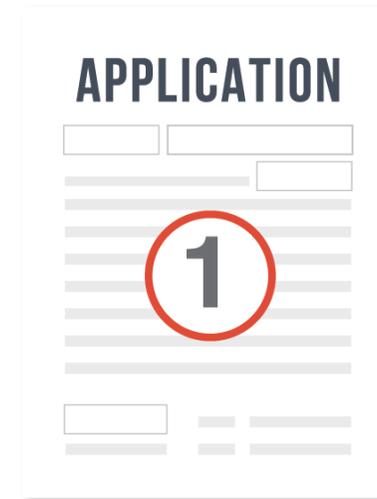
Use the Demo Application facility in the Student Resources section of the website to become more familiar with the process before starting an application.

- Apply online via [www.cao.ie](http://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.



# THE CAO - 2 Applications in 1

- 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.
- Alternatively, you might not wish to accept either offer.



# 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.

# How To List Your Courses

- There are 2 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.



## Sample CAO Application:

### Level 8

1.	CK600 Engineering
2.	MT830 Engineering
3.	MT839 Biomedical Eng
4.	MT831 Structural Eng
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

### Level 7/6

1.	MT739 Biomedical Eng
2.	MT731 Civil Engineering
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

# Sample CAO Application – Course Lists

	LEVEL 8		LEVEL 7/6	
1-3 DREAM	1	MI008 (552)	1	BN030 (230)
	2	MI005 (466)	2	DT315 (350)
	3	DC002 (462)	3	DT303 (330)
4-7 REALISTIC	4	CM001 (451)	4	DT360 (300)
	5	MH001 (485)	5	DL701 (200)
	6	DC203 (444)	6	TA111 (185)
	7	GY109 (403)	7	TA113 (175)
8-10 BACKUP	8	DC204 (487)	8	TA114 (170)
	9	DN500 (326)	9	TA103 (175)
	10	DT572 (380)	10	BN014 (185)

- Courses are ranked in genuine order of preference
- Example 1: the student scores a total of 550 points in her Leaving Certificate
- Example 2: the student scores a total of 330 points in her Leaving Certificate

# CAO 2025 Points Round 1

## Level 8

1). CK600 Engineering	499
2). MT830 Engineering	454
3). MT839 Biomedical Eng	455
4). MT831 Structural Engineering	424
5).	
6).	

## Level 7

1). MT739 Biomedical Eng	324
2). MT731 Civil Engineering	259
3).	

Student has 440 points including H4 Maths  
Round 1 offer of MT831 & MT739

# Making amendments to a CAO application

Date	Deadline
Early November - 1st February	Change of Course Choices facility available online (FREE)
Early February - 1st March 5:15 PM	Online facility to amend course choices available (FEE: €10)
Early May – 1st July 5:15 PM	Change of Mind facility available (FREE)

- It is important to note that there are restrictions on introducing courses using the Change of Mind facility - page 3 of the CAO Handbook outlines these restrictions
- There are a number of deadlines that must be noted when your child is making amendments to their CAO application. Changes to some personal information cannot be carried out online (e.g. name or date of birth) and your child will have to post the amendment with their CAO application number to CAO, Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway (please obtain and keep a certificate of postage).



# CAO IMPORTANT DATES



Date	Deadline
Early November	Online application facility opens
20 January 5pm	Discounted online application fee deadline – €35 fee
1 February 5pm	Change of Course Choices closes
1 February 5pm	Normal closing date for online and paper applications - €50 fee
Early February	Online facility to amend course choices opens – fee of €10
1 March 5pm	Closing date for amending course choices – fee of €10
1 March 5pm	Closing date for final completion of HEAR/DARE forms
10 March 5pm	Closing date for HEAR/DARE documentation to be received by CAO
1 May 5pm	Closing date for late applications - €65 fee
Early May	Online Change of Mind facility becomes available
End of May	Statement of Application Record sent to all applicants
1 July 5pm	Change of Mind closes

# The offers stage

- There are three main rounds of offers: **Round A, Round Zero, and Round One.**
- If your child is applying on the basis of school leaving examination results, regardless of the year completed, they may receive an offer in **Round One.**
- Round One offers will be issued as soon as possible after the Leaving Certificate results become available.
- After Round One offers have been accepted, CAO then issues Round Two offers for remaining places.
- Subsequent offers are issued by CAO as necessary until October to fill any vacancies that may arise.



# Accepting an offer

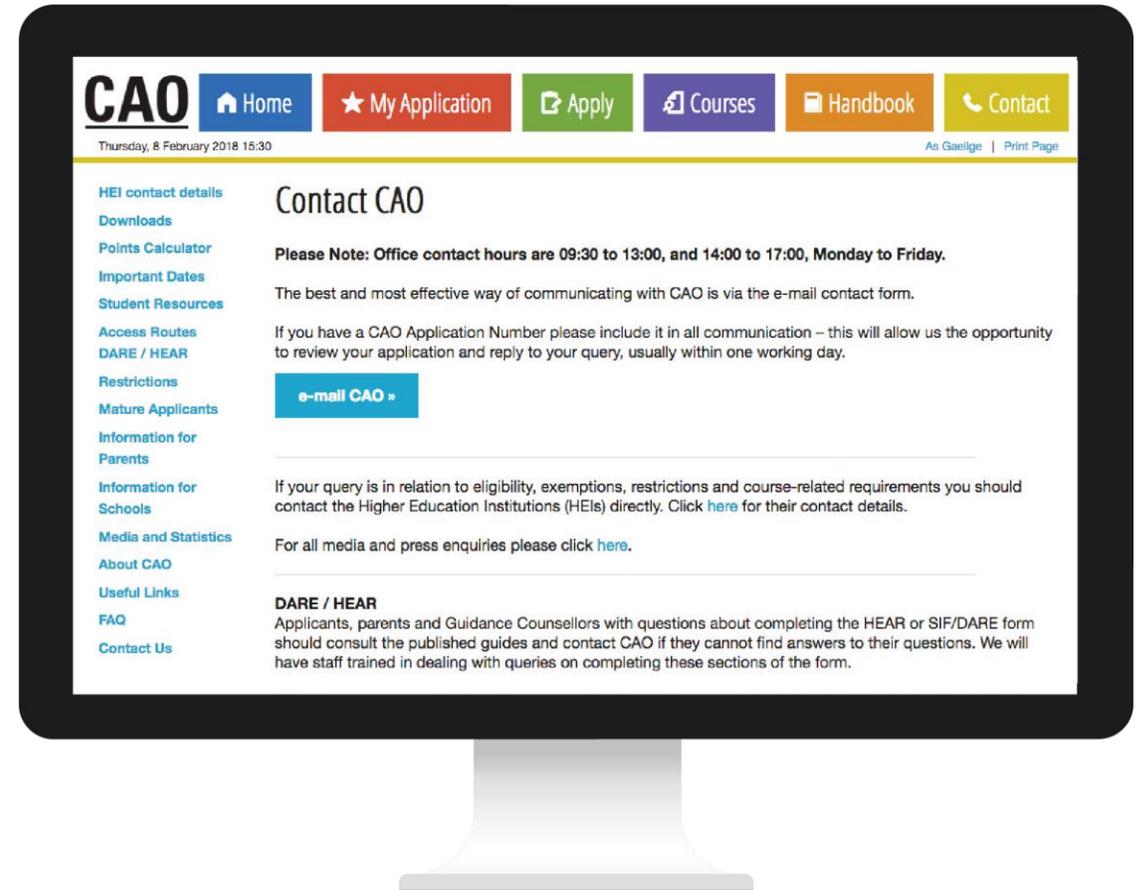
- If your child decides to accept an offer, they can accept the offer online up to the reply date.
- If they receive an offer from both lists they must choose between them; they can only accept one offer from either their Level 8 or their Level 7/6 list.



**Accepting an offer in Round One does not mean that your child will be prevented from receiving an offer of a higher preference course in subsequent offer rounds.** Should a place become available in a later round, and if your child is entitled to this place, they may receive an offer which they can choose to accept or ignore. Accepting the new offer will automatically cancel the previous acceptance.

# Communicating with CAO

- If you do not have your child's application number CAO cannot communicate any information about your child's application to you.
- The best method of communication for you or your child is via the CAO website [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie).
- Using the online '**Contact**' facility and quoting the application number will allow CAO time to review your child's file and revert with an answer to the query in writing within one working day



# Important correspondence from CAO

- All correspondence from CAO should be treated as **extremely important** and checked carefully to make sure that the information held on file by CAO is correct.
- When your child applies online their first correspondence with CAO will be in the form of an automated email which will contain your child's application number and a verification code.
- Before the end of May, all applicants will receive a Statement of Application Record in the post. This is an extremely important document and must be carefully reviewed and any errors or omissions must be noted on this form and returned to CAO immediately.
- At the offers stage your child will either receive an Offer or another Statement of Application Record (by email).
- If they receive a Statement of Application Record this is because they have not been deemed eligible for an offer in this round. You must ensure that your child checks that all of the information that CAO currently holds on file is correct, including their examination details.



# Irish / Modern Language Exemptions

- If your daughter is not sitting Irish and/or a Third Language for her Leaving Certificate **because she has an exemption** she must make a supplementary exemption application.
- If she is applying to any of the **NUI colleges** (UCD, UCC, NUI Galway, Maynooth, RCSI, NCAD etc.) and not presenting Irish and/or another language. See further information at [www.nui.ie](http://www.nui.ie) and download and complete the relevant application form.
- If she is applying to **Trinity College Dublin** and is not presenting any language. See further information at <https://www.tcd.ie/study/assets/PDF/tcd-language-waiver-application-form.pdf> and download and complete the relevant application form.
- If she is applying to the **University of Limerick** and is not presenting any language. See further information at <https://ulsites.ul.ie/admissions/ul-language-exemption> and download and complete the relevant application form.

# Useful resources

Please visit [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie) and click on the 'Information for Parents' page to view some of the useful resources available, including:

- The Demo Application Facility

- Video Guides

- A guide to the CAO for parents and guardians

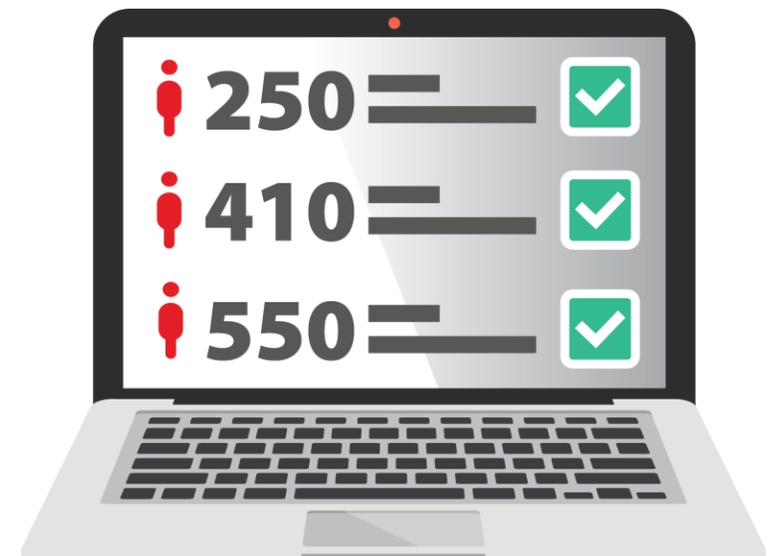
- Timetable of Events

- The CAO Handbook

- HEI Alert Lists

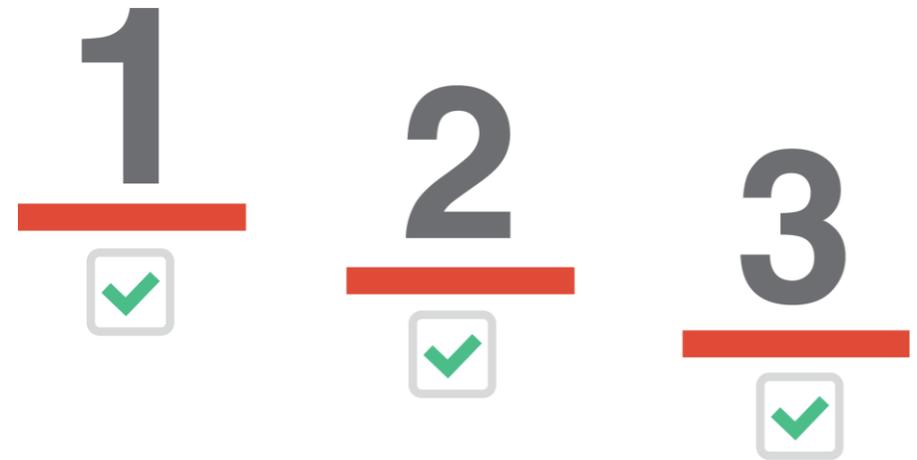
# How offers are issued

- Your child will then be placed on a list in **order of merit** for each course that they are eligible for e.g. if your child has the highest points score she goes to the top of the list and the child with the second-highest points score goes second on the list, and so on.
- The HEI then instructs CAO on how many offers to make for each course. If your child was in 20th position for a chosen course, and the institution instructs CAO to offer 25 places, then your child will receive an offer of a place on that course (unless they have received an offer of a course higher up on their preference list). The points score of the applicant in 25th place will be published as the cut-off points for that course in that round.



# How offers are issued

- After the release of the Leaving Certificate results, the examination results are input into the CAO computer and for each course that your child applied for the CAO will first check that they meet the minimum entry requirements.
- If your child meets the eligibility criteria for the course(s) that they have applied for, the system then calculates a points score.



# Restrictions

**RESTRICTED COURSES**

**HEAR**  
**SOCIO ECONOMIC**  
**DISADVANTAGE**

**DARE**  
**DISABILITIES/SLD**

Applications must be made by 1 February at 5:15 PM. Consult CAO Handbook for full details.

# The recheck process

- If your child has requested to have some of their Leaving Certificate examinations rechecked, and if the recheck discovers that your child deserved a higher mark and thus obtains a higher points score, their position on the Order of Merit list will be altered to reflect their new points score.
- The decision to offer a place to a recheck applicant is made by the HEI in question and not the CAO.



# HPAT

- HPAT – Health Professions
- Admissions Test
- Students applying for Medicine
- **HPAT Registration – online only.**
- **Student must register for HPAT test at: [www.hpat-ireland.acer.org](http://www.hpat-ireland.acer.org)**
- **Student must have CAO Application Number to register for HPAT. The HPAT will run across several days in February. It will be conducted online via laptop only.**
- **Registration Open: November until mid-Jan 2026**
- **Test dates: Late February 2026**
- **HPAT Results: Late June 2026**

# Grant (SUSI)

- Student Universal Support Ireland  
Online only grant applications system  
Check **Eligibility Reckoner** online.



- Students must indicate on CAO form that they wish their details to be forwarded to SUSI.
- Applicants apply at [www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie) next Spring 2026.



# Scholarships

- **Academic scholarships** are awarded on the basis of academic achievement. Some but not all are awarded automatically.
- **Other scholarships**, i.e. performing arts, sport and others must be applied for specifically and entry requirements and deadlines must be checked by individual institutions.
- More info: <https://careersportal.ie> → **Guide to Scholarships**

# SUSI: Key Eligibility Criteria

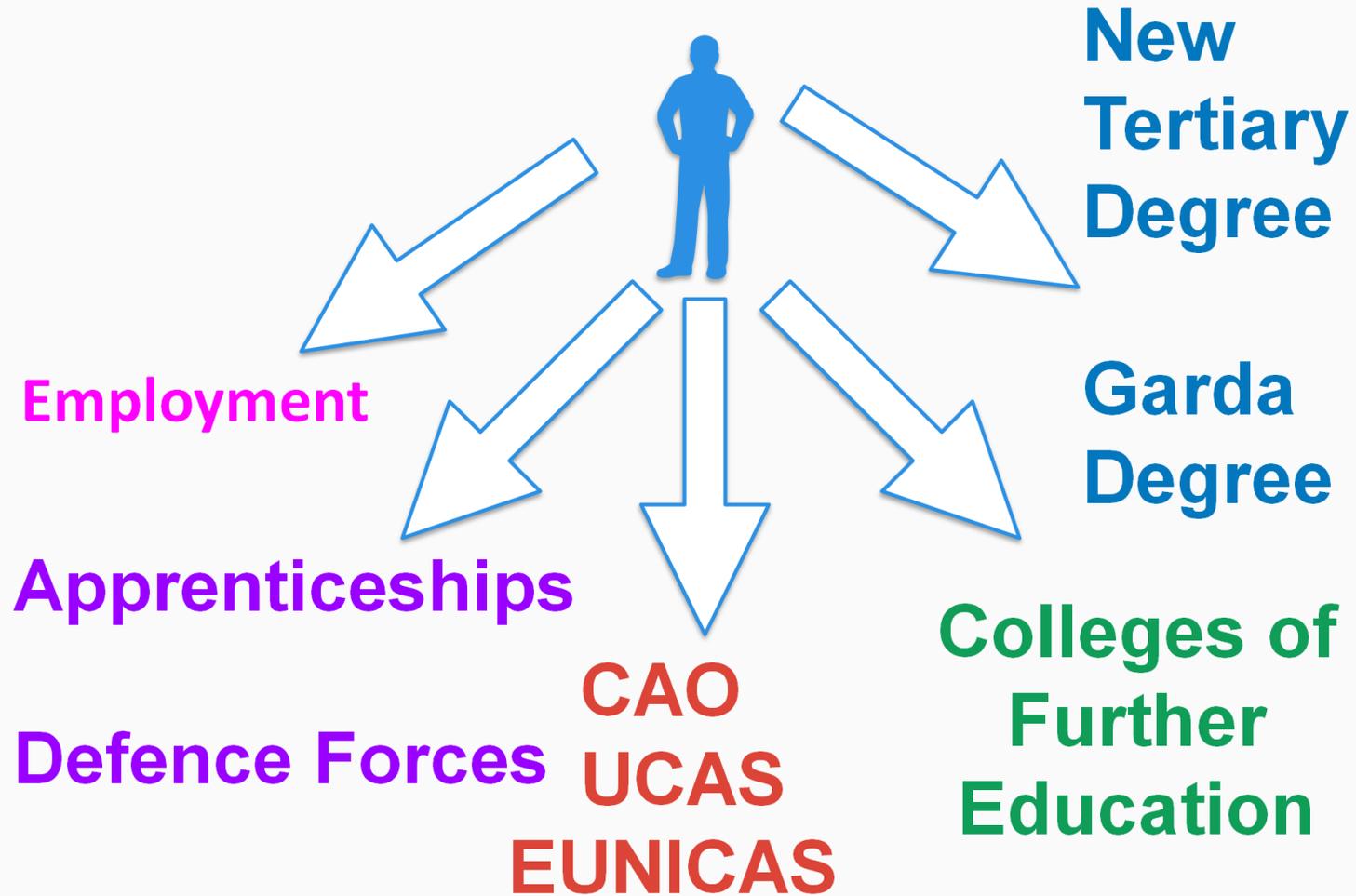


- **Check the website:** [www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie)  
(Use Eligibility Reckoner)
- **CAO form:** Tick the SUSI option to share your college acceptance
- **Apply early:** April 2026
- **Return requested documentation:** complete and on time

**Contact SUSI**

- **Website:** [www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie)
- **Email:** [support@susi.ie](mailto:support@susi.ie)
- **Facebook:** [facebook.com/susisupport](https://www.facebook.com/susisupport)
- **Twitter:** [twitter.com/susihelpdesk](https://twitter.com/susihelpdesk)
- **Telephone helpdesk:** 0761 087 874

# Keep Options After LC Open





UCAS



EUNICAS

- Early Deadline Oct / Jan
- Max 5 Courses
- Achieve specific Grades
- Include Predicted Grades
- Reference
- Personal Statement
- Fees £9,250
- Apply through School
- Interview

- Various Deadlines
- Direct Application to Colleges
- Lower grade requirements
- Reference
- Motivational Letter
- Fees vary £2,250
- Apply at home
- Interview



**cetb**  
Bord Oideachais agus  
Oiliúna Chorcaí  
*Cork Education and*

 **National** Tertiary Office  
Oifig Thrasachta **Náisiúnta**

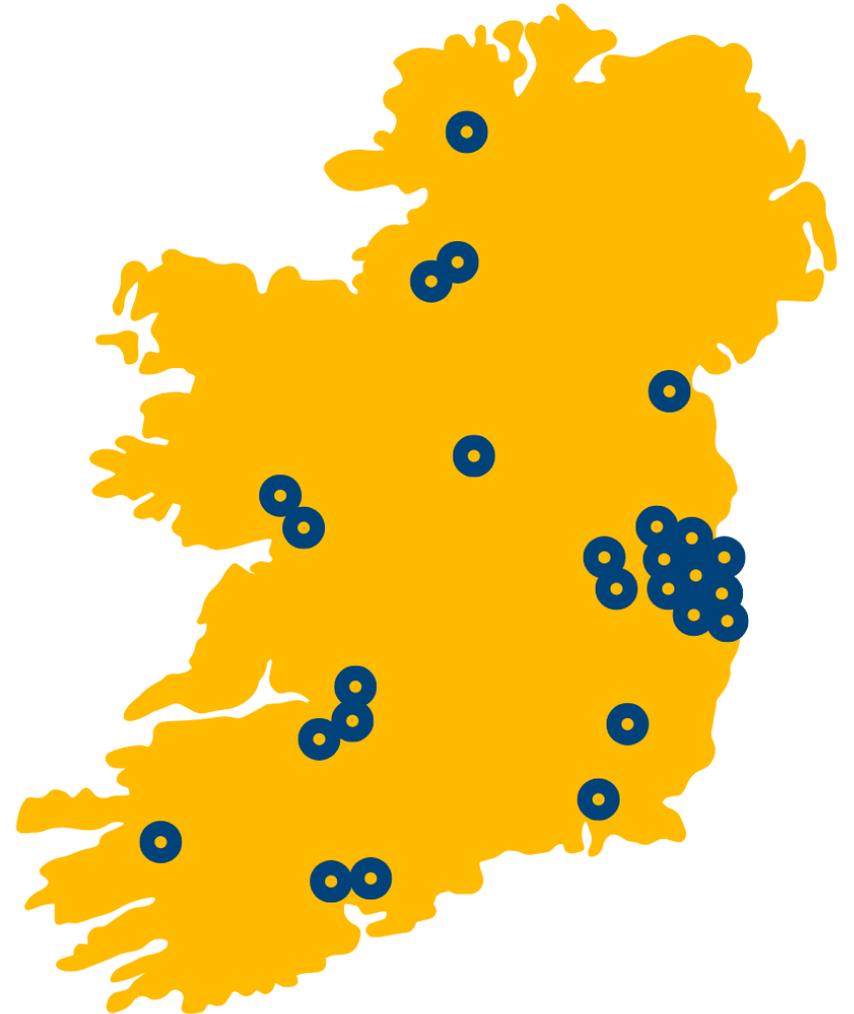
- **WHAT is a Tertiary Degree?**
- **Starts in and is designed by an Education and Training Board (ETB) / FET (No Fees Year 1)**
- **Continues in a Higher Education Institution (HEI) (Student Contribution Fees / SUSI)**
- **• Culminating in the award of a Degree.**

# The DARE & HEAR Schemes



# Where can I go to college?

- **Atlantic Technological University**
  - Donegal Campus
  - Galway Campus
  - Sligo Campus
  - St Angela's College
- **Dublin City University**
- **Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology**
- **Dundalk Institute of Technology**
- **Marino Institute of Education**
- **Mary Immaculate College**
- **Maynooth University**
- **Munster Technological University**
  - Cork Campus
  - Kerry Campus
- **National College of Art & Design**
- **National College of Ireland**
- **Pontifical University, Maynooth**
- **RCSI University of Medicine & Health Sciences**
- **South East Technological University**
  - Carlow and Wexford Campus
  - Waterford Campus
- **Technological University Dublin**
- **Technological University of the Shannon**
  - Athlone Campus
  - Limerick Campus
- **Trinity College Dublin**
- **University College Cork**
- **University College Dublin**
- **University of Galway**
- **University of Limerick**



# What is DARE?

The **Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)** is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school-leavers whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education.

DARE offers reduced points places to school leavers who as a result of having a disability have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education.

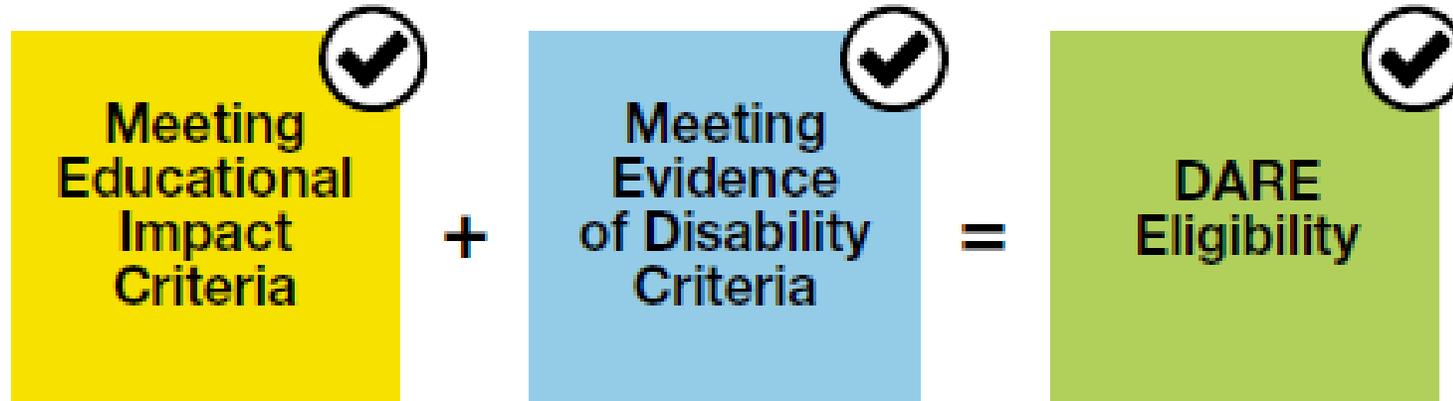
# Should I apply?

- If your disability has had a negative impact on your educational performance in school.
- You may not be able to meet the points for your preferred course due to the impact of your disability.
- You are under 23 years of age as at **1 January 2025**

# Disabilities eligible for consideration

- Autistic Spectrum Disorders (including Asperger's Syndrome)
- ADD / ADHD
- Blind / Vision Impaired
- Deaf / Hard of Hearing
- DCD – Dyspraxia
- Mental Health Condition
- Neurological Condition (Incl. Brain Injury & Epilepsy)
- Speech & Language Communication Disorder
- Significant Ongoing Illness
- Physical Disability
- Specific Learning Difficulty (Dyslexia & Dyscalculia)

# DARE Eligibility Criteria



- To be eligible for DARE you must meet **both** the DARE **educational impact** criteria and **DARE evidence of disability criteria**.

Applicants must provide the required evidence of their disability and provide an Educational Impact Statement from their school to be considered for DARE.

# Educational Impact

Has your disability impacted on a combination of the following?

1. Have you received **intervention or supports** in post-primary school?
2. Has it **impacted on your attendance** or regularly disrupted your school day?
3. Has it affected your **school experience and well-being**?
4. Has it impacted on **your learning or exam results**?
5. Has it caused any **other educational impact**?
6. Required for applicants with a Specific Learning Difficulty: is it severely impacting on your **literacy or numeracy skills**?

# Benefits of DARE

## Reduced Points

- An example: If the Leaving Certificate points for a course are 366 points, an eligible DARE applicant could be offered a place with a lower points score e.g. 356 points.
- Applicants need to **meet entry** and **programme requirements** to be **considered for a DARE reduced points offer**.
- The amount of points a particular course is reduced by is dependent on:
  - The overall number of places on the course
  - The number of reserved DARE places on the course
  - The number of DARE eligible applicants competing for these reserved places.
- The reduction in points for DARE places can vary every year.

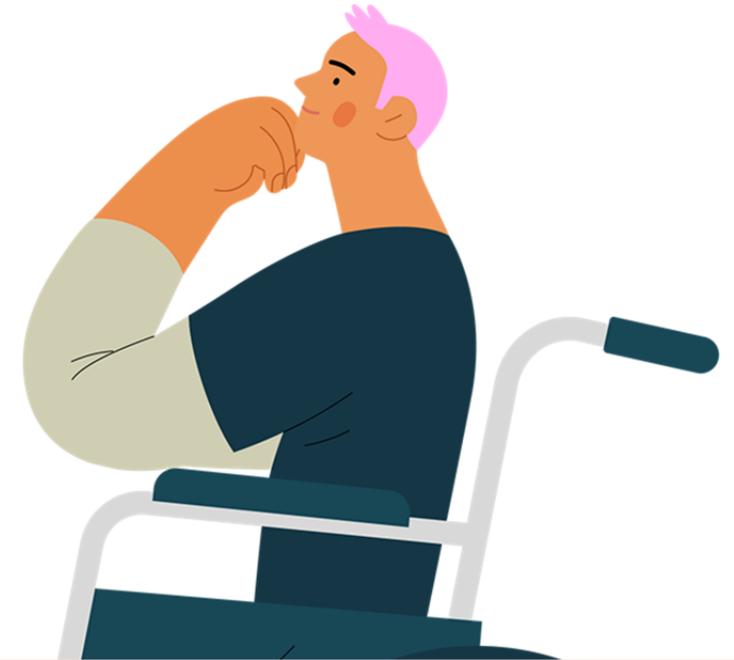
# Benefits of DARE

- Orientation Programmes
- Learning Support
- Assistive Technology
- Library Support
- Exam Accommodations
- Educational Support Worker
- Academic Tuition

- You don't have to be eligible for DARE to get support in college.
- A needs assessment is conducted to identify your specific support requirements.

# How do I apply?

1. Apply to CAO at [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie) by 17:00, 1 February 2026.
2. Review your DARE Handbook with your parents or guardians.
3. Complete Section A, the online Supplementary Information Form (SIF) and apply to DARE by answering Yes to Question 1 by 1 March 2026.
4. You should start gathering your documentation in a timely fashion, i.e. before 15 February.
5. Submit the Educational Impact Statement and Evidence of Disability to CAO by post by 10 March 2026.



# Section A: Supplementary Information Form (SIF)

## Section A: Applicant Information

- Completed by you online by 17:00 on 1 March 2026.
- Answer Yes to Q1 to apply to DARE and fully complete Questions 1-5. OR
  - Answer Yes to Q1(b) to apply to carry forward your DARE eligibility from 2025 to 2026.

## Section B: Educational Impact Statement (EIS)

- Educational Impact Statement completed by your school. Send to CAO by post by 10 March 2026.

## Section C: Evidence of a Disability (EOD)

- Completed by the appropriate professional. Send to CAO by post by 10 March 2026.

## Section D: School Statement

- Where applying under the Dyslexia/ Significant Literacy Difficulties category, applicants who do not have a Psychological Assessment Report identifying Dyslexia should submit Section D School Statement. Send to CAO by post by 10 March 2026.

# Section B: Educational Impact Statement (EIS)

**Provides information on how your disability has impacted on your second level education.**

- Download form.
- Complete the Educational Impact Statement (EIS) Checklist with your school.
- Your school will complete the rest following on from your responses to the EIS Checklist.

**This form needs to be completed by either your:**

- Guidance Counsellor
- Learning Support Teacher
- Year Head
- Visiting Teacher or
- Principal/Deputy Principal

The form **MUST BE** signed and stamped by school Principal/Deputy Principal. You must post Section B Educational Impact Statement (EIS) to the CAO by 10 March 2026



# Section C: Evidence of Disability (EOD)

**Provides verification of your disability and helps to determine 3rd level supports.**

- You can provide an **existing report**

**OR**

- Complete Section C **Evidence of Disability Form 2026.**

Get the form completed, signed and stamped by the appropriate professional or accompanied by their business card or headed paper.

Applicants with Dyslexia/Significant Literacy Difficulties or Dyscalculia/Significant Numeracy Difficulties are asked to provide a **full psychological assessment** of any age completed by an appropriately qualified psychologist instead of the Section C Evidence of Disability form. Where applying under the Dyslexia/Significant Literacy Difficulties category, applicants who do not have a Psychological Assessment Report identifying Dyslexia should submit Section D School Statement.

# Section C: Evidence of Disability (EOD)

## GP Verification

Your GP may be in a position to complete Section C Evidence of Disability, if they have the appropriate information on file from the Consultant/Specialist.

## Age of Reports

It is important to note that applicants applying under the following disability categories must provide a report that is less than 3 years old, i.e. dated after 1 February 2023.

- ADD/ADHD
- Mental Health Condition
- Significant Ongoing Illness



# Section C: Evidence of Disability (EOD)

## Psychological Assessment

Applicants with Dyslexia/Significant Literacy Difficulties or Dyscalculia/Significant Numeracy Difficulties must provide a full Psychological Assessment Report of any age completed by a psychologist.

Where applying under the Dyslexia/ Significant Literacy Difficulties category, applicants who do not have a Psychological Assessment Report identifying Dyslexia should submit Section D School Statement in support of their application.

**AND**

Applicants with Dyslexia/Significant Literacy Difficulties **MUST** also have two literacy attainment scores at or below the 10th percentile (Standard Score of 81 or below).

Applicants with Dyscalculia/Significant Numeracy Difficulties **MUST** also have one numeracy attainment score at or below the 10th percentile (Standard Score of 81 or below).

# Section C: Evidence of Disability (EOD)

*Continued*

These attainment scores can be from one (or a combination) of the following sources:

- 1) Scores from school-based attainment testing.
- 2) Scores from attainment tests carried out by a psychologist.

Testing must have been carried out on or after 1 February 2024 and all applicants must submit an EIS completed by their school.

You must post Evidence of Disability documentation to the CAO by 10 March 2026.

Please keep a copy of all documents that you post to CAO.



# What is HEAR?

The **Higher Education Access Route** is an admissions route for school leavers who for **social, financial or cultural** reasons are **under-represented** in **third level education**.

It was set up to ensure that all Leaving Certificate students have a fair and equal opportunity to progress to third level education.

# Helpful Tips

- Study the HEAR Handbook carefully with your parents / guardians.
- Complete the online application accurately.
- Accurate description of Parental Occupation.
  - Request the required supporting documentation early.
  - Send good quality copies of all pages of the correct documents.
  - Submit all supporting documents requested.
- Keep proof of postage.
- **Deadlines!**

# DARE and HEAR Timelines



1 February 2026 at 17:00	<b>Must have applied to CAO</b>
1 March 2026 at 17:00	<b>DARE &amp; HEAR closing date</b>
10 March 2026	<b>Supporting documents closing date</b>
Late June 2026	<b>Notification of eligibility</b>
Early July 2026	<b>Review and Appeals Application</b>
August 2026	<b>HEAR/DARE offers</b>
Late Aug /Early Sept 2026	<b>College Orientation</b>

# Useful Websites

- Course/Career Choice:
  - [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie)
  - [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie)
  - [www.careerdirections.ie](http://www.careerdirections.ie)
- Study:
  - [www.mocks.ie](http://www.mocks.ie)
  - [www.betterexaminations.ie](http://www.betterexaminations.ie)
  - [www.skool.ie](http://www.skool.ie)
  - [www.studyclix.ie](http://www.studyclix.ie)
- Support:
  - [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)
  - [www.npcpp.ie/helpline.html](http://www.npcpp.ie/helpline.html)
- DARE/HEAR:
  - [www.ahead.ie](http://www.ahead.ie)
  - [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie)
  - [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)
- Finance:
  - [www.studentfinance.ie](http://www.studentfinance.ie)
  - [www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie)
- Study Abroad:
  - [www.eunicas.ie](http://www.eunicas.ie)
  - [www.intstudy.com](http://www.intstudy.com)
  - [wwwucas.com](http://wwwucas.com)
- Qualifications:
  - [www.nfq.ie](http://www.nfq.ie)
  - [www.qqi.ie](http://www.qqi.ie)

# Questions

