



# 'Life after School' Information for 6<sup>th</sup> Year Students and Parents



## GENERAL CAO INFO

- ✓ The CAO (Central Applications Office) is the centralised system through which students apply to study Level 6, Level 7 or Level 8 courses at third level education
- ✓ A Level 6 course is usually a two year course which results in a higher certificate qualification
- ✓ A Level 7 course is usually a 3 year course which results in an ordinary degree
- ✓ A Level 8 course is a 3 - 4 year course which results in an honours degree
- ✓ Many opportunities exist to continue from a Level 6 to a Level 7 and from a Level 7 to a Level 8 with students being afforded the opportunity to enter at various year stages of the next level qualification. For example, a student who completes a 3 year ordinary level degree and attains the necessary results in their exams, may often progress to the final year of a Level 8 degree
- ✓ All CAO courses are delivered in Universities or Institutes of Technology

## TIPS FOR RESEARCHING COURSES

- ✓ [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie) and [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie) are excellent resources. Every course relevant to CAO or Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses available in the country are listed on these websites
- ✓ The websites listed above are starting points only. Always visit the college website to get more detail on a particular course
- ✓ Thoroughly read through the detail of every single module for every year of study on the course to ensure that this is the course for you
- ✓ As a rule of thumb, at least 6 out of every 10 modules mentioned should be of interest to a student if they were to be happy studying on a course
- ✓ If you don't understand a module content, simply google the meaning of the words
- ✓ Check class sizes, assessment types, college facilities, clubs and societies, transport links, accommodation requirements etc.
- ✓ Courses that have an industry placement specific to the course can be very valuable for students and a great addition to their CV. For example, in DCU their placements are for a 6 month duration, are paid and are called INTRA-ships
- ✓ Where possible go to college open days and information evenings or register for online events
- ✓ Network – ask people who may have experience of a particular course for information

## UNDERSTANDING CAO POINTS

Higher Level Grade	Points	Ordinary Level Grade	Points
H1	100		
H2	88		
H3	77		
H4	66		
H5	56	O1	56
H6	46	O2	46
H7	37	O3	37
H8	0	O4	28
		O5	20
		O6	12
		O7	0
		O8	0

## THREE VERY IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS WHEN RESEARCHING COURSES FOR THE CAO

### 1. MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COLLEGE

- Most universities, as a minimum entry requirement for Level 8 courses, require students to have 6 recognisable subjects with scores of 2 H5s and 4 O6/H7. They also usually require that each student has at least a pass grade in Maths, Irish and a modern language but this can vary from college to college and sometimes for courses within colleges. For Level 6 and Level 7 courses the requirements can vary.
- **Check each college minimum entry requirement which is available on Careers Portal under 'Entry Requirements' for every single course or on the individual college websites.**  
Students are shown how to do this during career classes with their Guidance Counsellor

### 2. SPECIAL SUBJECT REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIFIC COURSES

- Certain courses have specific subject requirements – for example, most Level 8 Engineering courses require a H4 in Maths; Primary School Teaching courses require a H4 in Irish etc;
- **Check each course entry requirement which is available on Careers Portal under 'Entry Requirements' on each course page or on the individual college websites**

### 3. CAO POINTS

- The CAO computer will add up a student's **6 best subject results** to get a student's CAO points
- A student does not have to use the minimum requirement subjects for CAO points if they are not amongst the student's highest scoring subjects
- LCVP can be used for CAO points but not as a minimum entry requirement subject because it is not considered a recognisable subject for minimum entry requirements. A student will need 6 subjects besides LCVP to meet the minimum entry requirements for most Level 8 courses in Universities and Institutes of Technology

## IMPORTANT DATES FOR CAO APPLICATION

- ✓ Applications open on Tuesday November 5<sup>th</sup> 2021 at 12.00pm
- ✓ Students **MUST** register with CAO **before 5.15 pm on February 1<sup>st</sup> 2022** (FEE - €45)
- ✓ Early online applications can be made before 5.15pm on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2022 for at a discounted fee of €30
- ✓ **Restricted courses** (those courses that require a portfolio, audition, interview or HPAT exam) **must be on the application form by February 1<sup>st</sup>**. **They cannot be added after this date**
- ✓ Applications can be edited up until 5.15pm on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2022
- ✓ The CAO will accept late applications up until 5.15pm on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 but restrictions apply and a late fee will be charged
- ✓ CAO change of mind facility opens on May 5<sup>th</sup> 2022 and closes at 5.15pm on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2022.
- ✓ All dates and deadlines are available on [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)
- ✓ **Important note**: these deadlines and times are strictly adhered to by the CAO. It is the students responsibility to meet these deadlines. If a deadline is not met, there is nothing that can be done to rectify the situation

## MAKING AN APPLICATION

- To make an application, go to [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)
- A demo CAO application can be accessed at: <http://www.cao.ie/index.php?page=demo>
- When entering personal details on the CAO application form please check that the information is accurate
- Take note of your CAO application number which will be given to you once you apply and remember to quote it in all communications with CAO
- Ensure that the email address you give the CAO is one that is checked regularly
- Some students might prefer to use a parent's email address

## INDICATING YOUR INTENTION TO APPLY FOR DARE, HEAR, NUI IRISH/LANGUAGE EXEMPTION, SUSI

- **If you are applying for DARE, HEAR, NUI LANGUAGE EXEMPTION or SUSI you must indicate your intention to do so by ticking the relevant box on the CAO application form.**
- **Supporting documents for HEAR and DARE do not have to be submitted to the CAO until 5.15pm on March 15<sup>th</sup> 2022.**
- DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) allows students to apply for reduced points access to college on the basis of physical, mental or intellectual disability/illness. Eligibility criteria can be found at <https://accesscollege.ie/dare/providing-evidence-of-your-disability/>
- The school is responsible for filling out the 'Educational Impact Statement' for DARE applicants which will be done well in advance of the supporting documents deadline.
- HEAR (Higher Education Access Route) allows students to apply for reduced points access to college on the basis of socio-economic disadvantage. Eligibility indicators can be found at <https://accesscollege.ie/hear/making-an-application/eligibility-indicators/>
- SUSI is the government grant scheme that gives financial aid to students from lower income families. The eligibility reckoner can be found at <https://susi.ie/eligibility-reckoner-app-irish/index.html> and the income thresholds can be found at <https://susi.ie/undergraduate-income-threshold-and-grant-award-rates/>

- SUSI grant applications usually open in April each year. The Guidance Counsellors will inform students once the date is issued. Each student who wishes to apply will then have to apply for their grant through the SUSI website [www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie)
- National University of Ireland Irish language exemption applicants need to complete the NUI language exemption form which can be found at <http://www.nui.ie/college/docs/exemption.pdf>. This form, along with the supporting documents, can be processed at any point. National University of Ireland universities includes UCD, UCC, UCG and Maynooth.

**Please Note:** Students with an **Irish language exemption** because of a diagnosis of dyslexia can automatically apply for a modern language exemption without the need for further testing. Even if a student is studying a modern language, they can apply for an NUI modern language exemption if they feel they run the risk of failing this language in the Leaving Cert.

Students with Irish/modern language exemptions applying to institutions outside of the NUI need to check with each individual higher education institution with regard to their particular exemption rules. A list of contact details for all the CAO Higher Education Institutions can be found at <http://www.cao.ie/index.php?page=hei>

## HOW THE CAO WORKS

- When applying through the CAO, there are two lists with ten options each – 1 for Level 8 courses, 1 for Level 6 and 7 courses. Twenty options in total.
- Students fill in their choices using the course's individual course code. Each college has a two letter code followed by a 3 digit course code. For example, UCD's college code is DN and its science degree's numerical code is 200 so Science in UCD's code is DN200.
- The CAO aims to give applicants their highest choice from 1 - 10 (not necessarily the course requiring the highest number of CAO points) so it is very important that students list their choices in **STRICT ORDER OF PREFERENCE**.
- When the results come out in August/September 2022, the CAO will issue offers in a series of rounds – usually 3, sometimes more.
- In any given round, students can be offered a course from their Level 8 list AND their Level 6/7 list. Only **ONE** offer can be accepted per round.
- Once a student is offered a choice, all choices beneath that offer on a student's list are automatically deleted from the CAO computer, as the CAO presumes that the student listed their choices in order of preference.
- Students should use the top 2-3 spaces on each list for dream courses, the middle 2-4 for realistic choices and the bottom 2-3 spaces for banker courses, that is, courses that a student is likely to get the points for even if the Leaving Certificate does not go as planned.
- The bottom choices should be approx. 200 CAO points lower than the dream course points, unless of course a student's dream course is 200 points lower than they are capable of scoring
- **REMEMBER:** CAO points for courses are based on supply and demand, not quality of education.

## APPLYING FOR COLLEGE IN THE UK

- Any student wishing to go to college in the UK needs to set up an account at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) and follow the step by step process outlined on the site
- Application deadlines vary but most deadlines are in January
- Students can research courses and apply for courses through the UCAS website
- Students applying for college in the UK need to submit a personal statement
- Please make sure to let your English teacher and Guidance Counsellor read any personal statements before submission
- Do not submit the first draft
- It is advisable that a student applying to the UK set up her UCAS account and prepare her personal statement as soon as possible
- Be aware because UK is now outside of the EU, for most courses substantial course fees apply as Irish students are considered “international students”
- As with Irish courses, please be sure to double check entry requirements for each course. This information is generally available on UCAS. Sometimes a student will have to contact a college directly
- If any student is confused about the offer system in the UK, please seek an appointment with your Guidance Counsellor without delay

## APPLYING FOR COLLEGE IN EUROPE

- ✓ Many colleges in mainland Europe deliver undergraduate degree programmes in various disciplines, through English
- ✓ It is arguably easier to get into a European college as they take in far larger cohorts of students than is generally the case in Ireland. Please be aware, however, that anecdotal evidence would suggest that while it might be easier to gain a place in some European colleges, the workload, once students begin to study is often greater than it is in Ireland for comparable courses
- ✓ In some European countries there are no course fees for EU citizens (Finland) or cheaper fees than Ireland (Netherlands).
- ✓ Before making a decision to study abroad, be sure to factor in accommodation and travel costs.
- ✓ Deadlines for application to European colleges are mostly in January but it is recommended that students interested in applying, do so well before the deadlines
- ✓ Applications for undergraduate courses in Europe can be made through individual college websites or at [www.eunicas.ie](http://www.eunicas.ie)
- ✓ EUNICAS is an Irish operated website that allows Irish students to register for a small fee of €38. EUNICAS then walks students through the process of researching and applying for up to 8 courses in Europe
- ✓ Some courses in Europe require students to do online tests and/or submit a personal statement
- ✓ Please let your English teacher and Guidance Counsellor read any personal statements before submission.
- ✓ Do not submit the first draft
- ✓ As with Irish courses, please be sure to double check entry requirements for each course. This information is generally available on the EUNICAS site. Sometimes a student will have to contact a college directly

## Applying for a Post Leaving Cert Course (PLC)

- Post Leaving Certificate courses are Level 5 courses and they usually last for one year
- Progression is possible from PLC courses to Level 6 courses and in some cases to first year on a Level 7 or 8 degree
- Students choose to do PLC courses for a variety of reasons:
  - she may feel she is not ready yet for university
  - she wants to experience a subject first to be sure she will like it – for example undertaking a PLC in Pre-University Law
  - they don't believe they will get the CAO points required for college
  - their subject selection does not meet the minimum entry requirements for their preferred course
- Usual entry requirements for a PLC are O6/H7s in 5 subjects, to include Maths. However, exceptions are made and it is very important to check with the course director of each course if a student is concerned about entry requirements
- PLC courses are delivered through Colleges of Further Education and courses are offered in a wide variety of disciplines
- Students apply directly to the Colleges of Further Education, usually in January.
- Courses can be researched through Careersportal or through the individual college websites (see tips for researching courses above)
- Further Education Colleges convenient to St Dominic's College include the Liberties College in the city centre, Coláiste Íde in Finglas or further afield, Dunboyne College of Further Education
- A very useful website is [www.fetchcourses.ie](http://www.fetchcourses.ie)

## Applying for an Apprenticeship

- An apprenticeship is a training and education programme which mixes learning in a college or training centre with work-based learning in a company. At least half of apprenticeship learning is done on the job
- As an apprentice, you earn while you learn. You receive a formal employment contract and you are paid a salary during your apprenticeship training
- Apprenticeships can last between two and four years. There are 56 different types of apprenticeship available, in 13 different industries. These range from craft industry apprenticeships in metal, wood, glass, clay and textiles to those in the construction, electrical and engineering sectors
- There are also apprenticeships in ICT, finance and hospitality including software development, accounting technician and commis chef
- Apprenticeships also lead to internationally-recognised qualifications ranging from Level 6 to Level 10
- For further information go to [www.apprenticeship.ie](http://www.apprenticeship.ie)