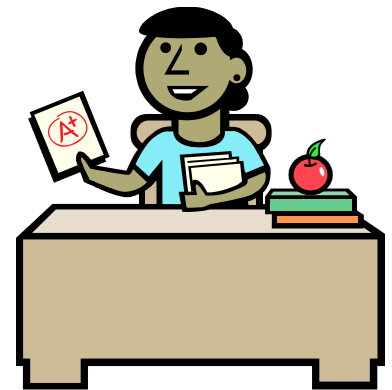


# St Columba's College

## Careers Information for Leaving Certificate Parents 2024/2025

Ms Eithne Sproule  
Ms Catherine McNulty  
Guidance Counsellors



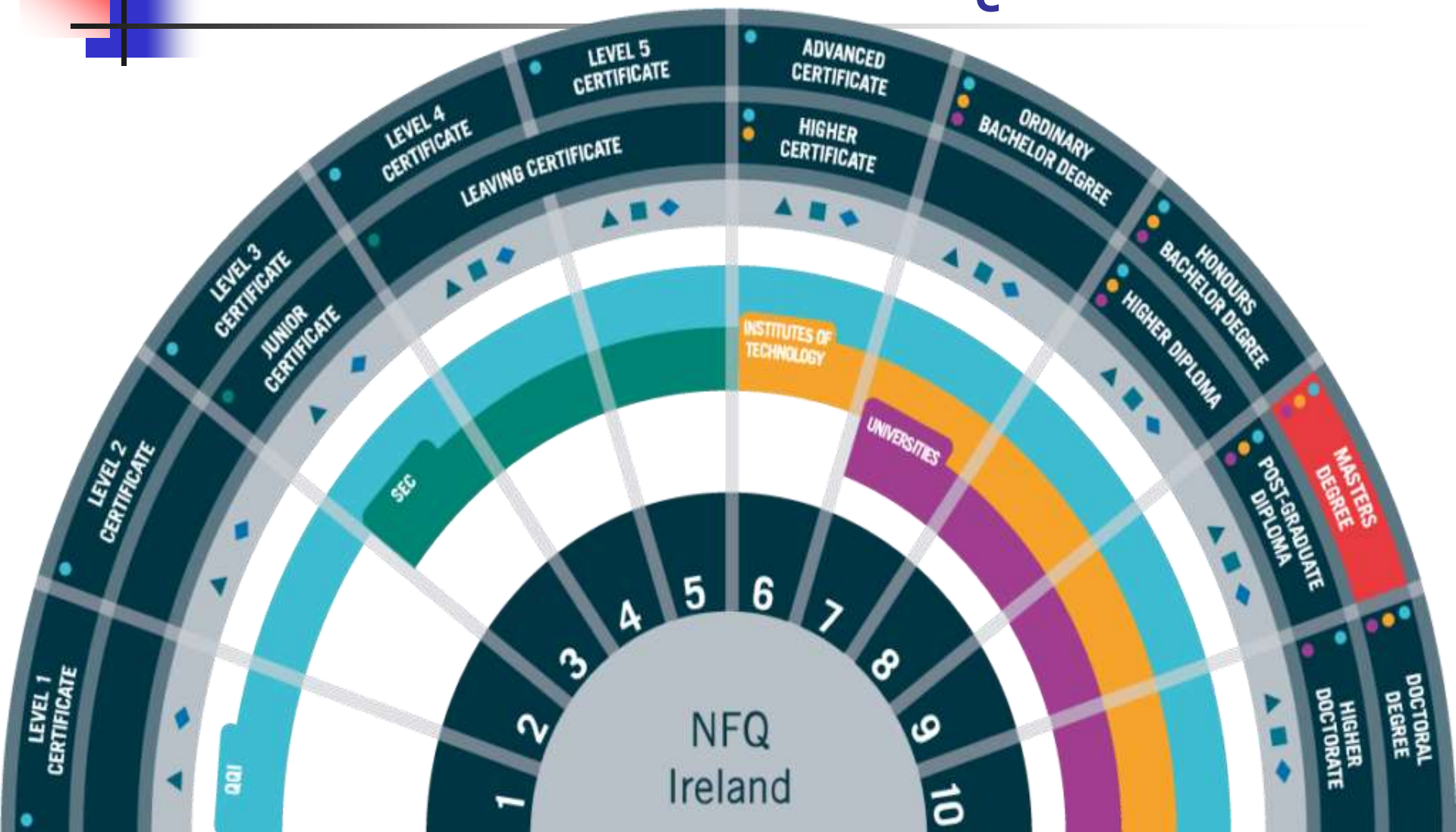


# AGENDA

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- SUSI Grant Process Kathleen Browne
- Options available after the Leaving Certificate
- The UCAS System
- The CAO system
- HEAR/DARE Access Programmes
- Scholarships

# National Framework of Qualifications





# Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Courses (FET)

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- Short, practical courses designed to give you skills you'll need in the workplace.
- Also can be used to progress to 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Colleges
- Work placement included.
- Internationally recognised.
- Usually 1 year fulltime: QQI Level 5
- Second year: QQI Level 6
- A full QQI award is 8 modules and can be potentially worth 380/390 CAO points.
- Grant can be obtained.



# Local PLC providers

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- Finn Valley College (3)
- Errigal College (3)
- Donegal ETB
- Sligo College of Further Education (28)
- Cavan Institute (60)
- Monaghan Institute (50+)

## Reasons for choosing to do a PLC.....some

- Age.....not ready to leave home
- Unsure about future career area
- To improve points total
- To try out a particular subject area before committing to college
- To gain access to college
- To gain valuable transferable skills
- To gain employment



# Traineeships (Donegal ETB)

---

- A programme of structured training which combines learning in the workplace and in an education/training setting.
- Up to 2 years in duration.
- Usually free except where participants have to buy their own equipment eg Beauty Therapy
- May receive a training allowance, travel allowance or accommodation allowance
- Start at various times of the year

## Benefits:

- Develop cutting edge skills in the workplace
- Improve employability and career options
- May be a chance to try an industry and then continue training/education in that field



# Apprenticeships (ETB + Technological Universities)

---

- A full time training programme combining learning in the workplace and in an education/training facility
- Duration 2-4 years depending on trade/occupation
- Earn while you learn model- 7 phases on/off the job
- Phases 1,3,5 and 7 with Employer
- Phases 2,4 and 6 in Training Centre/Technological University
- Pro-rata fees must be paid if off-the-job training takes place in a Higher Education Institute eg ATU Donegal for Electrical
- Location of the training provider depends on trade/occupation

## Benefits

Gain skills, practical work experience and qualification while earning a wage.

Valuable industry links/contacts.

Internationally recognised

## TOP TIP

**Start looking for an employer now**

# ETB/SOLAS



## ■ **Traineeships** (Currently in Donegal ETB)

- **Marine Engineering**
- **Beauty Therapist**
- **Hairdressing**
- **Business & Professional Admin.**
- **Public Works Operations & Maintenance**
- **Engineering Operations**
- **Healthcare Support**
- **Intellectual Disability Practice**
- **Outdoor Activity Instructor**
- **Horticulture**
- **Donegal Weaving**
- **Communication Systems Installation**
- **Medical/Legal Administration**

**(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

To apply:

- [www.fetchcourses.ie](http://www.fetchcourses.ie)

## ■ **Apprenticeships**

### ■ **40+ in the following fields:**

- **Construction**
- **Electrical**
- **Engineering**
- **Motor**
- **Finance**
- **Accounting**
- **Hospitality**
- **ICT**
- **Insurance**
- **Logistics**
- **Biopharma**
- **Property Services**
- 14 more currently being developed

■ [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie) (link)

■ [www.apprenticeship.ie](http://www.apprenticeship.ie)

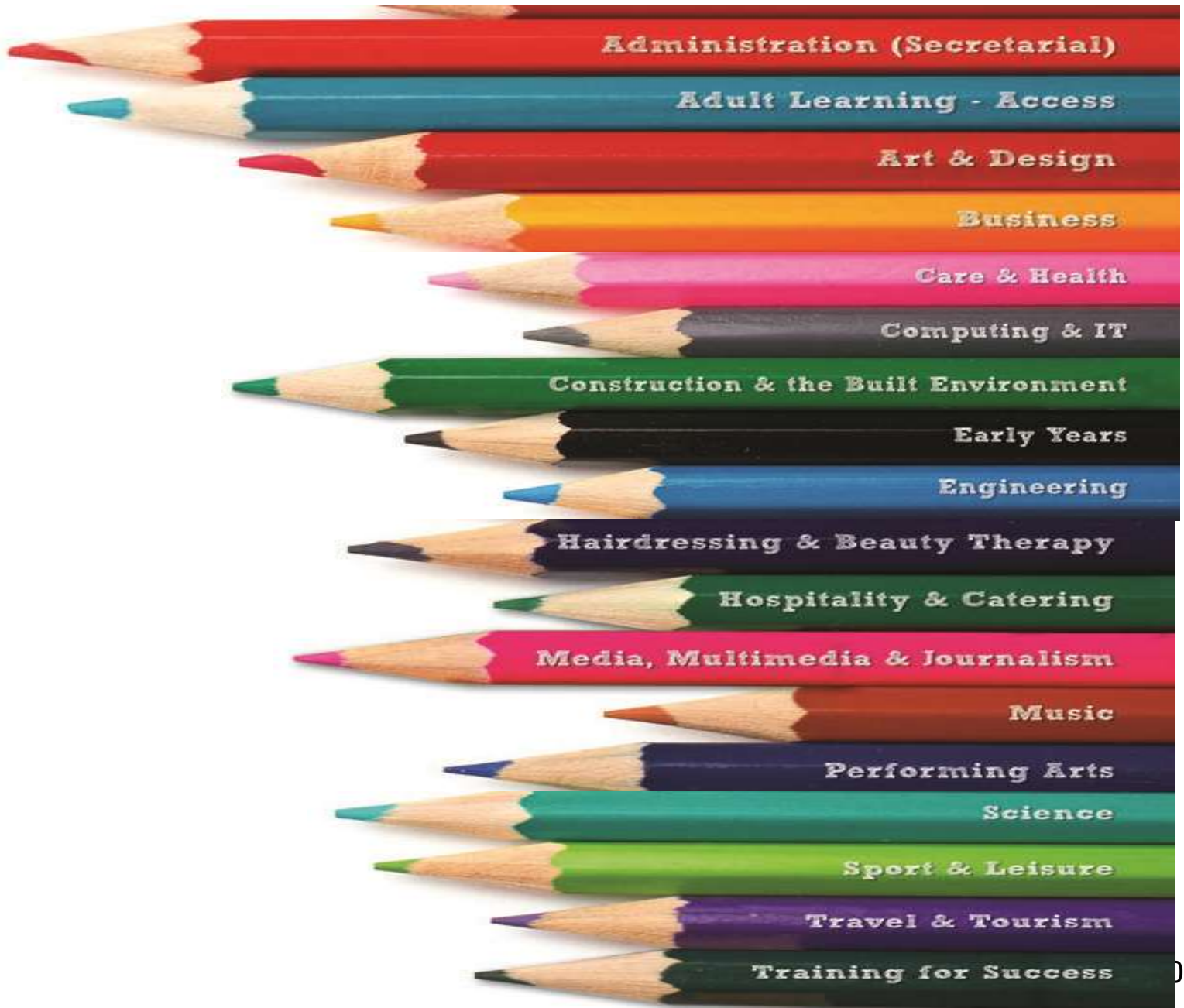
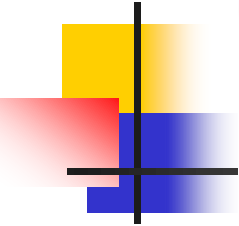




# North West Regional College (Derry, Limavady, Strabane)

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- Online Direct Application to college itself (Small number of courses apply through UCAS)
- 18 different subject areas
- Level 1, 2, Level 3, Level 4, Level 5 Higher National Diploma/Foundation Degrees (Add 2 for equivalent NFQ level)
- Work placement and continuous assessment
- No fees for Level 2,3.....but therefore **no grant**
- Level 4,5 HND/Foundation Degree £2,500....SUSI Maintenance grant available. Deposit £200.
- Can be a route to Employment / University
- Very useful as an alternative entry route for some high demand/points courses eg Physio, OT, Nursing, PE teaching.....
- Traineeships and Apprenticeships NI (Employer must be in N.I.)
- Entry Requirements for Level 3: **4 Ordinary level 05s or above**  
Level 4,5: **UCAS Tariff Points**



Administration (Secretarial)

Adult Learning - Access

Art & Design

Business

Care & Health

Computing & IT

Construction & the Built Environment

Early Years

Engineering

Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy

Hospitality & Catering

Media, Multimedia & Journalism

Music

Performing Arts

Science

Sport & Leisure

Travel & Tourism

Training for Success



# Teagasc Courses

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- Equine
- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Pig Production
- Poultry Production
- Horticulture
- Food
- Machinery



Courses available from Level 5-Level 8 in partnership with Technological Universities

Some courses are offered through CAO and some are applied for direct to the Agricultural College.

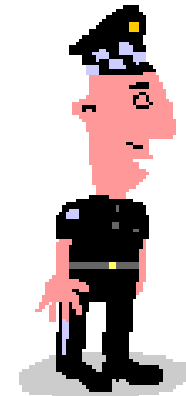


# GARDA

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## Entry requirements

- Must be 18-50 years of age
- 5 O6s in Leaving Certificate or a Merit/Distinction in Leaving Certificate Applied
- Hold an NFQ minimum Level 5 qualification
- Be proficient in English *OR* Irish *OR* Both
- [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)
- [www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie)



# Defence Forces

Careers in the Defence Forces include-

- Cadetship in: Army, Navy & Air Corps

Min Entry Req: Age 18-26

3 H5s and

3 O6/H6

(incl. Maths, Irish, English, 3<sup>rd</sup> language)

- Apprenticeships:
  - Aircraft Mechanic
  - Fitter/Armourer
  - Heavy Vehicle Mechanic
- Recruits (age 18-29)





# Options after LCA (Leaving Cert Applied)

---

LCA students are eligible to apply for all of the previously mentioned options:

- PLC courses (Tertiary Degrees)
- Traineeships
- Apprenticeships
- NWRC Level 1,2 and 3 courses
- Garda
- Defence forces (Recruits/Apprenticeships)
- Teagasc L5 courses

In order to progress to a Higher Education Institute, they must first successfully complete a PLC (QQI Level 5) course

ATU Letterkenny also offer an Access Course suitable for LCA students



## Tertiary Degrees (NEW)

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- Alternative access to college places
  - No points required
  - Interview based selection process
  - SUSI Grant available
  - Start with a PLC course (Free)
  - Then progress to a Technological University
  - Donegal ETB and ATU offer:
    - BSc Industrial Laboratory Science (L7)
    - Bachelor of Business (L8)
    - BSc (Hons) in Sustainable Engineering Technologies (L8)
    - Level 5 Access Route into BSc General Nursing (Year 1)
- APPLY VIA [www.fetchcourses.ie](http://www.fetchcourses.ie)



# UCAS

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- Application System for all Universities in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland & Wales
- Queens University, Belfast.
- Ulster University (Magee Derry, Coleraine, Belfast)
- DOES NOT INCLUDE  
North West Regional College  
St. Mary's, Belfast  
(Direct Application)





# UCAS Application on-line

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- Personal details
- Up to 5 choices (in no particular order of preference)
- Employment details— paid only
- Educational details – J.C. results, L. C. subjects and levels.
- Important to check Entry Requirements (JC and LC)
- Personal statement (Very important)
- Predicted grades from teachers and entered by GC
- Reference done by Guidance Counsellor
- Cost of application £28.50



# Important dates for UCAS

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- **29<sup>th</sup> January 2025**- Closing date for UCAS applications. (15<sup>th</sup> Oct Medicine, Vet, Dentistry, Oxford, Cambridge)
- However we endeavour to have all applications completed by early January and have given students a deadline for their first draft of Personal Statement (Nov 6th)
- After application has been submitted, Universities and Colleges begin sending decisions to applicants.



# What happens your application?

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- All colleges you have applied to will receive a copy of your application (same personal statement).
- Students are able to check on their application through their Hub on the UCAS website.
- Students may be called for interviews/asked to write essays etc. **(Important to check e-mails regularly)**
- Medicine: In person interview if selected
- Nursing interviews for Ulster University and QUB will be **on-line** from Feb
- Allied Healthcare: Applicants will sit an Assessment Test
- Paramedics: in person interview
- Dietetics: TBC
- Competency based Pharmacy interviews for Ulster and QUB in person



# Offers and Acceptances

---

- A response will be received from each college applied to, saying whether the applicant has been successful or not – the date of replies will vary.
- Offers are **conditional** (there will be certain grades/UCAS tariff points required)
- Only when you have received all replies back, do you have to decide which course you will keep as your Firm choice (no. 1) and which one as your Insurance choice (back-up). Any other offers you are holding must be declined.
- If the applicant obtains the Conditions (required grades/tariff points) in the Leaving Cert, they will be awarded their place



# Fees for ROI Students

---

Northern Ireland: £4,750

England: £9,250

Wales: £9,250

Scotland: £9,250

**No fees: Nursing, Paramedic Science & Allied Healthcare courses in Northern Ireland (NHS funded)**

**\*\*\*\*Student Loan option\*\*\*\***

**International Students/Rest of EU: £16,000**



# CAO Agenda

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- General points regarding the CAO.
- Entry Requirements and the Points System.
- Making an application.
- How places are allocated by CAO
- After submitting the application.

# CAO – General Info.

- Centralised application system for 44 Irish 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions, including some **fee-paying** colleges.
- CAO handbook is online at [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)
- Every 6<sup>th</sup> year will be given the opportunity to register in class in November (Choices not essential at this stage)
- **HIGHLY ADVISE THAT THEY TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO AVOID COSTLY MISTAKES**
- **Early discounted price €30 (before JAN 20<sup>th</sup>)**

<b>Online Application</b>	<b>Fee</b>	<b>Payment Method</b>
Normal (Feb 1 <sup>st</sup> )	€45	Credit/Laser Card
Late(May 1 <sup>st</sup> )	€60	Credit/Laser Card
<b>Change of Mind</b>	<b>No Fee</b>	---

# CAO – General Info.

- There are now 3 types of courses students can apply for under the National Framework of Qualifications.
- These are applied for on 2 separate lists:

## 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*'.
- These courses cannot be applied for after February 1<sup>st</sup> due to extra assessments required eg Portfolio/Audition



# ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

These must be satisfied before “points” are considered.

## Minimum Entry Requirements

E.g. University of Galway  
Bachelor of Arts

- Present 6 subjects
- At least 2 H5s and 4 O6/H7
- Pass in:
  - ✓ Irish
  - ✓ English
  - ✓ A third Language
  - ✓ 3 other subjects

## Specific Subject Requirements

E.g.s

- Engineering(UCD)  
Minimum H4 Maths and H6 in a Lab. Science
- Veterinary Medicine(UCD)  
H5 Chemistry
- Global Business -French (DCU)  
H4 French

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



# Points System

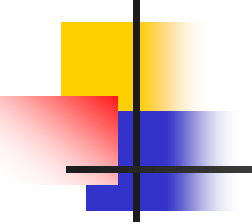
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Generally in the CAO system there are more qualified applicants than there are course places, therefore a selection system is needed.

Selection system used in Irish 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Colleges is the **POINTS SYSTEM**

- Points are calculated from **ONE** sitting of the Leaving Certificate only.
- Points total is calculated from **SIX** best subjects (any six incl. LCVP))
- Entry Requirements can be satisfied over more than one sitting of the Leaving Certificate. Eg. Repeat a single subject and combine it with previous years points in order to be eligible to apply
- If applying for Medicine, both points and requirements must be from same year

# POINTS ALLOCATION



<u>Marks</u>		<u>H</u>		<u>O</u>	
90-100	H1	100		01	56
80-89	H2	88		02	46
70-79	H3	77		03	37
60-69	H4	66		04	28
50-59	H5	56		05	20
40-49	H6	46		06	12
30-39	H7	37		07	0
0-29	H8	0		08	0

<b>LCVP Points</b>	
<b>Distinction</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Merit</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Pass</b>	<b>28</b>

\*25 Bonus Points for Higher Maths if Grade is H6 or higher\*

**Science – UCD**  
100 places to be offered

Applicant Position	Points Score
1	560
2	535
3	525
4	520
5	510
6	510
7	505
8	500
9	490
--	--
--	--
15	455
16	445
17	440
18	435
19	420
20	410
21	405
--	--
--	--
98	340
99	335
<b>100</b>	<b>330</b>
101	325
102	315
103	310
104	305
105	295
--	--
--	--
182	265

← Last  
place to  
be filled

**Course Cut Off Points = 330**

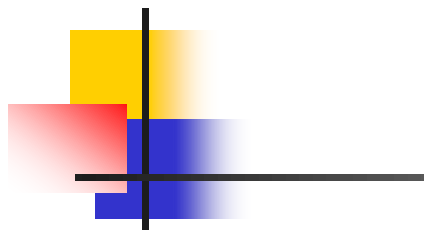
**Science – Maynooth**  
100 places to be offered

Applicant Position	Points Score
1	560
2	535
3	525
4	520
5	510
6	510
7	505
8	500
9	490
--	--
--	--
15	455
16	445
17	440
18	435
19	420
20	410
21	405
--	--
--	--
98	345
99	340
100	335
101	335
102	335
103	315
104	310
105	305
--	--
--	--
182	265

← Random  
Selection to  
be used

**Course Cut Off Points = 335\***

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



<b>1 Dream</b>
<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>
<b>5 Realistic</b>
<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>
<b>9 Bankers</b>
<b>10</b>



# After making Application

---

- Some students may be called for extra assessments eg Portfolio, Assessment Test, Audition, Interview, HPAT etc
- May: Receive Statement of Application Record – check details carefully online... **TICK BOX TO INDICATE YOU HAVE DONE SO**
- Change of Mind facility becomes available (Early May)
- Final closing date for entering choices **JULY 1st**
- Leaving Certificate Results are sent to CAO (August)
- Places are allocated and offered online.
- Students accept, reject or defer offered places.
- Further rounds of offers are made until all course places are filled.



# Timeline for August (Approx)

---

- Mid-Late August: Results issued by SEC
- 3-4 days later: Offers from CAO & UCAS

Between Registration, Accommodation, Induction, Subsequent CAO offers.....this is a very busy time!



# Access Routes to Higher Education

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- HEAR
- DARE
- DCU Access Programme





# HEAR

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- Higher Education Access Route
- A 3<sup>rd</sup> level admissions scheme for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who have completed the leaving certificate



## What colleges participate?

---

- DCU
- TU Dublin
- University of Galway
- Maynooth University
- TCD
- UCC
- UCD
- UL
- RCSI
- Marino Institute of Education
- Mary I. College, Limerick
- St. Angela's College Sligo
- ATU (All campuses)
- TUS
- Dundalk I.T.
- MTU
- MTU
- TUS
- National College of Ireland
- IADT, Dun Laoghaire
- SE Technological University



# What are the benefits of applying?

---

- Students who apply for the HEAR programme compete for a number of **reduced-point places** in each of the participating colleges.  
Other benefits include Post-Entry support such as:
  - Personal support: Student advisor, mentoring, social gatherings
  - Academic support: Extra tuition, study skills, exams preparation
  - Orientation Programme to introduce you to the college
  - Financial: Bursary when available, advice regarding grants/scholarships



---

N.B.

You must still meet the minimum course entry requirements to be considered for one of the reduced point places



# HEAR indicators: Should I apply?

---

1. Income ( €46,790 €51,325 €55,630) (2023)
2. Medical Card/ G.P. Visit Card (Valid to Dec 2024)
3. Means Tested Social Welfare Payment (2023)

\*\*\*\*\*

4. Socio-economic Group (Employment Status, Type, Job Title)
5. DEIS school (Not Applicable to St. Columba's)
6. Area profile-concentrated disadvantage

Applicants must meet No.1 and two others with at least one being from No. 4/6.



# HEAR Timeline

---

- FEB 1<sup>st</sup> 2025: Apply to CAO
- MAR 1<sup>st</sup> 2025: Complete HEAR application
- March 15<sup>th</sup> 2025: Submission of additional documents eg. Social Welfare document/P21
- **VERY STRICT DEADLINES**



# DARE

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- Disability Access Route to Education
- DARE is a supplementary admissions scheme which offers college places on reduced points to school leavers with disabilities



# What colleges participate?

---

- ATU (All campuses)
- TUS
- MTU
- SE Technological University
- TU Dublin
- University of Galway
- Maynooth University
- Pontifical University,  
Maynooth
- Marino Institute of Ed.
- DCU
- Nat. College of Ireland
- R.C.S.I.
- TCD
- UCC
- UCD
- UL and Mary Imm.
- St. Angela's College Sligo
- Dundalk I.T.
- I.A.D.T.





# Who should apply?

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- School leavers who have the ability to benefit from and succeed in higher education but who may not be able to get the points for their preferred course due to the impact of a disability/illness/challenge.



# What disabilities are eligible?

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- Asperger's/ASD
- ADD/ADHD\*
- Blind/Vision impaired
- Deaf/Hearing impaired
- Developmental Communication Disorder-  
Dyspraxia
- Significant Ongoing Illness\*
- Mental Health Conditions\*
- Neurological Conditions(incl. Epilepsy & brain injury,
- Speech & Language Communication Disorder
- Physical Disability
- Dyslexia/Significant Literacy Difficulties
- Dyscalculia/Significant Numeracy Difficulties

\*Reports must be less than 3 years old (Dated after Feb 1st 2022)



# How to apply?

---

Feb 1<sup>st</sup>: Apply for CAO

Mar 1<sup>st</sup>: Complete online Supplementary Information Form. Indicate that you wish to be considered for DARE.

March 15th: Return completed Educational Impact Statement and completed Evidence of Disability Form



# CAO Timetable 2025 Entry

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- **1<sup>st</sup> February, 2025**
  - Closing date for receipt of normal applications
- **1<sup>st</sup> May, 2025**
  - Closing date for receipt of late applications
- **Before/By 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2025**
  - Receive Statement of Application Record **CHECK**
- **5<sup>th</sup> May, 2025**
  - Online change of mind facility becomes available.
- **1<sup>st</sup> July, 2025**
  - Latest date for receipt of change of mind form in CAO.
- **Late August, 2025**
  - Expected date of first round offers.



# Scholarships

---

- Huge range of scholarships available eg. Sport, Performing Arts, Socio-Economic Background, Academic (usually not applied for)
- Important to check individual colleges
- Effort required from students
- Some to note locally:
  - Optum
  - 1916 Bursary
  - SVP Education & Training Bursary Fund
- <https://careersportal.ie/scholarships>



# Accommodation

---

- Challenge
- Cause of concern/stress
- Students must take responsibility and register for lotteries/book rooms
- Some require deposits
- Do not need to wait for offer of place
- Keep checking college websites



# Guidance Appointments

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- All 6<sup>th</sup> years are seen one-to-one
- Number of appointments vary
- Patience is required
- Anyone who requests an appointment is accommodated ASAP
- Many queries are addressed during class time
- Responsibility
- Communication



# Keep Options Open

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- Plan A, B, C.....
- Plan for all eventualities
- Research is key
- No rush
- Plenty of time to decide
- Be strategic....eg. use CAO and UCAS for different subject areas





# Study & Motivation Workshop

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**When: Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December (AM)**

## **Inspire Education**

- **Self Belief & Success Visualisation**
- **Revision Strategies relevant to student learning preferences**
- **Exam Techniques**
- **Planning and Time Management**
- **Physiological and Psychological preparation in the run up to exams and coping with anxiety/stress**
  - The price includes:
- **Study Skills Workbook – used for activities on the day and as a future reference guide**
- **A2 Revision Planner – to aid with the exam planning**
- **Access to a pre-recorded Parent Study Skills Support Webinar**

**Cost: €10**



# William Glasser

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- Educationalist
- Psychologist

**“Education  
begins at birth  
and continues  
all our lives”**