Naas CBS

Meánscoil Iognáid Rís

6th Year Parent/Guardian Information Evening

Ms M. Nolan & Ms C. Carter

Guidance Counsellors

6th Year Guidance Class Groupings by Religion/LCVP Class

Roughly 86 students each

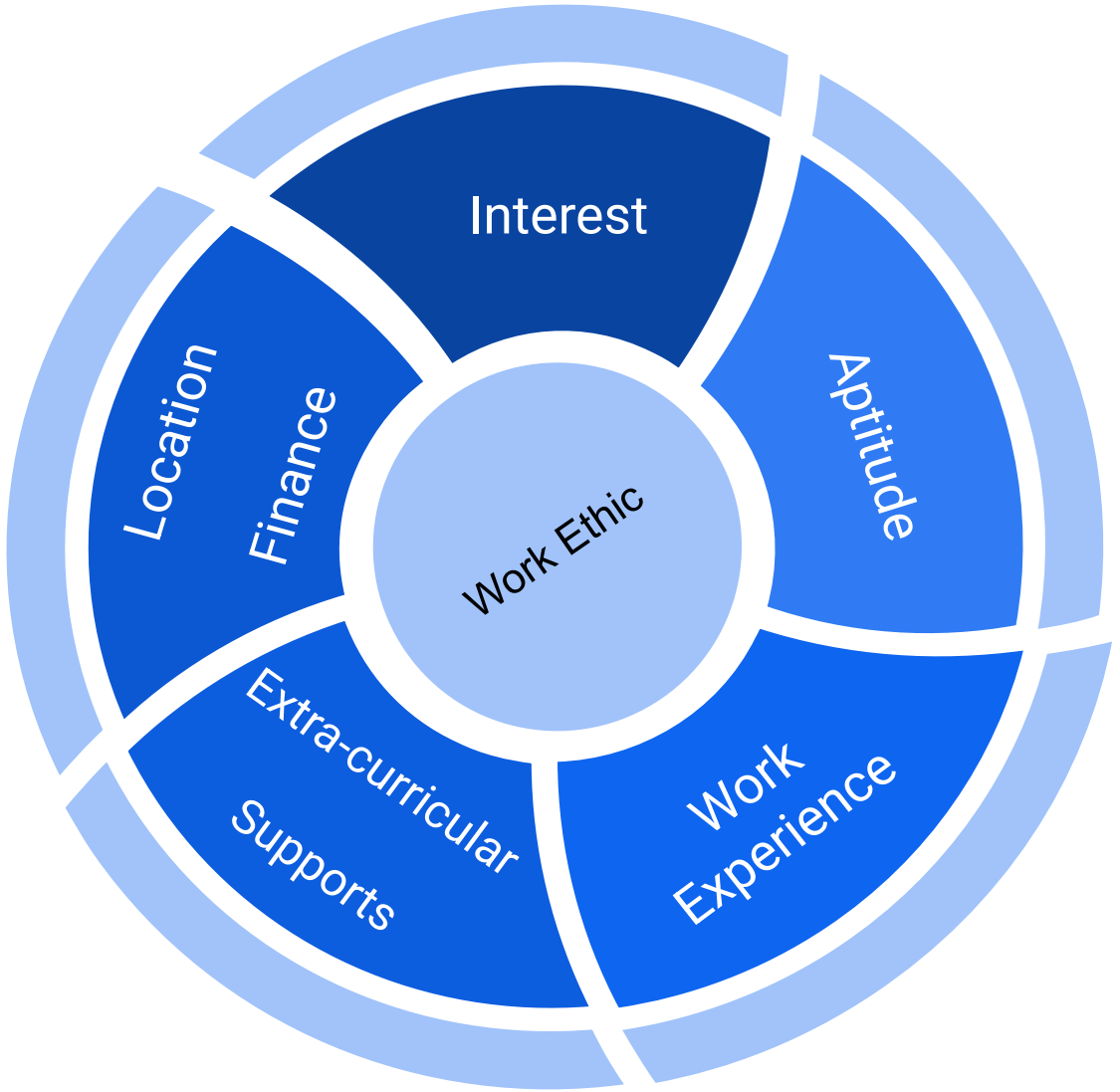
Ms Nolan	Ms Conroy, Mr McNamara, Mr Kelly, Ms Phibbs
Ms Carter	Ms Phelan, Mr Warren, Ms Harnett, Ms Phibbs

CAO Talk Outline

- Decision Making
- CAO Application
- DARE & HEAR Schemes
- SUSI Grants & Scholarships
- Other options after the Leaving Certificate
- Support
- Useful Websites



Decision Making



Before Making a CAO Application - Course Research

Each student must research their course choices by studying:

- Matriculation, Course and Points Requirements.
- Course Content.
- Number of lecture/tutorial/labs etc per week.
- Qualification type.
- Opportunities for postgraduate study or employment.

careers portal.ie

QualifaX™



NUI Irish/Third Language Exemption Application

There is a requirement to present **Irish** to enrol in an NUI institution, and for many courses there is also a requirement to present a **Third Language**. However, there are some situations in which a student can avail of an NUI exemption:

- Applicant is born outside Ireland: can avail of an Irish exemption.

- Applicant was educated outside Ireland up until the age of 12, or for three or more continuous years in primary and post-primary combined: can avail of an Irish exemption.

- Applicant has a specific learning difficulty or other diagnosed medical condition which affects their language learning: can avail of an Irish and/or Third Language exemption.

- Students who need an Irish and/or Third Language exemption for their CAO application to an NUI institution can apply using a streamlined online form.

- Apply at: https://exemptions.nui.ie/

*** Trinity College & University of Limerick - Require Another Language other than English (separate application)**

CAO Application

- Central Applications Office (CAO)

- Processes all applications, issues offers and records acceptances to all undergraduate courses in Ireland.

- Make applications online at **www.cao.ie** from **November 5th 2026**.

- Students are encouraged to register for their account early.

- All deadlines are strict to ensure fairness.

CAO Application Dates & Fees

ALL FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE	FEE	CLOSING DATE
Early Discounted Fee Deadline	€35	20 Jan 2027 (5pm)
Normal Application Deadline	€50	1 Feb 2027 (5pm)
Change of Mind Facility	FREE	5 May - 1 July 2027 (5pm)

The CAO Handbook

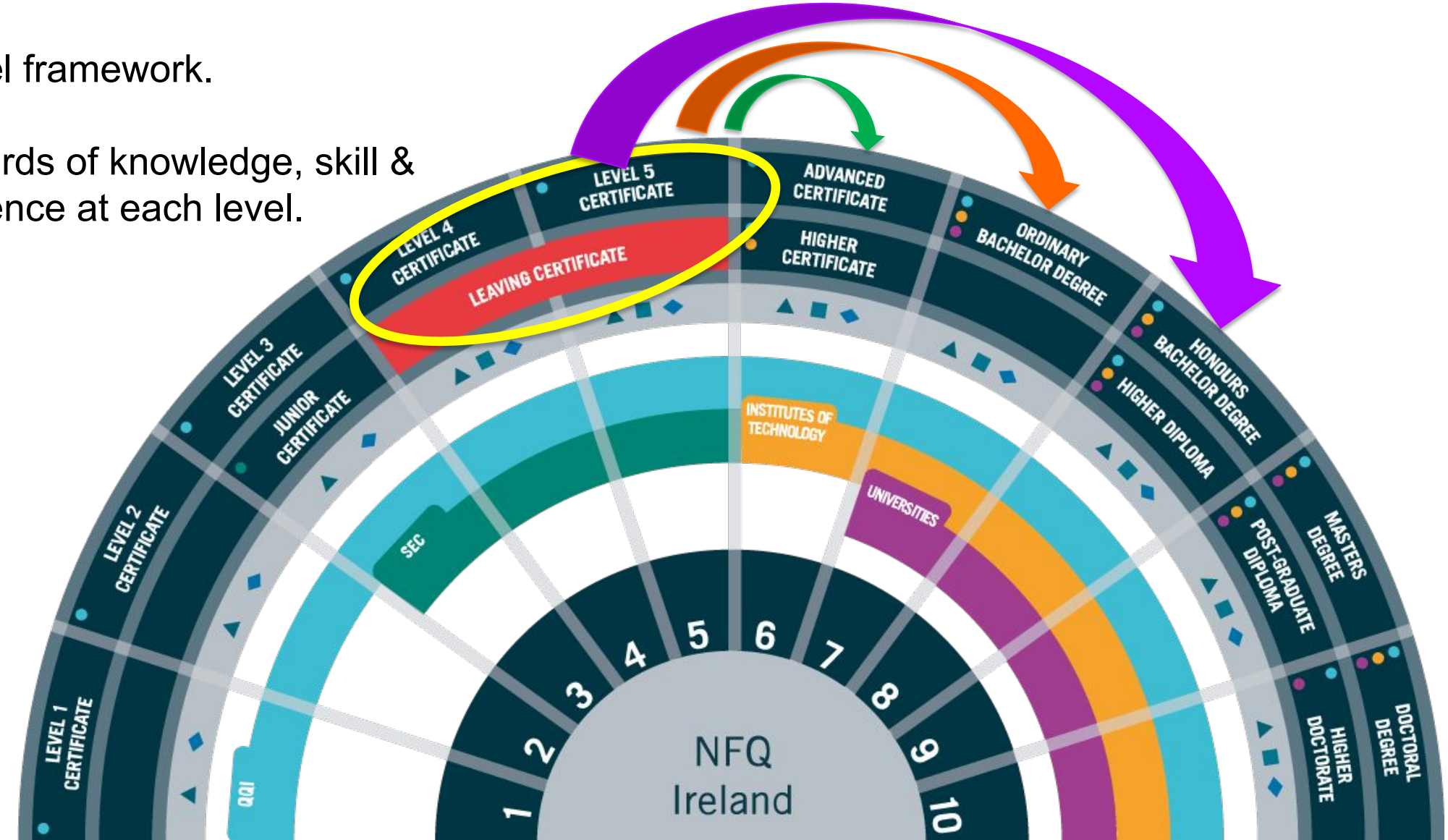
- The CAO Handbook is only available online at **www.cao.ie**

- The Handbook contains:
  - A reference list of Higher Education Institutions and the courses that each institution offers.
  - A section detailing information about the application, offers and acceptance process.
- * Restricted Courses.
- * Course Alert Lists.

What can I apply for on the CAO application?

The NFQ

- 10 level framework.
- Standards of knowledge, skill & confidence at each level.



What can I apply for on the CAO Application?

- 2 course lists

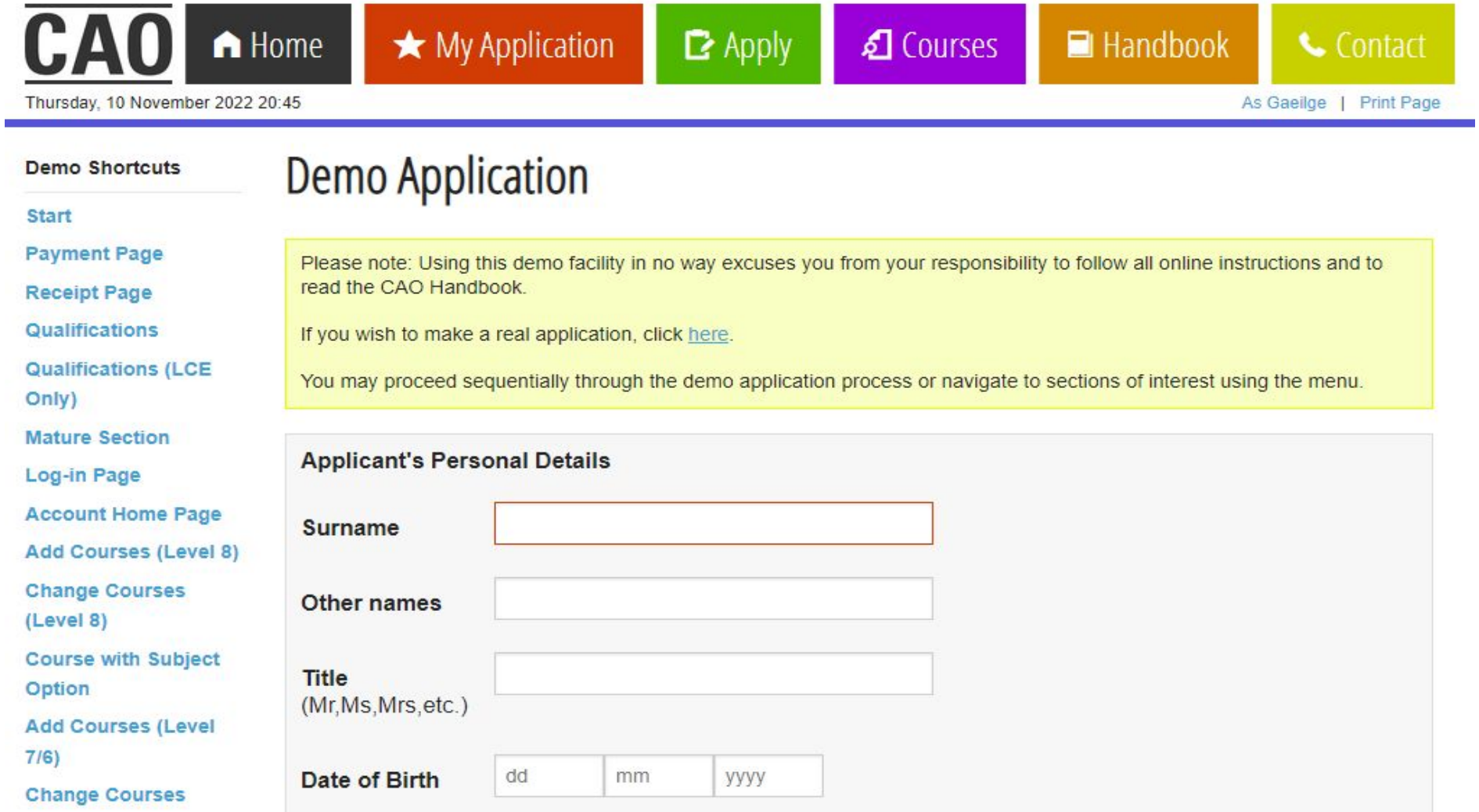
- Level 8 course list (10 choices)

- Level 7 and 6 course list (10 choices)

- Both lists are completely separate

- It is possible to get a course offer from both lists

Demo CAO Application



Accepting an Offer

- It is possible to receive an offer from both course lists.
- A student may then decide to accept **either** their Level 8 **or** their Level 7 or 6 course offer.
- They can only accept **one** offer.
- Alternatively, they may not wish to accept either offer.

The Offer Process

- After the LC results, if a student is eligible to receive an offer, they will be sent an offer notice in CAO Round 1 online via their CAO account.
- Students should check that all of the details on the offer notice are correct.
- Students check for and accept offers online through their CAO account.
- If a student wishes to accept an offer they must carry out the instructions on the offer notice before 5pm on the closing date for acceptance printed on their offer notice.

How Places are Allocated

- When LC results are released in Aug/Sept they are entered into the CAO computer.
- The computer checks each applicant's results.
- The computer first determines if the applicant has the minimum entry requirements for each course they have applied for.

How Places are Allocated

- If the applicant meets the matriculation, and specific subject requirements for the course, the applicant's points are calculated for this course choice.

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

- The admissions officers of the Higher Education Institutions tell CAO how many places are to be offered on each course.

How Places are Allocated

- 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 all places have been offered.

- If 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 in Round 2, 3 etc.

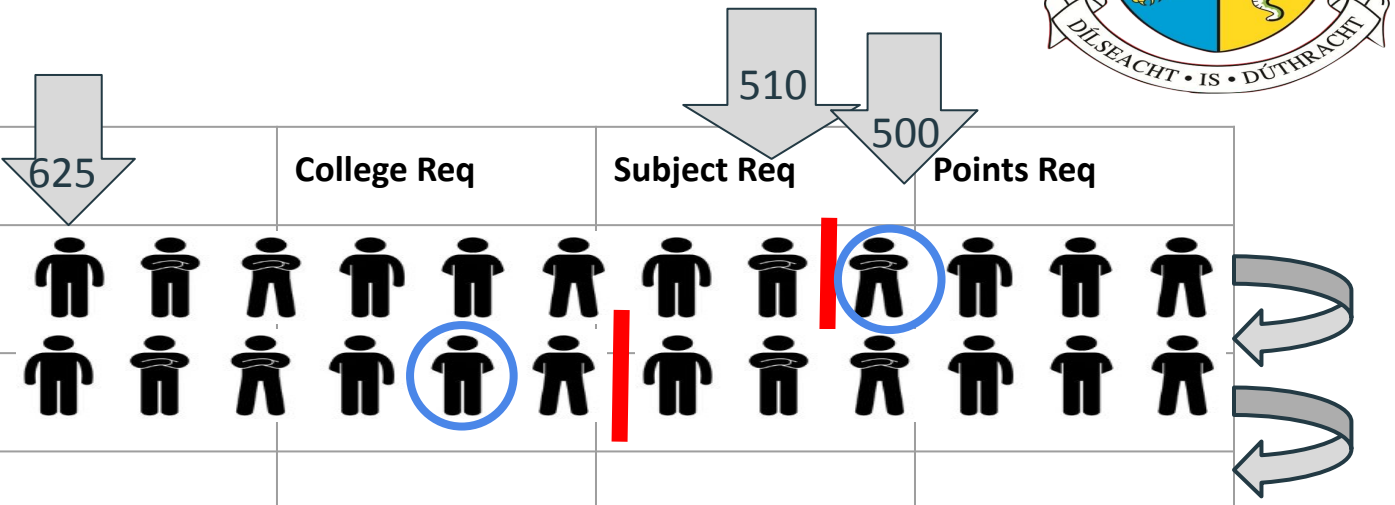
- This process continues until all the places on the course are filled or until all the eligible applicants on the order of merit list have been offered places.

How Places are Allocated - Example

- We will now look at Level 8 course list example and see how offers are made. The offer process works exactly the same way on the Level 7/6 list simultaneously.

- The importance of the applicant, placing courses in genuine order of preference will become apparent in the following slides.

Charlie's CAO Application - Level 8 Course List



Rank	Course Code	Course Title
1	DC111	Business Studies (510 points)
2	TU903	Business & Management (455 points)
3	DC110	Business International (498 points)
4	GY201	Commerce (454 points)
5		Business Studies (444 po
6		
7	MH101	
8		
9		siness Manage
10		Entrepreneurship (360 points)

How Places are Allocated

- If a student receives an offer on their CAO application, they must think of this offer as the only one they will receive.
- The only guaranteed offer is the one they see on screen in front of them.
- Subsequent offers are NOT guaranteed.
- If they do become eligible for an offer higher up their list in subsequent rounds, they can accept the new offer even if they have accepted an offer in an earlier round.

Useful Resources – CAO Website

- Applicant and Parent Resources Sections
- CAO Handbook
- Guide for Parents/Guardians
- CAO Video Guides
- Application Demo
- Important Dates
- Common Points Scale & Points Calculator



DARE Scheme – 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.

Disability Access Route To Education

Disabilities eligible for consideration

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

Educational Impact

Has the disability impacted on a combination of the following?

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

How do I apply?

1. Apply to CAO at **www.cao.ie** by **1st February 2027.**
2. Review your DARE Handbook with parents or guardians.
3. Complete all elements of the online DARE application form by **1st March 2027.**
4. You should start gathering your documentation in a timely fashion, i.e. **before 1 March**.
5. Submit clear copies of supporting documents requested on your checklist to CAO by **10th March 2027.**

DARE | DISABILITY ACCESS ROUTE TO EDUCATION

HEAR Scheme - What is HEAR?

The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is an admissions route for school leavers who for **social, financial or cultural** reasons are **under-represented** at **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.

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.

HEAR HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS ROUTE

HEAR - Should I apply?

1. Was your household income on or below €58,470 in 2025? (fewer than 4 dependent children) **Mandatory**
2. Do you or your family have a Medical Card/GP Visit Card? **If Yes = 1 pt**
3. Did your parents/guardians receive a means-tested social welfare payment for at least 26 weeks in 2025? **If Yes = 2 pts**
4. Do you live in an area of concentrated disadvantage? **Ranges from 2.5 pts - 1.5 pts dependant on area.**
5. Have you attended a DEIS second level school for five years? **If Yes = 1.5 pts**

Maximum Achievable Points = **7**

You must meet no. 1 the HEAR income limit

HEAR Criteria Score

5.5 -7: HEAR Priority

2.5-5: HEAR Eligible

2 or Lower: Not Eligible

HEAR HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS ROUTE

How do I apply?

1. Apply to CAO at **www.cao.ie** by **1st February 2027.**
1. Review your HEAR Handbook with parents or guardians.
3. Complete all elements of the online HEAR application form by **1st March 2027.**
4. Submit clear copies of supporting documents requested on your checklist to CAO by **10th March 2027.**

HEAR | HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS ROUTE

Remember

A student can apply to both

DARE & HEAR

Applicants who are both DARE and HEAR eligible will be prioritised by colleges when allocating reduced points places.

Further Information:https://accesscollege.ie/

Applying for a Grant

DARE and HEAR are **NOT**
a SUSI grant.

If you apply to DARE and/or HEAR,
you should also apply to SUSI if you think you may be eligible.

SUSI: Key Eligibility Criteria

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

SUSI: Some Key Messages

- **Check the website:** www.susi.ie (**Use Eligibility Reckoner**)
- **CAO form:** Tick the SUSI option to share your college acceptance
- **Apply early:** April 2027
- **Return requested documentation:** complete and on time

Contact SUSI

- **Website:** www.susi.ie
- **Email:** support@susi.ie
- **Facebook**.com/susisupport
- **Twitter**.com/susihelpdesk
- **Telephone helpdesk**: 0761 087 874

Scholarships

- Academic scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic achievement. Some but not all are awarded automatically.

- Other scholarships: performing arts, sport and others must be applied for specifically and entry requirements and deadlines must be checked by individual institutions.

- More info: Scholarships in Ireland | CareersPortal.ie









Apprenticeships

- Over 60 different apprenticeships available to apply to.
- 2-4 years in duration and span Levels 6-10 on the NFQ.
- Combination of ‘on the job’ and ‘off the job’ training.
- Research - www.apprenticeship.ie
- Check Entry Requirements (academic and age)
- Work experience in the relevant apprenticeship area strongly advised.
- Find an Employer (local ETB, online advertisements)



Post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLCs)

- Bridge between school and college/apprenticeship/employment
- 1 - 2 years in duration and span Levels 5 and 6 on the NFQ.
- Available in a broad range of subjects - business, computing, science, Pre-apprenticeship, Music, Photography, Art etc.
- Range of reasons for choosing a plc - unsure of future career path, may not get the requirements necessary for college, may be more employment focused.
- Separate application system to the CAO. Application is made directly to the colleges of further education via their individual websites.
- Possible to apply for the CAO and for a PLC course.
- More information - www.plccourses.ie
  - www.careersportal.ie

Support

- Balance is key…..getting the basics right

  E.g. good diet, adequate sleep, exercise, good study habits.

- Evening, Night and Saturday study available in school.
- School Supports – Year Head, Tutor, Guidance Counsellor, AEN Dept, Subject Teachers etc.

Useful Websites

- Course/Career Choice:
  - www.qualifax.ie
  - www.careersportal.ie
  - www.careerdirections.ie

- Study:
  - www.mocks.ie
  - www.betterexaminations.ie
  - www.skoool.ie
  - www.studyclix.ie

- Support:
  - www.cao.ie

- DARE/HEAR:
  www.ahead.ie
  www.accesscollege.ie
  www.cao.ie

- Finance:
  www.studentfinance.ie
  www.susi.ie

- Study Abroad:
  www.eunicas.ie
  www.intstudy.com
  www.ucas.com

- Qualifications:
  www.nfq.ie
  www.qqi.ie



Remember

- Completed CAO application forms must be submitted by 5pm on February 1st 2027.
- A reduced fee of €35 is on offer for students who make their application before January 20th 2027.
- Students may change their mind up to July 1st 2027.

Good luck with the application ☺

PowerPoint Presentation available in Guidance Section of
www.naascbs.ie



jcr@naascbs.ie



mn@naascbs.ie


Questions