



THE DUBLIN  
ACADEMY OF  
EDUCATION

Welcome

# Kay



THE DUBLIN  
ACADEMY OF  
EDUCATION

# Agenda

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Course Levels Post Leaving Cert

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Personal Responsibility

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**CAO Applications**

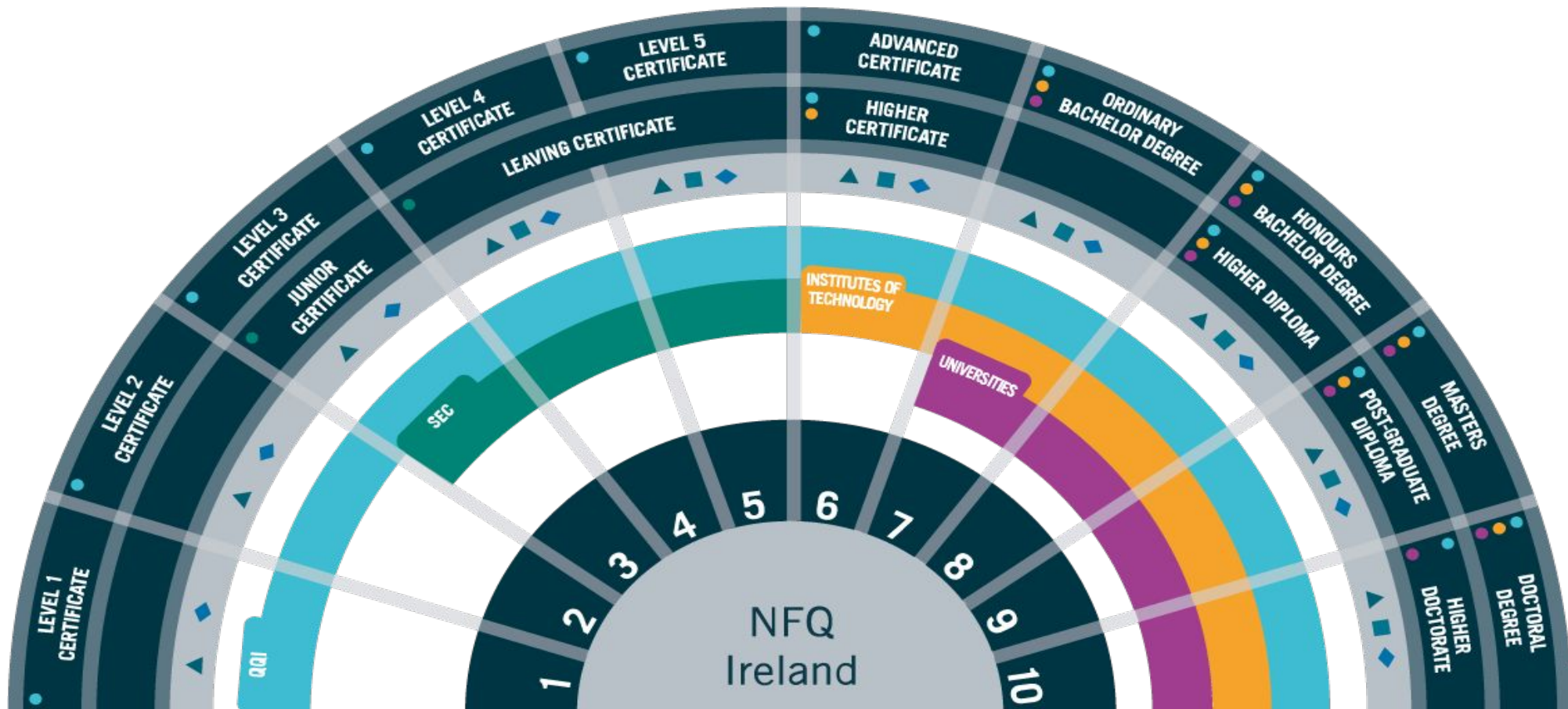
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# Course Levels

## Post Leaving Cert

# National Framework of Qualifications



# Course Levels Post Leaving Cert

## Level 5, PLC Course

- 1-year course
- Delivered by Institutes/Colleges of Further Education
- **Progress to year 2 of a Level 6 or year 1 of a Level 7/8**
- Applied for directly through the Colleges of Further Ed (Dec/Jan)

## Level 6, Higher Certificate

- 2-year course
- Delivered by Institutes/Colleges of Further Education and some universities
- **Progress to year 3 of a Level 7 or year 2/3 of a Level 8**
- Applied for through the CAO



# Course Levels Post Leaving Cert

## Level 7, Ordinary Degree

- 3-year course
- Delivered through some universities and Institutes of Technology
- **Progress to year 3 or 4 of a Level 8**
- Applied for through the CAO

## Level 8, Honours Degree

- 3-4-year course
- Delivered through universities and Institutes of Technology
- **Progress to Masters Degree**
- Applied for through the CAO



# Tertiary Degrees & Apprenticeships

## Tertiary Degrees – Level 8

- Students begin at Level 5 PLCs and continue on to guaranteed place on degree.
- Delivery begins in Colleges of Further Ed & continues in universities or TUs.
- Variety of disciplines – Business, Nursing, Media, Science, Engineering, Occupational Therapy
- **Entry is directly through Colleges of Further Ed – no CAO points required**

<https://nto.hea.ie/courses/>

## Apprenticeships – Level 6-8

*(must be eligible to work in Ireland to do an apprenticeship)*

- 2-4 years in duration
- Students earn while they learn
- Over 80 apprenticeships available nationwide in traditional trades and in areas like Bio Pharma, Insurance, Accounting, Finance.

[www.apprenticeships.ie](http://www.apprenticeships.ie)



# Personal Responsibility

# Personal Responsibility

## Self Knowledge

- Interests Profiler – Careersportal
- Subjects that come easily or are particularly enjoyable
- How do you like to learn?
- Aptitude tests

## Course Research

- Research online – Careersportal good starting point
- Open Days



# Course Research

The most important info to research about courses is:

- Entry requirements
- Course content – the modules that you will study each term of course

Detailed info re: course research

*Careersportal is the best starting point for research*



# Open Days

<https://careersportal.ie/media/index.php>

UCD 8 November

DCU 15 November

IADT 22 November

NCAD 26 November

Maynooth 28 November, 29 November

Trinity 29 November

TUD Grangegorman 6 December



# Personal Responsibility Career Guidance Meetings

- If you haven't done so already book a career guidance meeting
- School guidance counsellor



# Personal Responsibility

The words '**you**' and '**yours**' appear over 50 times in the CAO booklet introduction.

**You** must take responsibility for making sure that:

- **You** understand the CAO system
- **You** know the course requirements
- **You** are aware of the relevant deadlines.



# CAO Application

# What is the CAO?

The Central Applications Office (CAO) processes applications for all Level 6/7/8 undergraduate courses in Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) including some private colleges.



# HEIs

## National University of Ireland

- UCD
- UCC
- Maynooth University
- University of Galway
- RCSI
- NCAD
- Shannon College

## Institutes of Technology

- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Institute of Art, Design and Technology

## Other notable Universities

- Technological Universities
- Trinity College Dublin
- Dublin City University
- University of Limerick

## Other notable HEIs

- National College of Ireland



# Technological Universities

*(formerly Institutes of Technology)*

## **Technological University Dublin (TUD) (formerly DIT)**

- Grangegorman
- Bolton Street
- Aungier Street
- Tallaght
- Blanchardstown

## **Munster Technological University (MTU)**

- Cork
- Tralee

## **Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)**

- Limerick/Shannon
- Thurles/Clonmel
- Athlone

## **South East Technological University (SETU)**

- Carlow
- Waterford
- Kilkenny
- Wexford

## **Atlantic Technological University (ATU)**

- Mayo
- Sligo
- Galway
- Letterkenny



# Fees for Higher Education

- For EU citizens (resident and parents paying tax) in EU State or Switzerland 3 of the past 5 years – count from Sept 1<sup>st</sup> in year of college entry), the Irish government pays college fees – government free fees initiative.
- Students pay a student contribution of between €2000-3000 depending on government budget in any given year.
- International applicant pay much higher fees. If classed as international applicant in 1<sup>st</sup> year of university, must pay international fees for entire degree. International fees range from €20-60K per year depending



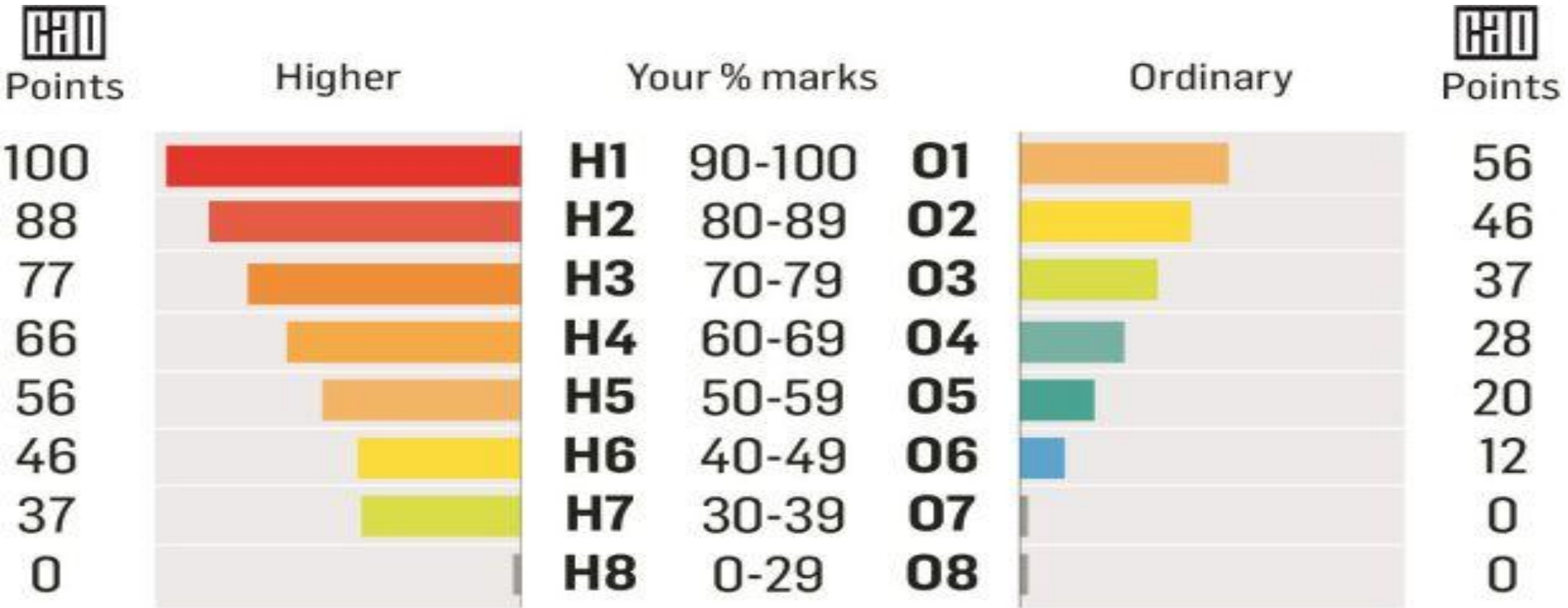
# Private College Fees

circa €6000 per annum

- HEIs that have fee paying courses include:
  - Griffith College (all courses)
  - Dublin Business School (most courses)
  - American College (all courses)
  - Pulse (all courses)
  - Portobello Institute (all courses)
  - Independent College
- The Psychology degree in National College of Ireland has fees circa €6000 per annum.



# Leaving Cert Grades and CAO points



**+25** Bonus points for H1-H6 maths



## 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

# CAO Handbook

## www.cao.ie

- All students need to be extremely familiar with the CAO handbook.
- It can be downloaded and personalised.

# Important CAO Dates

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<b>CAO online applications open</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> Nov 2025 12pm</b>	
Discounted early online application ends	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2026 5pm	€30
Applications close (restricted courses cannot be added after this date)	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2026 5pm	€45
Change of Mind facility (restricted courses cannot be added)	6 <sup>th</sup> May 1 <sup>st</sup> 2026 12pm - 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2026 5pm	Free



# Timeline for CAO Applications

- Research should be done between now and Xmas.
- If you haven't had a career guidance meeting and want one that needs to be done asap!!
- Set up CAO account when it opens in November.
- Complete CAO application between Nov and end of Xmas holidays.
- Forget about CAO until May 2026!!



# Restricted Courses

Restricted courses cannot be added to a CAO application after February 1<sup>st</sup> 2025.

Restricted courses are courses that require:

- A portfolio
- An audition
- An interview
- Supplementary application form

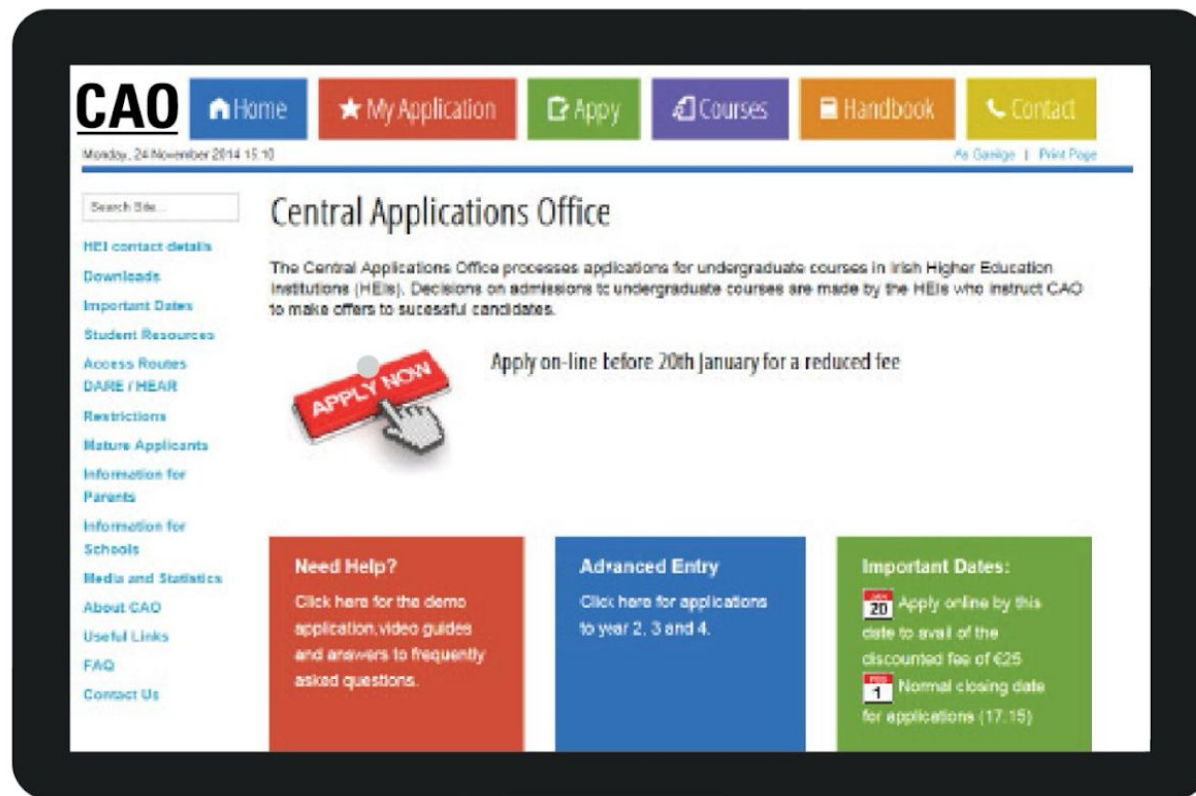


# Making an Application

Applicants apply online at  
[www.cao.ie/apply](http://www.cao.ie/apply)

Carefully enter details such as your name, address, date of birth, schools attended, examination information, etc.

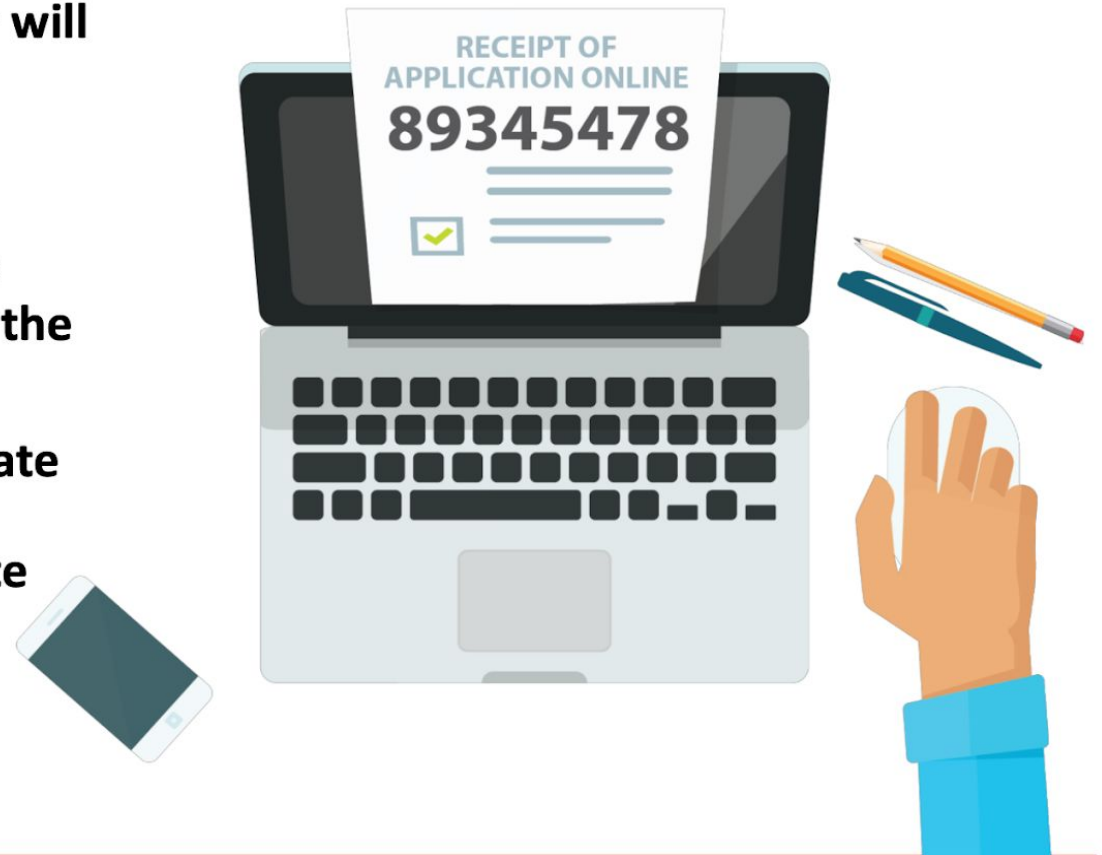
Make sure you inform CAO about all relevant qualifications and exemptions – select the relevant section(s) on the application form.



The screenshot displays the CAO website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the CAO logo and links for Home, My Application, Apply, Courses, Handbook, and Contact. Below the navigation bar, the date and time are shown as Monday, 24 November 2014 15:10. A search bar is located on the left side. The main heading is "Central Applications Office". Below this, there is a paragraph explaining the CAO's role: "The Central Applications Office processes applications for undergraduate courses in Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Decisions on admissions to undergraduate courses are made by the HEIs who instruct CAO to make offers to successful candidates." A prominent red button with a hand cursor icon says "APPLY NOW". To the right of this button, it says "Apply on-line before 20th January for a reduced fee". Below the main heading, there are three columns of information: "Need Help?" with a link to a demo application, video guides, and answers to frequently asked questions; "Advanced Entry" with a link for applications to year 2, 3 and 4; and "Important Dates:" with a calendar icon showing the 20th as the deadline for a discounted fee of €25, and the 1st as the normal closing date for applications (17:15).

# CAO Application Number

- **When you apply online your application number will appear on screen. You will also receive an email containing your CAO application number and an email verification code.**
- **Your application number is private, and it will be used in every correspondence between you and the CAO for the rest of the year.**
- **You will require your CAO application number, date of birth and password when you log in to your account via the 'My Application' facility to update your application.**



# Qualifications & Assessment

- **You must complete the Qualifications and Assessments section(s) that is relevant to you.**

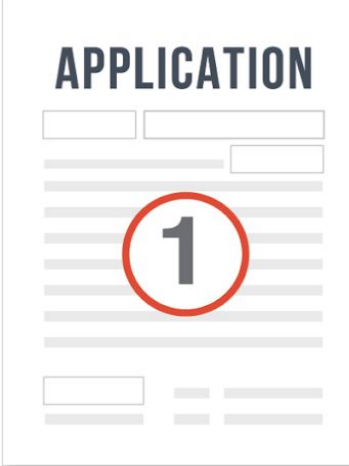
**For example, if you are a first-time Leaving Certificate candidate under the age of 23 with no other relevant qualifications, you will be asked to enter your school's name and address and the years attended. You must also tick the Leaving Certificate examinations box and subsequently indicate the year of your Leaving Certificate.**

**If you have a previous sitting of the Leaving Certificate, you must also remember to supply the year and examination number in the space provided on the application form.**



# Level 8 and Level 7/6 lists (Course Choices)

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



APPLICATION

Form 1: A stylized representation of an application form with a large red circle containing the number '1' in the center. The form has a header, several horizontal lines representing text, and a few rectangular boxes for input.



APPLICATION

Form 2: A stylized representation of an application form with a large red circle containing the number '2' in the center. The form has a header, several horizontal lines representing text, and a few rectangular boxes for input.

<i>Level 8</i>	
	Course Code
1	DN660
2	TR081
3	TU905
4	DC115
5	TU903
6	DN700
7	MH404
8	MH101
9	
10	

<i>Level 6/7</i>	
	Course Code
1	TU678
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	



# 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.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

**Choices 1-3 Dream Choices**

**Choices 4-7 Realistic Choices**

**Choices 8-10 back-up courses**



# Importance of back up courses

## Insurance exists for a reason

- UCD and TCD are not the only universities!
- Choose the type of degree you want, not just the university!
- Important to bear in mind how university rankings are devised. The heaviest weighting not necessarily given to student experience.
- **Have a course on your CAO that you would be prepared to do that is 50 points lower than you're hoping for – lower than mock results**



# CAO Offers

*CAO Offers are made in a series of rounds in Sept / early October each year*

# CAO offers

In each round, the CAO will offer a student the course that is highest on both lists for which:

- They meet minimum entry requirements
- They meet special subject requirements
- They have the necessary CAO points

*NB: You could have the points but if you don't meet entry requirements you won't be offered a place*



Course Summary

Language Options

Entry Requirements

PLC Progression Links

The Student

Career Progression

Further Research

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Points History

**577** <sup>▲</sup>

Minimum Subjects

**2 H5 & 4 O6/H7**

✓ **O6/H7** IN English

✓ **O6/H7** IN Irish

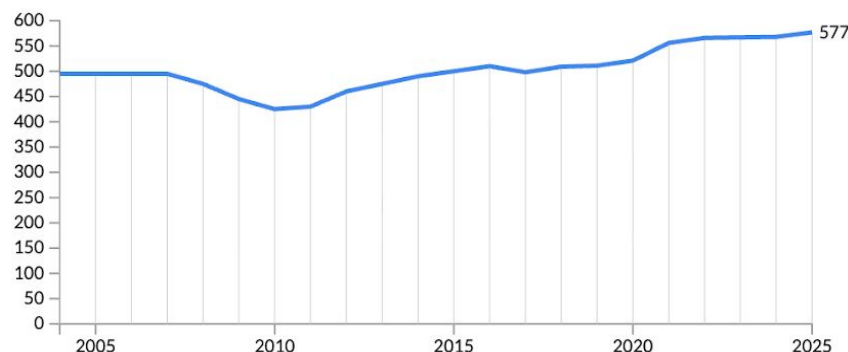
✓ **H4** IN Maths

✓ **H6** IN Agricultural Science OR Biology OR Chemistry OR Physics

OR Physics/Chemistry

**Disclaimer: Details subject to change - If this is a course you are considering applying for you should check on the [Colleges' website](#) to ensure you have the latest entry requirements information.**

CAO Points History



If you believe the data above to be incorrect, please let us know at [info@careersportal.ie](mailto:info@careersportal.ie) - thank you.

## COLLEGE PROFILE



University College Dublin -  
UCD

[Visit College Profile](#)

[View Prospectus](#)

[View Scholarships](#)

[View Courses](#)

## CONNECT WITH US

[01 716 1555](tel:017161555)

[myucd@ucd.ie](mailto:myucd@ucd.ie)

<http://www.ucd.ie/>

[Student Union](#)

[Facebook](#)

[X](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Youtube](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

# CAO points for each course are determined each year by:

- The number of places on a course.
- The number of applicants to that course.
- The CAO points attained by those applicants.

It's a supply and demand game



# CAO Points

- Every applicant is placed in a queue for each course they apply for.
- When the Leaving Cert results are released, applicants are ranked in order of points (once minimum entry requirements are met).
- The computer system moves down the queue, offering places until the course is full.
- The points of the last person to be offered a place become the Round 1 points for that course.



# CAO points

- Points are calculated from **ONE** sitting of the Leaving Certificate only.
- Minimum Entry and Subject Requirements can be satisfied using grades received in more than one sitting of the Leaving Certificate (except for medicine).
- CAO points are calculated using the student's **SIX** highest grades.

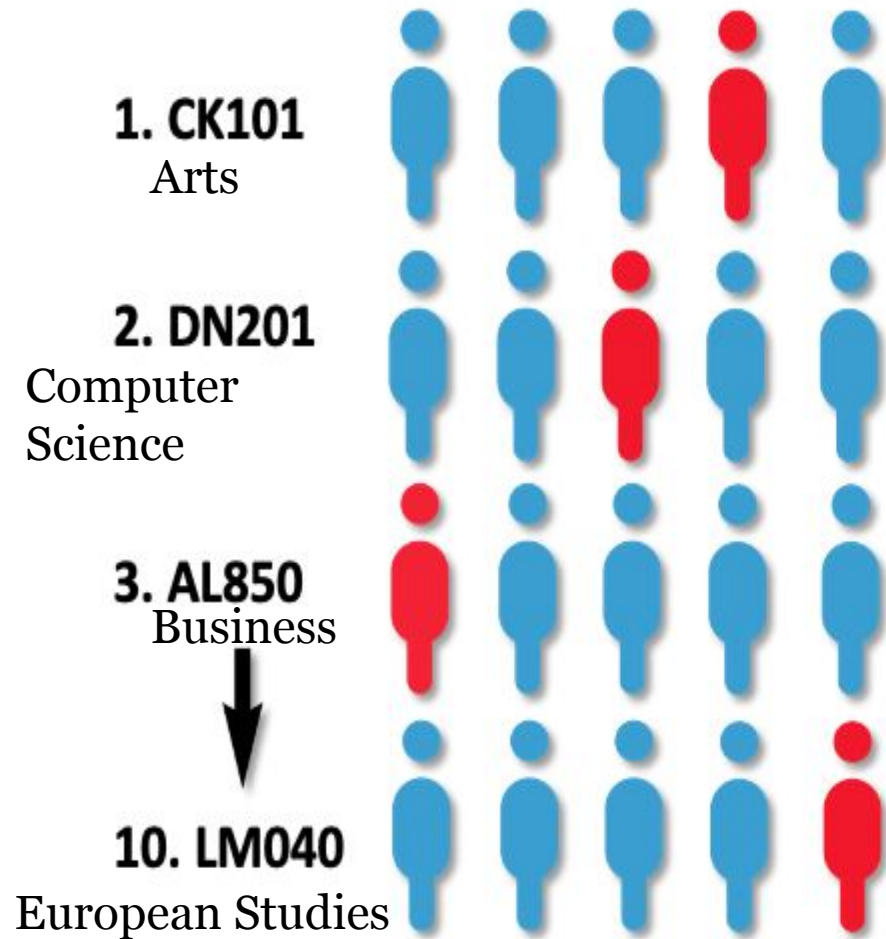


# CAO offers

- Only **one** course from **one** list can be accepted per round.
- Always accept an offer as there is no guarantee further offers will come in subsequent rounds.
- If spaces become available on courses in 2<sup>nd</sup> or subsequent rounds, a student may be offered a course higher up their preference list **but never lower down.**
- Once a student is offered a course, **all lower preference courses disappear from a student's CAO application.**



# Place Allocation

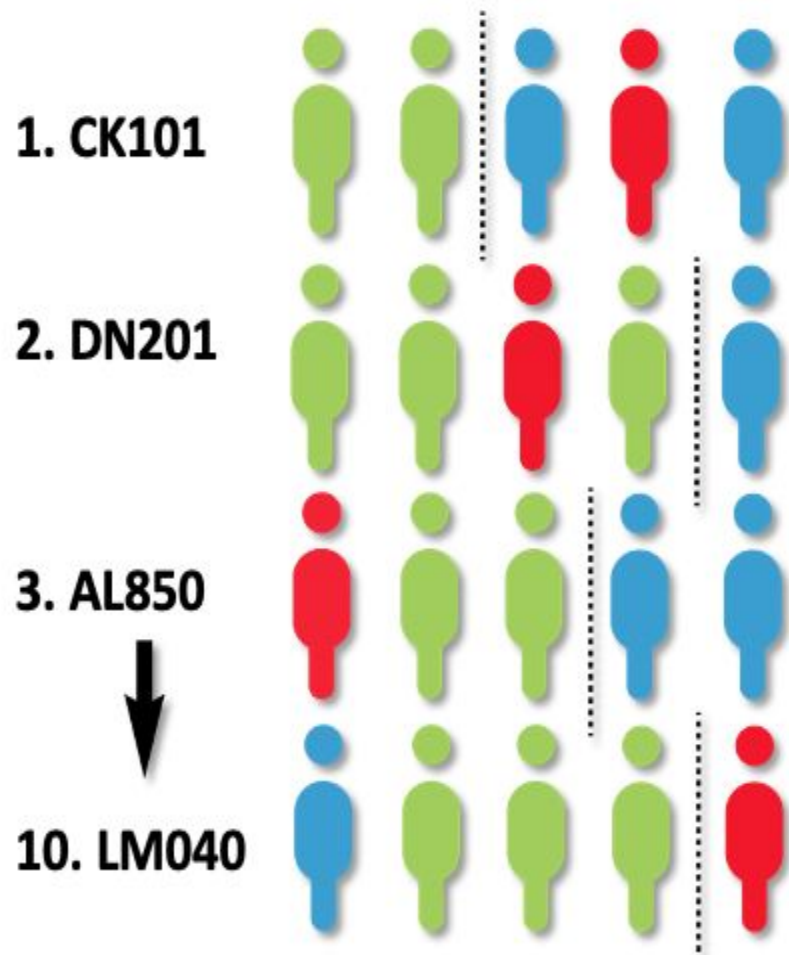


## EXAMPLE

– 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.

# Place Allocation



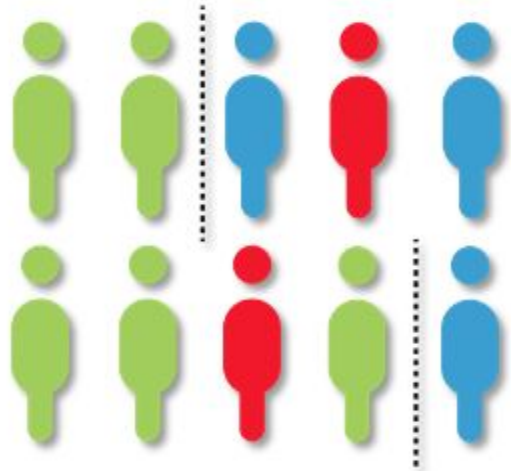
## EXAMPLE

– 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.

# Place Allocation

1. CK101



2. DN201

## 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.

# Place Allocation

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.

# Other important sections of the CAO application

**On the CAO application students will be asked to tick a box if they intend applying for any of the following:**

- (a) A SUSI grant ([www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie))
- (c) DARE (Disability Access Route to Education)
- (d) HEAR (Higher Education Access Route)

[www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie) (check out if family income less than 100K)

[www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie)



# Extras

- Irish/Modern Language Exemptions
- Scholarships
- UCAS
- Studying in Europe
- Med Student info



# Irish/Language Exemptions

- If you are exempt for Irish/Modern Language **you must apply** for exemptions for college.
- If you have already applied for an NUI Irish exemption, remember to email NUI in November with your CAO number.
- **If NUI does not have your CAO number, the CAO will not know about your Irish exemption, and you will not get any offers!!**
- If you have no language in LC other than English and have Dyslexia/other learning issue you will need to apply for language exemption to Trinity and University of Limerick.



# Links to Language Exemption Applications

## **NUI Language Exemptions**

<https://exemptions.nui.ie/>

## **Trinity Language Waiver**

<https://ask.tcd.ie/portal/service?btn=87&autolog=true&shownewticket=true&categoryid=7&id=49>

## **UL Language Exemption**

<https://www.ul.ie/academic-registry/leaving-certificate-students>



# Potential Medical Students

- All applicants must score over 480 points in L.C. and take HPAT test (realistically 550 points or higher).
- Applicants must complete the HPAT Ireland test held Feb 2026.
- Online registration opens November 2025.
- HPAT results added to Leaving Cert.

<https://hpat-ireland.acer.org/registration>



# Scholarships

- Sports and Performance Arts Scholarships.
- UCD Ad Astra – Academic, Sports and Performing Arts.
- Naughton Scholarship – students studying for STEM degree.



Finally !

# Statement of Application Record

**If you do not  
receive a  
Statement by**



**contact CAO  
immediately.**

Before the end of May you will be sent a Statement of Application Record. The purpose of this e-mail is to instruct you to log in and verify that all of your information has been recorded completely and correctly on your CAO account. There may be very serious consequences for your application if you do not follow these instructions immediately.

Check the following carefully, and if there is any error or omission amend the Statement and return it to CAO.

- Are your exam numbers correct? (do not assume that they are)**
- Are all exams mentioned?**
- Are all exemptions listed?**
- Are all the courses shown and in the correct order?**

# Most important things to remember...

- Research entry requirements and course content (modules) early.
- Have CAO applications complete by end of Xmas holidays.
- Restricted courses can't be added after Feb 1<sup>st</sup>.
- List courses in strict order of preference.
- Make sure to have back up courses 30-50 points below mock results - don't be a university snob for back ups!!
- Be aware of important deadlines.
- Read every email/text you get from CAO.



**Thanks for  
Listening**

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