Applying to CAO

GCE Applicants

your next step
Purpose of the CAO

- CAO processes applications to undergraduate courses in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
- Offers are issued and acceptances are recorded by CAO.
- Assessment of applications and decisions on admissions are made by HEI Admissions Officers.
Application Process
CAO Handbook

CAO distributes to schools and individuals a handbook containing instructions and information about the application process.

Every applicant should be familiar with the contents of the CAO Handbook.
Information on courses is available from each HEI and prospectuses should be consulted before making an application. A course search facility is also available at www.cao.ie

Participating HEIs in the Republic of Ireland include Universities, Institutes of Technology and other designated institutions.
Applicants are encouraged to apply online.

The website address is **www.cao.ie**

Click on ‘Apply’ and enter the information requested.
Timely Action

**DO NOT LEAVE EVERYTHING TO THE LAST MINUTE!**

In order to be fair to all applicants, closing dates are strict and therefore action should be taken in good time.
• Information which identifies you is of the utmost importance.
• Carefully enter details such as your name, address, date of birth, schools attended, board numbers, candidate numbers, etc.
• Your examination details must be entered with great care.
• Make sure you inform CAO about all relevant qualifications and exemptions – select the relevant section(s) from the Qualifications and Assessments summary on the application form.
When you apply online your application number will appear on screen. You will also receive an email containing your CAO application number.

This number is private and it will be used in every correspondence between you and the CAO for the rest of the year.
Qualifications & Assessment

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

Applicants presenting GCE/GCSE examinations are required to provide additional information to support their application.
Qualifications & Assessment

• Applicants completing A Level examinations in summer will be asked to insert their 5-digit centre number and 4-digit candidate number for each examination.

• You must inform CAO if you are taking your summer examinations with CCEA and/or with British/Welsh examining boards. If we do not have this information CAO will be unable to obtain your results electronically. If this information is not received a minimum of 10 working days before Round One offers you will not receive an offer in this round. It will be the responsibility of the applicant to provide CAO with certified photocopies of results.

• Detailed instructions for the completion of this part of the application form may be found in the CAO Handbook (see pages 4, 5 & 6) and on the website.
GCE/GCSE Applicants must inform CAO of any GCSE, AS & A Level examinations previously taken – these results are required to meet minimum entry requirements, but are not used for points computation purposes.

Applicants must also advise CAO of any previous AS and A Level awards and provide certified photocopies of certificates/statements of results produced by an examining board to support their application.

Certified photocopies of certificates/statements of results produced by an Examining Board must be supplied to CAO a minimum of ten working days in advance of Round One offers. A certified photocopy means that you photocopy the documents and then bring both the originals and the photocopies to an acceptable person or body (School, University, Police Station, Admissions Office, Notary) where they will stamp the photocopy as being a true copy of the original.
AS Level Results

- CAO advises GCE applicants to discuss the AS Level certification process with their school.
- AS Level results are frequently cashed in along with A2 Level results in the final year. As a result, candidates often will not have evidence of their AS Level results until the release of their A2 Level results in August.
- In this instance, CAO will expect to receive electronic notification of the AS Level results provided that the applicant has supplied their correct Board, Centre Number and Candidate Number for all subjects that will be cashed in in August.
- If your school cashes in AS Level results in the same year as A2 Level results, you must enter the remaining AS Level subject carried forward on your CAO application – you must use the space provided for ‘Examinations to be taken’ in the Qualifications & Assessments section.
- CAO must be informed if the candidate sat any AS or A2 Level examinations at a different school.
Common Errors

- No school stamp on supporting documentation
- Providing documents provided by a school as opposed to an examining board
- Not informing CAO of GCSE examination results
- Not informing CAO of previously taken AS & A Levels
- Not supplying Centre Number and Candidate Number for current year examinations
- Pre-U examinations should be included under Other School Leaving qualifications. You must also supply Centre Number and Candidate Number in the GCE section.
- BTEC qualifications should be listed under Other School Leaving qualifications
Choosing Courses

• Consult your Careers Teacher/Adviser.

• Discuss your options with family and friends.

• Details about courses may be found in HEI prospectuses and by consulting HEI websites.

• A course search facility is available on the CAO website.
Level 8 and Level 7/6 Courses

- The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is a system of 10 levels which allows the different standards and levels of qualifications to be compared in the Republic of Ireland.

- CAO process applications for Levels 6-8 in the Framework:
  - Level 6 courses result in the awarding of a Higher Certificate
  - Level 7 courses result in the awarding of an Ordinary Degree
  - Level 8 courses result in the awarding of an Honours Degree

- A diagram of the NFQ is on the website of the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) www.qqi.ie.

- For more information see page 3 of the CAO Handbook.
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!

To do otherwise is a grave mistake.
Order of Preference

• It is most important that applicants state their course choices in order of genuine preference and/or career plans.

• It is a mistake to base course choices only on your present expectations of examination performance or the points level of previous years.

• If you are not successful in your first choice this will have no effect on your chances of obtaining a place in one of your lower preferences.

• Having received an offer in any round, you may get a higher preference offer in a later round. You will never be offered a lower preference in a later round.
Restrictions

• Certain courses are ‘Restricted Courses’. They have early assessment procedures which may start as early as February.

• This includes courses such as Music, Art and Drama which may require interviews, assessments or presentation of a portfolio as part of the application process.

• Restricted courses are clearly marked in the relevant prospectus and also on the CAO Handbook (by the words 'Restricted – see page 3').

• An application for a Restricted Course will not be considered unless:
  • a) it has been included among original course choices by 1 February b) it has been added to an existing application not later than the final date for correction of errors or omissions (1 March).
  • Please see page 3 of the CAO Handbook for further information.
Change of Mind Facility

You may use this facility to change the order of your course choices and/or to introduce new courses, subject to the restrictions detailed in the handbook.

The Change of Mind opens in early May and closes on 1 July at 5:15pm.
Before the end of May you will be sent a Statement of Application Record as a final acknowledgement and to enable you to verify that all information has been recorded completely and correctly.

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

- Are all the courses shown and in the correct order?
- Are all the codes correct?
- Are the exam numbers correct?
- Are all exams mentioned?
- Are all exemptions listed?

If you are presenting both Northern Ireland and British Board results, two records should appear for the current year.

If you do not receive a Statement by June 1st, contact CAO immediately.
The Offer Process

• In the week following the release of the A Level results CAO will email all GCE/GCSE applicants.
• Applicants must read this email carefully and inform CAO immediately if any details are incorrect or missing.
• Applicants must supply evidence of any results that are missing or incorrect by post as soon as possible.
The Offer Process

- If you are entitled to an offer you will be sent an e-mail and SMS text message if you have selected this option.
- You should check that all of the details on the offer notification are correct and that there are no omissions.
- Offers will also be available on the CAO website.
- You may check for and accept offers on the website.
The Offer Process

There can be no delays at the offer/acceptance stage.

• Any offer not accepted by the closing date for receipt of acceptance of offers in CAO will be offered to another applicant in the next round of offers.

• You will receive an e-mail acknowledging your acceptance if you accept online.
We will look just at Level 8 courses, but exactly the same process will take place with Level 7/6 courses, and at the same time.

The importance of you, the applicant, placing courses in genuine order of preference will become apparent in the following pages.
Place Allocation

- When examination results are released in August they are entered into the CAO computer.
- The computer checks each applicant’s results.

For each course the applicant has applied for, the computer first determines if the applicant has the minimum entry requirements for the course.
Place Allocation

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

Minimum Entry Requirements + Points Score = Position on Order of Merit List

If the applicant meets the minimum entry requirements for the course, the applicant’s points are calculated for this course choice.

To view how to calculate your points go to the Student Resources section of www.cao.ie or see the CAO Handbook.
The admissions officers of the Higher Education Institutions tell CAO how many places are to be offered on each course.

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 enough places have been offered.
Place Allocation

• Should 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. This process continues until all of the places on the course are filled or until all the eligible applicants on the Order of Merit list have been offered places.
These are the applicants for CK101 - Arts in UCC.

The examination results have not yet been released, so these applicants are in no particular order.

We are going to trace the progress of the applicant marked in red.

EXAMPLE – no results yet!
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.

EXAMPLE
– Exam results have been released.

1. CK101
2. DN201
3. AL850
10. LM040
Place Allocation

• The applicants marked in **GREEN** have enough points to be offered places.

• The applicant marked in **RED** has enough points for her second preference.

**EXAMPLE**
– HEIs issue R1 offers

1. CK101
2. DN201
3. AL850
10. LM040
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.
• After Round 2 offers are issued, our applicant is now in first place on the waiting list for her first preference course.

• She has already accepted her 2nd preference course. **Accepting or not accepting** her 2nd preference course will not prevent her from receiving an offer of her 1st preference course if she is deemed eligible by the institution in a later round.
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.

EXAMPLE
– An offer is issued in R3 for her 1st preference!
Genuine Order

1. You do not need to guess what the points are going to be for the courses you are interested in.
2. Simply list your courses in genuine order of preference from the highest preference 1, to the lowest preference 10.
3. If you are entitled to an offer, you will be offered the highest preference that you are entitled to.
Applicant Scoring for GCE/GCSE

From 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universities and associated colleges</th>
<th>Best 3 A-Levels</th>
<th>4th Subject</th>
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<td>AS Level</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>63</td>
<td>15</td>
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</tbody>
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† Extended Project is now accepted and scored as AS. It is possible to attain an A* in this.

†† Applies to A-level only

From 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutes of Technology &amp; TU Dublin (other than DkIT)</th>
<th>Best 3 A-Levels</th>
<th>AS Levels (&amp; 4th A-Level where presented)</th>
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Applicant Scoring for GCE/GCSE

Universities and associated colleges:

• Applicants are scored on the basis of their best four A levels or three A levels and an AS level in a different subject from the same or preceding year. The maximum number of points that can be achieved is 600.

• Note: Applicants presenting Grade E or above in one of A-Level Mathematics, Further Mathematics or Pure Mathematics will have 25 points added to their score for that subject. The bonus points will only be relevant where that subject is scored as one of the applicant's best four subjects for points purposes. This gives a maximum possible score of 625.
Applicant Scoring for GCE/GCSE

Institutes of Technology & TU Dublin (other than DkIT) and other HEIs offering QQI HET awards:
Applicants are scored on the basis of a maximum of 4 different subject results at A and/or AS level. For scoring purposes, the following combination of A Levels and AS Levels are permitted:

• The **best 4 A level results in a single sitting.**

• The **best 3 A level results in a single sitting, plus the best AS level result from the previous or the same sitting.**

• The **best 2 A level subject results in a single sitting, plus the best 2 results at AS level from the previous or the same sitting.**

• The **best 1 A level subject result in a single sitting, plus the best 3 results at AS level from the previous or the same sitting.**

• The **best 4 AS level subject results in a single sitting.**
Communication with CAO

- The easiest and most efficient way to communicate with CAO is by using the Correspondence Section of your CAO Account. You will receive a reply to your query usually within one working day.
- Always quote your CAO application number in any communication with CAO.
- If you post something to CAO, always obtain a certificate of posting at the post office. This is a free service and it offers you peace of mind.
Useful Resources

An online copy of the CAO Handbook is available here.

Visit the ‘Student Resources’ section accessible here for Video Guides and useful resources including the ‘Demo Application’ facility.

Watch this space for ‘Important Dates’.
Finally...

Remember to carefully read all of the documents and instructions from CAO.

Most applicants follow the simple instructions from CAO and get along just fine.

If you are unclear on any matter concerning the application process, please contact us via our website: www.cao.ie