

**Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC)
Admissions Officers Association (AOA)
Central Applications Office (CAO)**

Protocol for AOA / IGC / CAO November Conferences

This protocol has been agreed by the executive of each of the three organisations and governs the organisation of, and conduct at, the November Conferences.

Context and Background:

The AOA/IGC/CAO November Conferences are an established and important series of events which take place at locations geographically spread around the country, and online. In recent years there have been four in-person events plus one online event, although the number of events and their locations have varied considerably over the decades.

The purpose of the conferences is to bring Guidance Counsellors and Admissions Managers together for friendly and informal discussions between the two groups of professionals on matters relating to entry to higher education.

The conferences have a long and successful history. In the past, they had been organised by IGC branches, usually held in a school hall after school hours. After a number of years, the HEIs asked CAO to undertake the task of organising and chairing the events, and they shifted to daytime conferences held in hotels with refreshments and a light lunch provided.

At present, the conferences are organised and chaired by CAO. HEIs contribute approximately half of the cost of venues and refreshments with CAO contributing the remainder. IGC, AOA and CAO consult on matters such as the locations, venues, content, dates and running order. The forum for this consultation is the IGC-AOA-CAO Liaison Committee. The arrangements are subsequently confirmed by the CAO Operations Group which consists of Admissions Managers from every participating HEI and CAO Management.

Protocol:

1. The conferences are private and to be attended by invitation only.
2. To be invited: Guidance Counsellors, Principals of Post Primary Schools and Further Education Colleges, HEI representatives with an expert knowledge of undergraduate admissions, and relevant CAO staff.
3. The dates and locations for each conference will be circulated with the September mailing to schools. CAO will also circulate the dates and locations to members of CAO's email Mailing List in April/May. Full details of the events will be available on the Conference Registration page in October.
4. Guidance Counsellors and Principals must register on the conferences page of the CAO website to attend.

5. HEI representatives must register with the CAO organiser.
6. A representative of the IGC (normally the Chair of the local Branch) will host the conference. This means that the host will take a seat at the top table, welcome those attending and close the conference with thanks to CAO, HEIs and Guidance Colleagues.
7. CAO will chair the conferences. This means that CAO will introduce the conferences, conduct the order of business and chair the Q&A/discussion forum stage.
8. The AOA will provide a representative (usually the chair of the AOA) to join the CAO and IGC representatives at the top table.
9. There are many opportunities in the calendar for promotional and marketing events, the November Conferences are not intended for such purposes. No literature or promotional materials are to be distributed or made available at the conference venue. This practice emerged in the distant past but has not been permitted for many years as the associated activity was found to be disruptive to presentations and discussions which are the core purposes of the conferences
10. All those attending should bring a CAO Handbook and any other required materials (e.g. a notepad and pen).
11. Attendees are asked to arrive before presentations are scheduled to begin and to leave only when the last speaker has finished. Late arrivals and early departures are to be discouraged and when absolutely necessary should ensure there is no disruption or distraction caused to speakers.
12. It should be recognised that presenting and/or speaking in front of a large group of people is not part of the day to day job for all of those who will speak at the conferences and a degree of understanding, courtesy, space and time should be given to those who have taken the trouble to participate. Attendees are asked not to interrupt during talks. Should any difficulty occur during a talk (e.g. with the volume or the pace of the speaker) raise a hand and direct the comment through the chair when called upon.
13. Every participant should expect to be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.
14. HEI speakers should first give the page(s) their HEI appears in the CAO Handbook, name their HEI and then give their own name. Each HEI may give a presentation of maximum duration 4 minutes, on matters relating to CAO entry to their HEI , and in particular drawing attention to any changes in entry requirements, course content or

title , learning outcomes, qualifications, progression, professional recognition, etc. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. significant re-structuring of a HEI, HEI mergers) the HEI representative may ask the chair for extra time in advance of the conferences commencing.

15. The Q&A/discussion session proves most valuable when a variety of issues are raised and discussed. To ensure the session does not become dominated by any one topic there will be a time limit of 10 minutes per topic during the Q&A/discussion forum stage.
16. Should an attendee wish to speak during the Q&A/discussion session they should raise their hand and wait for a microphone and for the Chair to call on them to speak. Speakers should give their name and the name of their school/college/HEI/FEI etc. Please raise one question/topic at a time so that it can be responded to effectively and if the matter is to be directed to a particular HEI or to CAO, you should indicate this. Further opportunities will be given to contribute again if desired. Where possible, the Chair will try to facilitate all attendees with questions/contributions, however, please note that it may not be possible to get to all delegates if the time allowed for the Q&A session has elapsed.