

CAO Briefing - The New Common Points Scale

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Introduction

This document has been prepared to assist with the publication of articles, features and supplements containing points data and information about the new grading scale and Common Points Scale. It also provides some useful reference links, a copy of the new Common Points Scale, and information about matriculation requirements for 2017 and pre-2017 Leaving Certificate candidates.

Publication of points data for 2016*

When producing tables of points data for 2016 or preceding years, the inclusion of introductory paragraphs/infographics (see attached) highlighting the following information would be appreciated:

- *The Common Points Scale from 2017 is not directly comparable with the scale that was in existence from 1992 – 2016.*
Applicants are not advised to compare Leaving Certificate scores under the new scale with points table data from 2016 or earlier.
- *There are a number of variables that can influence the points for a particular course and making course selections based on the previous year's points is never advised (applicants should place their courses in genuine order of preference).*
These variables include:
 1. The number of applicants for a course in the current year
 2. The number of places made available by the Higher Education Institution (HEI) in the current year
 3. The performance of the applicants for the course in the current year.
- *The published points for Round 1 and subsequent offer rounds represent the points score of the last applicant to receive an offer on that course in that particular round.*
For example, if an institution instructs CAO to issue 40 offers in Round 1, the points allocated to that course for Round 1 represents the points score of the applicant in 40th position on the waiting list for that course. In order to make it onto the waiting list (or 'Order of Merit' list as it is referred to) the applicant must first have met the matriculation and minimum entry requirements for the course.

Once an applicant is deemed to have met these requirements, a points score is calculated using the HEI Common Points Scale. An applicant's points score for a course determines their position on the waiting list, with the applicant achieving the highest points taking 1st place, the applicant with second highest points score getting 2nd place, and so on all the way down to the last eligible applicant with the lowest points score. The number of places then offered by the institution determines the cut-off points.

*CAO will not be providing a conversion table for 2016 points data. The old and new Common Points Scales are not directly comparable; a straight-forward conversion of last year's points into the new scale is not possible because of a number of factors arising as a result of the changes. For example, an applicant previously disqualified for a course because they did not meet the minimum entry requirements in 2016 may now be deemed eligible under the new scale. When this additional applicant is taken into account, the points score for the last eligible applicant for that course may change.

The CAO offer and acceptance process

It is important to highlight that the mechanics of the CAO offer and acceptance process have not changed.

Applicants should list their course choices in genuine order of preference and they will be offered the course highest up on their list that they are deemed eligible for, if any.

All applicants in 2017, including those applying on the basis of a previous year's Leaving Certificate results, will be scored by the same criteria. All candidates will therefore be competing on a level playing field.

Matriculation requirements from 2017

From 2017, a Higher Level E grade will contribute to the new basic matriculation requirements which the universities and institutes of technology have introduced to take account of the new grading scheme. These basic matriculation requirements for 2017 applicants, and the grades required from pre-2017 applicants, are detailed in the Table below:

2017 Matriculation requirements	Pre 2017 Leaving Cert grades required
2 H5 and 4 O6/H7 grades	2 HD1 and 4 OD3/H E grades
5 O6/H7 grades	5 OD3/H E grades
3 H5 and 3 O6/H7 grades	3 HD1 and 3 OD3/H E grades

Source: www.transition.ie

Applicants must also take note of course-specific entry requirements, details of which will be found on the websites and in the prospectuses of the institution.

New Common Points Scale, to be introduced in 2017

Higher		Ordinary	
GRADE	POINTS	GRADE	POINTS
H1	100		
H2	88		
H3	77		
H4	66		
H5	56	O1	56
H6	46	O2	46
H7	37	O3	37
H8	0	O4	28
		O5	20
		O6	12
		O7	0
		O8	0

Source: www.transition.ie

Points for pre-2017 Leaving Certificate applicants, to be introduced in 2017

CURRENT (PRE-2017) LEAVING CERTIFICATE GRADING SCALE	NEW LEAVING CERTIFICATE GRADING SCALE	NEW POINTS AT HIGHER LEVEL	NEW POINTS AT ORDINARY LEVEL
A1	H1 / O1	100	56
A2	H2 / O2	88	46
B1			
B2	H3 / O3	77	37
B3			
C1	H4 / O4	66	28
C2			
C3	H5 / O5	56	20
D1			
D2	H6 / O6	46	12
D3			
E		33	0

Source: www.transition.ie

Points for LCVP, Foundation Level Maths and QQI FET Applicants

- **LCVP Points**

With the introduction of the new Leaving Certificate grading scale and the new Common Points Scale for entry into Higher Education from 2017, points will be awarded for LCVP Link modules as follows:

LCVP Grade	Revised LCVP Points
Distinction	66
Merit	46
Pass	28

Source: www.transition.ie

- **Foundation Level Mathematics**

Points for Foundation level Mathematics will be awarded by certain institutions only for the purposes of admission to higher education – applicants should refer to the literature available from each HEI for full details.

Foundation Level Maths 1992-2016	2017+	Points
A1	F1	20
A2 / B1	F2	12

Source: www.transition.ie

- **QQI FET/FETAC Applicants**

From 2017, the maximum possible total score of 360 will be multiplied by 13 and divided by 12, to give a revised maximum overall points score of 390 for applicants presenting QQI further education and training awards. For further information about how points are calculated for QQI-FET applicants please visit the Applicant Scoring page in the 'Student Resources' section of www.cao.ie.

Useful Resources

- **Transition Website:** For a copy of the new grading scale and Common Points Scale, information about the rationale behind the changes, and the answers to frequently asked questions go to www.transition.ie
- **CAO Website:** For a guide to the scoring scheme for current year Leaving Certificate candidates and candidates presenting an earlier Leaving Certificate go to the Student Resources section of the CAO website:
<http://www.cao.ie/index.php?page=cps&bb=studentresources>
- **Points Calculator:** To calculate a points score based on Irish Leaving Certificate results (either 2017 or 1992 – 2016), use the Points Calculator available at www.cao.ie.