

Dear Principal/Guidance Counsellor,

September 2020

I hope that this letter finds you settled back to school after what has been a challenging year for everyone. The 2020 application literature was distributed to schools in mid-September. This mailing was sent slightly later this year to allow you the time to adapt to your new working environment. If you have not yet received your bulk supplies please contact us quoting your school roll number.

**CAO applications may be made online from 5 November at noon** and we ask that you remind your students to register as early as possible to encourage familiarity with the system. As you know, the courses that they select now can be amended up to 1 February for no extra charge, and students who apply online before 5:15pm on 20 January 2021 may avail of the discounted application fee of €30. **With so much uncertainty at the moment, it is even more important than ever that you encourage your students to apply early and supply any supporting documentation (e.g. HEAR DARE documentation) as soon as possible.**

I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to some upcoming events and additional information:

- In the interests of the health and safety of our delegates, colleagues and staff, the annual **Autumn Conferences for Guidance Counsellors** will be taking place online this year. The online events will take place over three dates on the 3, 10 and 11 November. Full details and an online registration link will be available on the CAO website from the 15 October at noon. We look forward to meeting you at these events, albeit virtually, and please note that you **must register online** if you wish to attend. If the school Guidance Counsellor is not available to attend we encourage the school Principal to attend. **Please remember to have your CAO Handbook to hand.**
- We enclose a **poster** which you may wish to display for students containing the application closing dates. Additional resources will be available in the Information for Schools section of [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie) over the coming weeks.
- **Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)** - Applicants with a disability or specific learning difficulty will be able to complete Section A (Application Information) of the **Supplementary Information Form (SIF)** when they apply online. Applicants who wish to be considered for the DARE scheme must complete this form and indicate on the form that they wish to be considered for DARE by answering Yes to Question 1 by 5:15pm on 1 March. DARE applicants must submit the DARE Educational Impact Statement (EIS) and also Evidence of Disability to arrive in CAO no later than 5:15pm on 15 March.
- **Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)** - Applicants from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds may complete the HEAR online application form by 5:15pm on 1 March and submit supporting documentation to be considered for supplementary entry and post-entry supports to arrive in CAO no later than 5:15pm on 15 March.
- Information on DARE and HEAR can be found on [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie)

In November, you will be able to view the demonstration version of the online application form to see how the entire 2021 online application form is set out, including the SIF/DARE and HEAR sections. We have also updated a number of our resources, including the presentations and videos – please check out the Information for Schools pages for more information. An updated guide and presentation for Parents and Guardians is also available.

Again, we look forward communicating with you at one of the online conference events in November, and if you have any questions or require any assistance throughout the year please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



Joseph O'Grady,

General Manager