

Email to Guidance Counsellors re Further Education, Conferences, Handbooks and 2022 resources – 15 October 2021

Dear Guidance Counsellor,

I hope this email finds you well. Apologies for emailing twice in the one week, but I just wanted to update you on a couple of items:

1. Further Education and Apprenticeship applications

You may recently have read some media coverage about changes to the CAO website in relation to further education and apprenticeship options. We have received a number of queries from guidance counsellors and parents on same, and we just wanted to clarify that the CAO website will not be accepting further education or apprenticeship applications for 2022. Applicants will continue to apply for FE and apprenticeships using the traditional channels, and the CAO website will continue to accept applications for entry to Higher Education courses in Irish HEIs only. The CAO website will, however, prominently display FE and apprenticeship options on our website as a jumping off point for applicants to go to www.fetchcourses.ie and www.apprenticeship.ie and find out more information on course offerings.

2. Virtual Information Evening

Thank you for your help in promoting our upcoming Virtual Information Evening for Parents and Guardians - its popularity has exceeded our expectations, and only a limited number of online places remain - (to register go to www.cao.ie/webinar).

3. Autumn Conferences

Registration for our Autumn Conferences opened earlier today here, and we are already seeing a good deal of interest in both the physical and online events. As you may have noticed on the registration form, the events will proceed subject to the approval of the public health measures that are scheduled to come into place in October. Unfortunately, we are still awaiting updated advice on this matter and we will update you by email/on the website should any event changes be required.

The online event is the Sligo conference on the 3 November. To register for this, you will see a link underneath the physical conference options - you do not need to select the Sligo conference from the dropdown menu if you wish to attend online, you simply click on the link and complete the Zoom registration form. Please do not do both.

4. Handbooks

In the CAO Newsletter circulated in May, we informed you of our plans to launch an interactive version of the CAO Handbook. This online flipbook has been introduced in place of the traditional printed version. As you know, we have printed and distributed a small quantity of handbooks for guidance counsellors, principals, and other key stakeholders, however, in the main, your students will now be exclusively accessing the handbook online. The CAO Handbook can also be downloaded to a laptop or other electronic device and used by applicants when they are offline - a download option is available at www.cao.ie/handbook. Individual requests for handbooks will not be fulfilled except for those who are in a guidance or similar supporting role who have not already received their handbook in our September mailing. The decision to significantly reduce the quantity of printed handbooks was made by CAO out of concern for the environmental impacts of printing and distributing such a large quantity of this document every year. This is not a cost-saving measure, but a small contribution to creating a greener society. We appreciate that this is a change to the norm

and there will be some challenges, but this is part of our organisation's strategic goal to reduce our impact on the environment. The company has taken the decision to act now before it is too late. We are excited about the opportunities this change affords us for enhancing our online offering and ensuring that applicants are accessing the most up-to-date course options via the Courses page on our website, along with the numerous online resources such as our video guides.

5. 2022 Guidance Resources

The 2022 CAO website will go live on 5 November, but in the meantime some of the resources that you require have been added to the 2021 website - go to 2022 Downloads here for the 2022 Applying to CAO presentation and the 2022 posters. Additional resources and updates will be made in time for the launch of the 2022 website.

We hope to see as many of you as possible, either virtually or in person, in the next few weeks.

Kind regards,

Eileen Keleghan

CAO Communications Officer