

INFORMATION SHEET

– Mature Applicants

CAO
www.cao.ie

IMPORTANT - Applicants making a Mature Application must read the following carefully and in full. Applicants should also see cao.ie/mature for further information.

What is a Mature Applicant?

Normally mature applicants should be **23 years old on or before 1st January** of the year of admission.

When should a Mature Applicant apply to CAO?

It is extremely important that Mature Applicants have registered on the CAO system before 1 February at 5pm. Most HEIs will not consider applicants on mature grounds who apply after 1 February. The Mature Applicant Form (part of the CAO Application Form) must be completed by 1 March 2026 at 5pm (please read the instructions at www.cao.ie/mature before completing this section)

Please note: Some HEIs may have a different age requirement, different definitions of mature applicants, etc., and some will consider applications received after the 1 February closing date. Contact the Higher Education Institutions directly for further information www.cao.ie/hei

What are the entry requirements for mature applicants?

Before you start your CAO application you should take some time to review the prospectuses and websites of the institutions that you are interested in applying to for more information. If you have questions, contact the Admissions Officers of the individual institutions and ask them to explain the entry requirements and if a quota of places applies.

See the Direct Applications section of the CAO Handbook for advice on whether to apply through CAO or directly (or both).



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What information is required in the Mature Applicant Form?

HEIs wish to carefully evaluate applications from mature applicants and, therefore, need certain information to be provided using the Mature Applicant Form (see www.cao.ie/mature for more information on completing sections 1-11):

1. Highest Qualification to Date.
2. Current Studies
3. Post-secondary Education
4. Second Level Education
5. Non-certificate Courses
6. Employment or Voluntary Work
7. English Language Proficiency (if applicable)
8. References
9. Statement of Interest
10. Hobbies/Interests
11. Additional Information

Please note: School leaving examinations and QQI FET/FETAC results presented by mature applicants are also considered in the normal competition for places. Applicants must ensure that they indicate this by ticking the relevant section(s) in the Qualification and Assessment Summary and providing the information required in these sections.

Mature applicants to:

- Nursing/Midwifery
- Primary teaching
- Graduate-entry courses

are not required to complete Mature Applicant Sections 1-11 UNLESS they are also applying for other courses and wish to be considered on the grounds of mature years for those courses. For more information on nursing/midwifery/ graduate programmes go to the Interviews and Assessments section on page 24 of the CAO Handbook.

If you are applying for mature entry to primary teaching in Dublin City University, Marino Institute of Education, Mary Immaculate College Limerick or Maynooth University, you must apply to CAO by 1 February at 5pm. In March, those meeting the eligibility criteria will be sent an email (to the email account registered to their CAO account) with instructions for completing and submitting a supplementary form.

What supporting documentation is required?

Applicants should supply:

- Evidence of any qualifications that have been mentioned in the Mature Applicant Form (within 10 days of applying to CAO)
- Supplementary information that you were unable to include in the space provided
- Any documentation required by each of the institutions to which you are applying (details of same are available from cao.ie/mature)
- If English is not your first language you must provide evidence of competency in the English language.

For more information, contact the Admissions Office of the institution(s) that you are applying to.

Where do I send my documents?

For information on submitting supporting documents, go to page 100 of the CAO Handbook. Documents can be uploaded to your account or posted to CAO. Do not do both.

What is the deadline for submitting my documents?

Applicants should supply their supporting documents to CAO within 10 days of registering with CAO.

How will my qualifications be assessed?

Mature Applicants applying on the basis of mature years are assessed directly by the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Applicants will need to check with individual HEI Admissions Offices for information on how their qualifications will be assessed. You will find HEI contact details at the link below:

cao.ie/hej

When will I be notified of an offer?

Applicants being assessed on the basis of mature years will be considered for offers in Round A, which is usually in early July. Some additional offers may issue to mature applicants in Round Zero (early August).

Mature applicants who are competing on the basis of school leaving qualifications (for example, Leaving Certificate results) will be considered in Round One.



NOTE: we will contact applicants by email. When we send emails, we send them to the email address registered on your CAO application. Please ensure you monitor this email address for messages from CAO. Failure to do so may have serious consequences. A copy of all emails sent by CAO can be viewed in the Correspondence section of your CAO account.

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