

DARE

Disability Access Route to Education

Handbook 2027

Guiding you through your DARE application



www.accesscollege.ie

DARE | **DISABILITY
ACCESS
ROUTE TO
EDUCATION**

Key dates

Deadline	What to do
CAO deadline	Apply to the CAO at www.cao.ie
Monday 1 February 2027 at 5pm	You can apply from Thursday 5 November 2026. Tick 'Yes' when asked if you have a disability. This will bring you the Supplementary Information Form.
DARE deadline	Complete the Online Supplementary Information Form (SIF) on your CAO application. Answer 'Yes' to question 1 to apply to DARE.
Monday 1 March 2027 at 5pm	
Supporting documents deadline	
Wednesday 10 March 2027 at 5pm	Post your supporting document to the CAO: DARE Applications 2027 CAO Tower House Eglinton Street Galway
• Educational Impact Statement • Evidence of Disability • School Statement or psychological reports (if these apply to you)	Don't forget to get a free certificate of posting as proof of postage from the post office.

Contents

About this handbook	1
---------------------	---

Introduction to DARE	3
----------------------	---

Important information for your CAO and DARE application	6
---	---

DARE application timelines	8
----------------------------	---

DARE participating colleges	11
-----------------------------	----

Is DARE for me?	12
-----------------	----

2027 My DARE application: essential information	14
---	----

Section A: Supplementary Information Form (SIF)	14
---	----

Section B: Educational Impact Statement (EIS)	21
---	----

Section C: Evidence of Disability	26
-----------------------------------	----

Guide to providing evidence of your disability	29
--	----

Section D: School Statement	33
-----------------------------	----

Important instructions for your DARE application	34
--	----

Next steps in the application process	36
---------------------------------------	----

Things to remember	39
--------------------	----

About this handbook

In this handbook, DARE wants to help you apply for the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) if your disability has affected your education.

This handbook provides you with an overview of the DARE application process. DARE may be able to help you get into college on reduced points.

We hope to see you at the college of your choice soon.

Advice and support

All participating colleges and universities have a staff member who can advise you on how to apply to DARE. If you wish to speak to someone about your DARE application, or have questions relating to a specific college or university, contact any member of the DARE team listed on page 11.

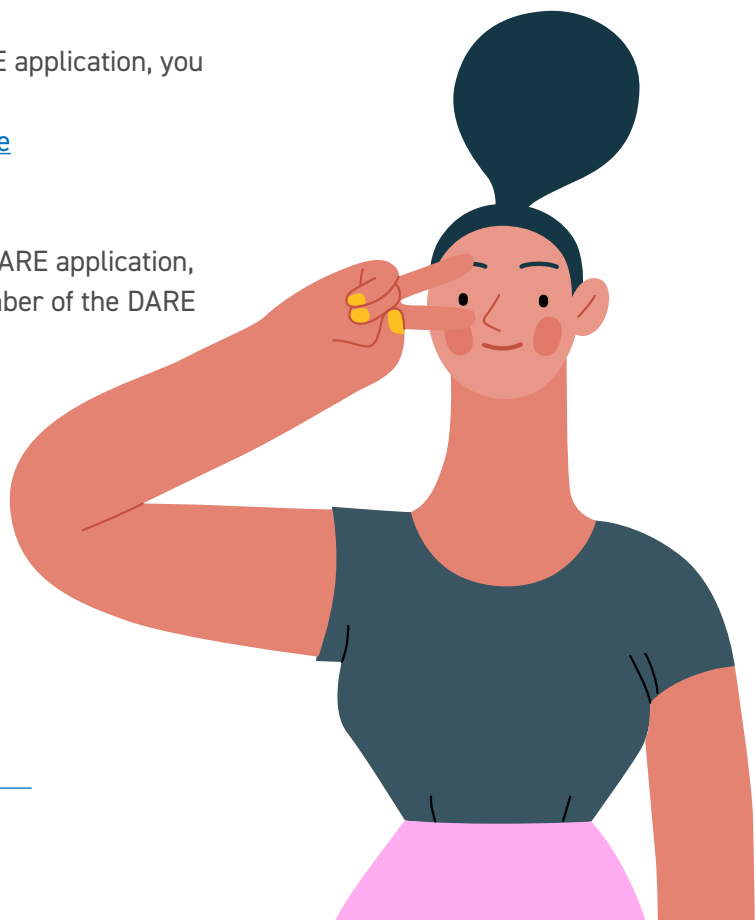


Important: Unfortunately, DARE can't guarantee that all applicants will get a college place even if they are eligible for the DARE scheme. The role of this handbook is to explain the application process. This will help to increase your chances of getting on the course of your choice, where possible.

For questions about completing your online DARE application, you can contact the CAO helpdesk.

- Click on the 'Contact Us' button at www.cao.ie
- Phone 091 509 800

For questions about the criteria for your online DARE application, such as documentation needed, contact any member of the DARE team listed in participating colleges on page 11.



Information on Supplementary Information Form and other supporting documents

Document/Form	What it's for	Who does it?
Supplementary Information Form (SIF) (Also called Section A)	- This online application form provides information on your disability and includes a personal statement. - The SIF/Section A must be completed by Monday 1 March 2027 at 5pm if you wish to apply to DARE.	You with your parent(s) or guardian(s).
Educational Impact Statement	Information on how your disability affects your education.	This form should be completed with you by one of the educational professionals listed below: - Guidance Counsellor, - Learning Support Teacher, - Year Head, - Visiting Teacher, - Deputy School Principal or - School Principal
Evidence of Disability	Evidence of disability and to see what supports to provide.	Relevant professional related to your disability.
School statement or full psychological assessment report AND literacy attainment scores*	Only for students applying with dyslexia or significant literacy difficulties.	Special Educational Needs (SEN) Teacher and signed by School Principal. See page 33 (Section D) for more details. Psychologist (psychological assessment).

*All supporting documents must be posted to CAO by Wednesday 10 March 2027 at 5pm.

Introduction to DARE

What is DARE?

The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a college admissions scheme for school leavers (under 23) whose disability has negatively impacted their learning and educational experience during secondary school. Eligible DARE applicants will compete for DARE reduced points places on college courses.



Who can apply to DARE?

DARE is for school leavers with a documented disability whose secondary school education has been negatively affected due to that disability. To apply, you must be under the age of 23 on 1 January 2027.

You can apply using:

- an Irish Leaving Certificate
- GCE A/AS Levels
- other EU equivalent qualifications.

What types of disabilities does DARE consider?

- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD, including Asperger's Syndrome)
- Blind or vision impaired
- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD) – dyspraxia
- Dyslexia or significant literacy difficulties
- Dyscalculia or significant numeracy difficulties
- Mental Health Condition (such as depression, severe anxiety and schizophrenia)
- Neurological condition (such as brain injury and epilepsy)
- Physical disability (significant mobility difficulties)
- Significant Ongoing Illness (such as cystic fibrosis)
- Speech and language communication disorder

Priority for applicants with a physical or sensory disability



Students with physical disabilities and students who are blind or deaf are under-represented in higher education (college) compared to all students with disabilities.

The colleges that take part in DARE want to increase the numbers of DARE students with these disabilities in college. To do this, these colleges give priority to these groups when allocating reduced points places.

What about mature applicants or Further Education Training students?

Mature and Further Education Training (FET) students have their own admissions routes separate from DARE. They should contact college admissions offices for more information.



What are the benefits of applying to DARE?

You may be offered a place even if you do not have enough points.

If you apply for college or university and meet the DARE criteria, the college or university may offer you a place on your preferred course even if you do not have enough points for it. Each participating college and university has reserved reduced points places for DARE applicants.

How reduced points work

For example, let's say the points requirements for a particular course is 366 points. If you are eligible for DARE, the college could still offer you a place if you have only 355 points. However, like all other applicants applying to college based on their results, you would still need to meet:

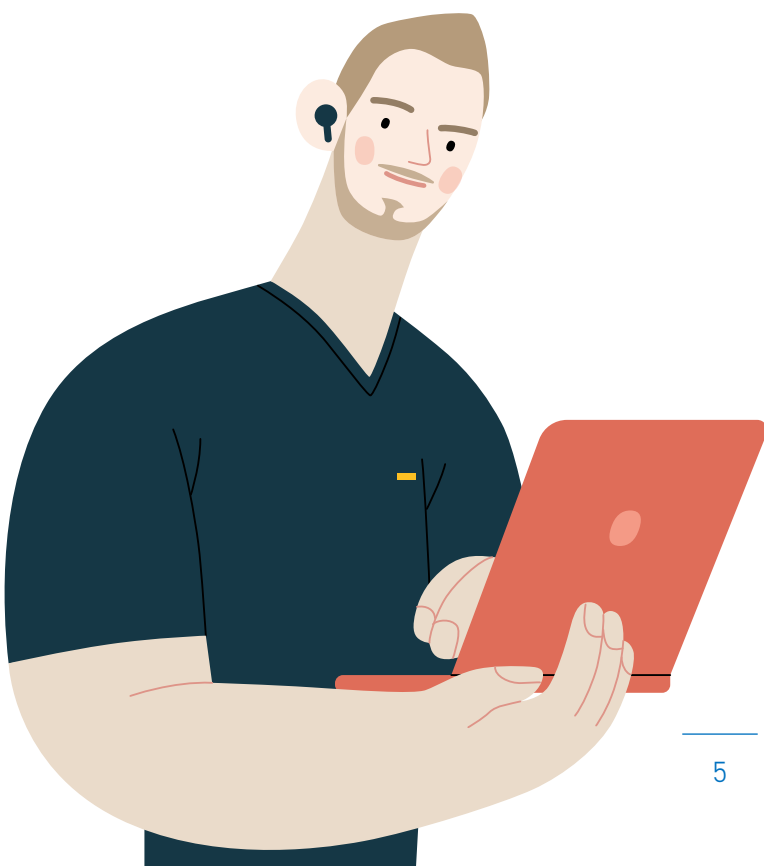
- The minimum entry requirements such as subjects or languages needed for your college course
- Any specific programme requirements

The reduction in points for DARE places can be different every year and depends on the:

- overall number of places available on the course
- number of reserved DARE places on the course
- number of applicants who are eligible for DARE competing for these reserved places.

If you get a place through DARE, you can avail of a variety of academic, personal and social supports while at college.

Did you know that even if you are not eligible for DARE, you can still access additional supports in college?



Important information for your CAO and DARE application

Start gathering documents early

It can take time to get all the information you need. DARE suggests you start to gather information from early November 2026. The documents you need are listed on pages 29-32.

Attend an open day in 2026/2027

- Attend a college open day or DARE/HEAR information event to learn more about the application process and supports that are available in college.
- Scan the QR code to find upcoming open days and DARE/HEAR information events.



Should I apply?

You must be under 23 on 1 January 2027.

To be eligible for DARE, you must also meet the relevant criteria from both the:

- Educational Impact criteria
- Evidence of Disability criteria

DARE explain each of these criteria in this handbook (see pages 21-32).

Full details of the criteria are available on www.accesscollege.ie

Add key information on each document you send



On all documents you post to the CAO, make sure your documents are clear and can be easily read. On each page please include:

- a page number
- CAO application number
- your name
- the date.

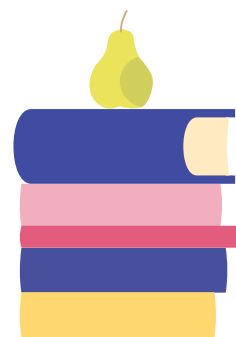
Get proof of postage when sending documents

Keep the originals of all documents you post to DARE and your proof of postage. You can get a free certificate of posting from the post office. If you would like to receive confirmation from CAO that your documents have been received you must include a self-addressed and stamped postcard in your envelope with your DARE documents.

Get in touch with questions

Please contact a DARE advisor in one of the participating colleges if you have any questions about your application.

Find a list of advisors at www.accesscollege.ie/dare/participating-colleges or on page 11.



DARE application timelines

To apply to DARE, you must agree to the DARE Terms and Conditions. The terms and conditions are part of the online form.



You must be under 23 on 1 January 2027

Please complete the following steps:

Date and timeline	What you need to do
From Thursday 5 November 2026	Apply to CAO CAO applications open on Thursday 5 November 2026 at 12 noon.
CAO applications open	• Make a CAO application at: www.cao.ie • Review the DARE Handbook with your parent(s) or guardian(s). • Fill in the online Supplementary Information Form (SIF) at: www.cao.ie • Complete your Educational Impact Statement with your school. • Gather your Evidence of Disability documents (pages 29-32)
Monday 1 February 2027 at 5pm	Apply to CAO at www.cao.ie
CAO deadline	
Monday 1 March 2027 at 5pm	Complete your DARE application To apply for DARE, you must answer 'Yes' to Question 1 ('Do you wish to be considered for DARE?') on Section A of the online Supplementary Information Form by Monday 1 March at 5pm.
DARE deadline	You must also complete Section A (Questions 1-5) of the Supplementary Information Form

Date and timeline	What you need to do
Wednesday 10 March 2027 at 5pm Deadline for other documents	Post supporting documents Submit copies of supporting documents to: DARE Applications 2027 CAO, Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway DARE documents cannot be sent by email or uploaded to your CAO application. Section B: Educational Impact Statement Download Section B: Educational Impact Statement (EIS) and ask your school to complete this form with you. Your School Principal or Deputy School Principal must sign and stamp the form. Post the EIS to the CAO with Section C or with an existing medical report. Section C: Evidence of Disability Download Section C: Evidence of Disability Form and ask the appropriate medical professional to complete it. Only do this if you do not have a report that confirms that your disability meets the DARE criteria. Post it to the CAO. You must provide a full Psychological Assessment Report if you are applying with: - Dyslexia or significant literacy difficulties - Dyscalculia or significant numeracy difficulties An appropriately qualified psychologist should complete this. Applicants applying to DARE with Dyslexia and Dyscalculia do not need to complete Section C: Evidence of Disability form. Section D: School Statement Some people will be applying under the dyslexia or significant literacy difficulties category, but do not have a full Psychological Assessment Report. If so, you should instead download Section D: School Statement. Ask the school to complete this statement. You must then post it to the CAO. Alongside the psychological report or the Section D report, you must provide your attainment scores from testing carried out within the required time limit which is on or after 1 February 2025. The attainment tests are literacy and/or numeracy tests. This must have been done in your school or through an appropriately qualified psychologist or both.

After you apply

April – June 2027 DARE assessment	Your DARE application is assessed to check if you meet the DARE criteria.
In late June 2027 DARE outcomes End June/Early July	You will be notified of the outcome of your DARE application by email. If you receive an ineligible outcome, you can make a review and appeal application.
August 2027 Review and Appeals outcome	If you made a review and appeal application, you will be notified of the outcome by email.
August 2027 Leaving Cert results	• Leaving Certificate exam results come out. • Eligible DARE applicants compete for reduced points places. • CAO makes course offers to eligible applicants. • If you get an offer you want, you must accept it through the CAO.
Late August and early September 2027 Orientation and registration	You must attend the DARE college orientation (an intro to the college) and register with Disability Support Services.

DARE participating colleges

Name of College	Phone	Email	Website
Atlantic Technological University			
Donegal Campus	(074) 918 6172	dare@lyit.ie	www.atu.ie
Galway Campus	(091) 742 392	dare.galwaymayo@atu.ie	www.atu.ie
Sligo Campus	(071) 913 7355	dare@itsligo.ie	www.atu.ie
St Angela's College, Sligo	(071) 917 9633	dare@stangelas.ie	www.atu.ie
Dublin City University	(01) 700 5927	dare@dcu.ie	www.dcu.ie/disability
Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology	(01) 239 4895	dare@iadt.ie	www.iadt.ie
Dundalk Institute of Technology	(042) 937 0237	dare@dkit.ie	www.dkit.ie
Marino Institute of Education	(01) 805 7752	access@mie.ie	www.mie.ie
Mary Immaculate College	(061) 204510	accessoffice@mic.ul.ie	www.mic.ie/access-disability
Maynooth University	(01) 708 4600	dare@mu.ie	www.maynoothuniversity.ie/dare
Munster Technological University			
Cork Campus	(021) 433 5138	dareCork@mtu.ie	www.mtu.ie/access/dare
Kerry Campus	(066) 714 5636	DareKY@mtu.ie	
National College of Art & Design	(01) 636 4200	dare@ncad.ie	www.ncad.ie
National College of Ireland	(01) 584 0411	dare@ncirl.ie	www.ncirl.ie
Pontifical University, Maynooth	(01) 708 4600	dare@mu.ie	www.mu.ie/dare
RCSI University of Medicine & Health Sciences	(01) 402 2228	dare@rcsi.ie	www.rcsi.com/dare
South East Technological University			
Carlow and Wexford Campus	(059) 917 5600	DARE.CW@setu.ie	www.setu.ie/study
Waterford Campus	(051) 302758	DARE.WD@setu.ie	www.setu.ie/study
Technological University Dublin	(01) 220 5097 (01) 220 8618	dare@tudublin.ie	www.tudublin.ie/dare
Technological University of the Shannon			
Athlone Campus	(090) 646 8142	dare.midlands@tus.ie	www.tus.ie
Midwest Campuses	(061) 293 112	dare.midwest@tus.ie	www.tus.ie
Trinity College Dublin	(01) 896 1968	dare@tcd.ie	www.tcd.ie
University College Cork	(021) 490 4807	dare@ucc.ie	www.ucc.ie/dare
University College Dublin	(01) 716 7123	dare@ucd.ie	www.ucd.ie/all
University of Galway	(091) 493 553	dare@universityofgalway.ie	www.universityofgalway.ie
University of Limerick	(061) 213 478	dare@ul.ie	www.ul.ie

Is DARE for me?

To be eligible for DARE, you must meet both the:

- DARE Educational Impact criteria and
- DARE Evidence of Disability criteria





Meeting DARE's Educational Impact criteria

You can find the six indicators for these impact criteria on pages 23 and 24 in Section B: Educational Impact. You don't have to meet all of them. However, you must meet the correct combination of two indicators to meet these criteria.

Please see page 25 of this handbook to see what documents you must submit.

Meeting DARE's Evidence of Disability criteria

DARE require documents showing specific evidence of disability for each type of disability or condition. Please see pages 26-32, Section C: Evidence of Disability, to see what documents you must submit.

You can find information on the criteria DARE use to assess your evidence of disability documents under the Providing Evidence of Your Disability Section on www.accesscollege.ie/dare

Tip: Get help from your parent(s) or guardian(s) and use this handbook to complete your DARE application.



2027 My DARE application: essential information

There are four sections in the DARE application form, please read these carefully. The first section of your DARE application is called Section A: the Supplementary Information Form which must be completed online by Monday 1 March 2027 at 5pm.

Section A:

Supplementary Information Form (SIF)

**Online application deadline:
Monday 1 March 2027 at 5pm**

There are five questions in this section

Complete the online Supplementary Information Form in your CAO application.



Information about you

Please fill out Section A. It is very short and only takes a few minutes to complete. It asks about:

- your disability
- the supports you received in secondary school education
- how your disability affected your education.

You must complete Section A before **Monday 1 March 2027 at 5pm** and answer 'Yes' to question 1 to apply for DARE.

This handbook guides you through the Supplementary Information Form (SIF) for DARE.

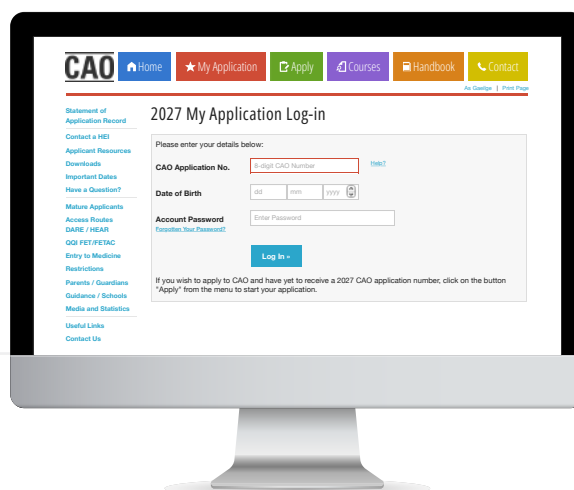
The demo CAO application is available at www.cao.ie/demo. You can use this to practice filling out the CAO form before you complete your application.

STEP 1: Log in

Log into your CAO application and scroll down until you reach the 'Disability' section.

STEP 2: Click on 'Modify Disability'

Click on the 'Modify Disability (& DARE Application) Status' button on the online application form. Follow the instructions given.



Disability Section

If you wish to disclose a disability or apply to the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE), click on the 'Modify Disability Status' button below.

Modify Disability (and DARE Application) Status

STEP 3: Click 'Yes' and then 'Update selection'

Click 'Yes' and then choose 'Update Selection'.

Disability Section

If you wish to disclose your disability please select 'yes' and click on the 'Update Selection' button below. You will then be asked to complete the Supplementary Information Form.

Disability: **Yes** ☐ No ☐

Cancel

Update Selection

STEP 4

Click 'Supplementary Information Form (and apply to DARE)'. This opens the SIF.

Disability

You indicated that you have a Disability.

If you would like to provide more information on your disability and/or, apply to **DARE**, please complete the Supplementary Information Form (SIF).

Instructions for completing the SIF are given in the following section.

Supplementary Information Form (and apply to DARE)

STEP 5

Complete Section A - Supplementary Information form.



Important instructions

Question 1 is very important

To be considered for DARE, you must:

- answer 'Yes' to question 1
- click the 'Submit' button
- do this before Monday 1 March 2027 at 5pm

Click 'SUBMIT' again at the end

Make sure you click on the 'SUBMIT' button when you have finished completing your DARE application form.

Check if you have submitted a previously saved application by the deadline

If you saved your DARE application form before the deadline, do not forget to 'SUBMIT' it by Monday 1 March 2027 at 5pm.

Check your application is completed and correct

To confirm you have completed your online application correctly (Questions 1-5), please:

- go to www.cao.ie
- click on My Application
- enter your login details
- check the information you have entered.

You can make changes to your DARE application until Monday 1 March 2027 at 5pm.

Section A:

The questions you must answer



Q.1 Do you wish to be considered for DARE?

Tick 'Yes', that you want to be considered for DARE.

If you select 'No' to Question 1, DARE will not consider your application for DARE even if you submit supporting documents. You may still get disability supports in college if you are admitted.



Q.1(b) Carry forward eligibility from 2026 to 2027

Carrying forward DARE eligibility from 2026 to 2027

This section is only relevant to applicants who made a DARE application and were eligible in 2026. For example, applicants who are now reapplying to CAO, repeating the Leaving Certificate or taking up a deferred college place from 2026. Please only complete this section if you applied to **AND** were eligible for DARE in 2026.

Eligibility for DARE carries forward for ONE year provided that you:

- Apply to CAO by Monday 1 February 2027 at 5pm,
- No later than Monday 1 March 2027 at 5pm, disclose your disability and/or dyslexia/ significant literacy difficulties or dyscalculia/ significant numeracy difficulties in your CAO application and fully and correctly complete Section A of the Supplementary Information Form (SIF). You must answer 'Yes' to Question 1 ('Do you wish to be considered for DARE?') on Section A of the fully completed SIF by Monday 1 March 2027 at 5pm,
- Supply your correct 2026 CAO number under Question 1(b).

The outcome of your 2026 DARE application was communicated to you by email in June 2026. If you applied to CAO in 2026 and you were deemed eligible for DARE in 2026, then your DARE eligibility can be carried forward to your 2027 application. You must enter your correct 2026 CAO number in the box provided.

- You are still required to complete all relevant sections of the 2027 SIF form (Section A), however you do not need to supply the Educational Impact Statement (Section B) or Evidence of Disability (Section C) as part of your application. You can contact the CAO helpdesk if you require information about your 2026 DARE eligibility.
- You must be under the age of 23 as of 1 January 2027 to carry forward DARE eligibility from 2026 to 2027.

The following deadlines apply for carrying DARE forward for one year

Monday 1 February 2027 at 5pm

You must apply to CAO on this date and by this time.

Monday 1 March 2027 at 5pm

You must provide details of your disability and/or dyslexia or significant literacy difficulties; or dyscalculia or significant numeracy difficulties; in your CAO application.

You must also fully and correctly complete Section A: Supplementary Information Form (SIF).

Monday 1 March 2027 at 5pm

You must answer 'Yes' to Question 1 ('Do you wish to be considered for DARE?') on Section A of the fully completed SIF.



Important Information

You must supply your correct 2026 CAO number under Question 1(b) in the box provided.

DARE emailed you with the outcome of your 2026 DARE application in June 2026.

If you applied to CAO in 2026, and you were deemed eligible for DARE in 2026, then your DARE eligibility can be carried forward to your 2027 application. You must enter your correct 2026 CAO number in the box provided. You must be under the age of 23 on 1 January 2027 to carry forward your DARE eligibility.

You must still complete all relevant sections of the 2027 Section A: Supplementary Information Form (SIF). However, you do not need to provide:

- The Educational Impact Statement (Section B)
- Evidence of Disability (Section C).

You can contact the CAO helpdesk if you require information about your 2026 DARE eligibility.



Q.2 Select your primary disability

Your main disability

Question 2 asks you to indicate your main disability. If you have more than one disability, you should consider your main disability as the one which has the biggest impact on your educational experience. You can only select one main disability. See page 3 for the full list of disabilities.



Q.3 Please let us know if you have any other disabilities

Your other disabilities

Question 3 asks you to select if you have any other disabilities. This is important because if you supply the correct documents for each one, DARE can assess all your disabilities for eligibility under DARE. For this question, you can select more than one disability. If you select 'Yes', that you have another disability, a list of disabilities will be shown. You can select relevant disabilities then.



Q.4 Select supports you have received or that you may need

Supports

Question 4 asks you to list the supports you received in secondary school education and those you may need in college. You can select 'Yes' or 'No' for each of the following supports:

- Accessible accommodation
- Alternative print format
- Assistive technology
- Campus orientation
- Counselling
- Dyslexia support
- Examination support
- Learning support
- Note-taker
- Personal assistant
- Sign language interpreter
- Transport
- Wheelchair access

You will then be asked if there are other supports that you received in secondary school and if you may need them in college that were not included in the list above. Make sure to name the supports.



Q.5 Complete your Personal Statement

Personal statement

This is an opportunity for you to tell us about your experience of being in school and the challenges you faced. This can include:

- your exam performance
- access to texts and materials
- memory or concentration issues
- meeting deadlines
- attendance
- taking part in after school activities
- the supports you needed for the educational impact of your disability
- anything else you think relevant.

Personal Statement tips

- You may use bullet points.
- Write your personal statement and save it in an MS Word or text document.
- You can then copy the text into Q5 online.
- Try to keep the statement short if you can.



What is my Personal Statement used for?

The Disability Support Staff in a college will use the personal statement to help them decide what supports you may need in college. It may also add to the information you and your school provide as part of the Educational Impact Statement (EIS).

Click on the 'Save' button as you complete the form.



Section B:

Educational Impact Statement (EIS)

Document deadline: Wednesday 10 March 2027 at 5pm

The Educational Impact Statement (EIS) allows you and your school to give details of how your disability has affected your secondary school education. The Educational Impact Statement is used to determine if you meet the DARE criteria for educational impact of your disability. The statement also helps us to find out what supports you need in college.

The appropriate person in your school should complete the EIS checklist with you. They should coordinate this section with you. An appropriate person can be a:

- Guidance counsellor
- Learning support teacher
- Year head
- Visiting teacher (for applicants who are blind or vision impaired; or deaf or hard of hearing)
- Deputy School Principal
- School Principal

Your response to each of these questions should guide the teacher when they are deciding what information they may need to gather to complete the rest of the EIS.

The person completing this form should be familiar with the impact of your disability on your academic performance and participation at secondary school.

You must have a PDF viewer installed on your computer before you can use a PDF form. Your school can complete it on a PC or laptop, or the school can print it off and fill it out by hand.

For further information and to download your EIS form, see Access College www.accesscollege.ie/dare-supportingdocuments

Accurately completing the Statement

Not every section of the EIS may be relevant to you. It can depend on the type of disability and how that disability affects your educational experience.

The person completing the form with you may have to talk with other teachers so that they can answer the questions on pages 23-24.

If you are being home-schooled, please see the Frequently Asked Questions section on www.accesscollege.ie for more information about what you need to submit.

Educational Impact Statement (EIS) Checklist

The person filling in the form should complete the checklist with you. This checklist outlines, from your point of view, the impact of your disability on your education.

Your response to each of the six statements should guide your teacher when deciding what information they may need to gather to complete the Educational Impact Statement.

(EIS) Checklist

Please ask the applicant: **Has your educational experience been affected by your disability/condition in any of the following ways? Record their response to each of the following:**

Mark their response to each of the following.

I needed and received supports in school or exam accommodations.	Yes ☐	No ☐
My school or class attendance has been disrupted.	Yes ☐	No ☐
It has impacted on my overall experience of school.	Yes ☐	No ☐
It has impacted on my school exam results and learning.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I have experienced other educational impacts not listed above.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I have dyslexia/significant literacy difficulties or dyscalculia/significant numeracy difficulties and my literacy and/or numeracy abilities have been impacted on.	Yes ☐	No ☐

How to complete the Educational Impact Statement (EIS)

- You or your teacher should download the Educational Impact Statement from the following link www.accesscollege.ie/dare-supportingdocuments.
- Your school must complete the form and print off all pages.
- You and your parent(s) or guardian(s) should sign the form.
- Your School Principal or Deputy School Principal must also sign and stamp the form.



Meeting DARE's Educational Impact Criteria

You must have experienced certain impacts on your education due to your disability to meet the DARE Educational Impact Criteria. In particular, you must have experienced a combination of at least two indicators of educational impact.

Applicants with dyslexia/significant literacy difficulties or dyscalculia/significant numeracy difficulties must meet indicator 6 plus one other indicator to meet the DARE educational impact criteria.

All other applicants must meet two indicators from indicators 1 to 5.

Where there is more than one part to a question, if you answer 'Yes' to just one part, that counts as one of the two needed criteria.

When you answer these questions, it will help you see if you meet the criteria.

1. Intervention and supports

- Have you received additional support in school due to the impact of your disability? **OR**
- Have you received exam accommodations for the Leaving Certificate?

2. Attendance and disruption

- Have you missed a significant number of school days due to your disability? **OR**
 - Have you missed a significant number of classes or been unable to complete full school days? This may have been due to, for example, personal care needs, appointments for learning support or fatigue. It could also be that your disability or condition means that you need to take breaks from classes.
-

3. School experience and well-being

- Has your potential to take part in extra-curricular activity been limited because of your disability or condition? **OR**
 - Have you ever during your time in secondary school education, needed and received support due to the emotional impact of your disability or condition? **OR**
 - Does it take a considerable amount of time for you to complete schoolwork or study due to the impact of your condition? **OR**
 - Is the time you spend on your schoolwork or study limited due to managing your disability or condition?
-

4. Learning and exam results

- If your disability or condition began or deteriorated (got worse) while you were attending secondary school, has this impacted on your exam results? **OR**
 - Has your disability caused you to experience additional challenges compared with your classmates in:
 - completing homework
 - studying for exams
 - taking part in class
 - accessing the curriculum? **OR**
 - Do you attend a supported or specialised school, for example, the School for the Deaf?
-

5. Other educational impact

- Is there any other educational impact related to your disability not covered under the previous sections?
-

6. Dyslexia or dyscalculia

Dyslexia or significant literacy difficulties attainment scores

- Do you have two literacy scores at or below the 10th percentile from testing carried out on or after 1 February 2025?

OR

Dyscalculia or significant numeracy difficulties attainment scores.

- Do you have one numeracy score at or below the 10th percentile from testing carried out on or after 1 February 2025?
-

You must submit an Educational Impact Statement (EIS) from your current secondary school

If you are no longer attending school, you should submit an EIS from the most recent secondary school that you attended.

DARE will not consider EIS forms completed by a PLC or FET college when checking if you are eligible for DARE.

You may need to submit an EIS from more than one school

Your current school may not be the only one you have attended for all of your secondary school education. If this is the case, you should submit a second EIS from your previous school if you need to provide more information on the impact of your disability on your education.

Signatures and meeting the deadline

When your school prints the EIS statement, you and your parent(s) or guardian(s) (if you are under 18 on 1 January 2027) should sign the form to show you agree that the content is accurate and complete.

It must be signed by the School Principal or Deputy School Principal and include the school stamp.

You may not change the responses on the EIS after it is signed by the School Principal or Deputy School Principal.

If DARE think an EIS has false information, DARE may contact schools to check the information submitted. Applicants found to have changed the EIS will not be eligible.

Please make sure the Educational Impact Statement is posted to the CAO to arrive by Wednesday 10 March 2027 at 5pm.





Section C:

Evidence of Disability

Document deadline: Wednesday 10 March 2027 at 5pm

You must submit evidence of your disability as part of your application

You can download the Evidence of Disability Form 2027 from the following page

www.accesscollege.ie/dare-supportingdocuments

DARE use your evidence of disability documents to check if you meet DARE's evidence of disability criteria. DARE colleges and universities also use this information to decide the kinds of supports you might need when you get to college.

Your application will only be complete when you provide evidence of your disability by **Wednesday 10 March 2027 at 5pm.**

If you would like to find out more information on DARE's eligibility criteria, please go to www.accesscollege.ie/dare

Getting your Evidence of Disability completed by the appropriate professional

When submitting your evidence of disability documents, make sure:

- It has been completed and signed by the appropriate professional (a list of the appropriate professionals for each disability type is on pages 29-32).
- The appropriate professional has filled in all parts of the form.
- The writing on the form is easy to read.
- There is a clear diagnosis of your disability. (Documents that only reference or state an initial or likely, or previous diagnosis of your condition or disability are not enough.)
- It contains the stamp of the appropriate professional or is on headed paper or is accompanied by their business card.

Types of acceptable evidence of disability

There are several ways to provide evidence of your disability. You can:

- Use an existing report which you already have.
- Get an Evidence of Disability Form 2027 completed by the appropriate professional (specialist or consultant).
- Please check the tables on pages 29-32 for information on the type(s) of acceptable evidence you can provide to complete your DARE application. They also give you more information on the time limits of reports. Some medical reports must be dated within the last three years on or after 1 February 2024, so please read these carefully to see what you need.

Are you unsure or have a question?

If you are unsure about the evidence you need to provide, please contact a member of the DARE team in participating colleges.

You can find contact details on page 11.



Section C:

Evidence of Disability Form

GP verification and other professional verification needed

DARE can only accept diagnoses made by an appropriate professional (specialist or consultant). However, DARE knows it can be difficult at times to contact or get a response from the appropriate professional to confirm your existing diagnosis of a disability or to get an updated report. That is why DARE encourages you to contact your general practitioner (GP) for assistance.

Your GP can **partly** help to verify (confirm) your diagnosis. DARE will still need the other professional's document confirming your diagnosis, and that professional must have signed (or stamped) and dated this document.

Important: If you **ONLY** send us a diagnosis of your disability that your general practitioner (GP) made, DARE can't accept it. You will not be eligible for consideration under DARE.



Next steps after you get evidence needed

When you get the verification of your disability from your GP, you need to send us copies of the following:

- your GP's confirmation (verification) of your disability - by completing Section C: Evidence of Disability Form - you don't need to send your whole medical file. However, you must send a copy of the document which confirms your diagnosis from the appropriate professional and is within the time limit (if one applies)
- AND**
- the DARE appropriate professional's document which must be signed and dated on their headed paper or sent along with their business card.

Time limits apply on some documents confirming diagnosis

Some documents confirming a diagnosis of a disability from appropriate professionals have no age limit, but others have a time limit of three years. If you have one or more of the following four conditions, you need to check if the document you got from a DARE appropriate professional about your diagnosis is still in date:

- ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder)
- ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)
- Mental Health condition
- Significant Ongoing Illness



Guide to providing evidence of your disability

This is a guide to help you identify what supporting documents you need as part of your DARE application. For full details, visit the 'Providing evidence of your disability' section on www.accesscollege.ie

You can also contact a member of the DARE Team for guidance at participating colleges.

Type of disability	Appropriate documents	From what type of professional	How old can the report be?
Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	Evidence of Disability Form 2027 OR Existing report	Consultant psychiatrist OR Psychologist OR Neurologist OR Paediatrician	Less than three years. Dated after 1 February 2024. Report must include tests used for diagnosis.
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (including Asperger's Syndrome)	Evidence of Disability Form 2027 OR Existing report	Consultant psychiatrist OR Psychologist OR Neurologist OR Paediatrician	Any age. Report must include tests used for diagnosis.
Blind Vision impaired	Evidence of Disability Form 2027 OR Existing report	Ophthalmologist OR Ophthalmic surgeon	Any age

Type of disability	Appropriate documents	From what type of professional	How old can the report be?
Deaf Hard of hearing Students may apply under one of the following categories: (A) Applicants who have an audiogram (B) Applicants who attend a School for the Deaf (C) Applicants with a cochlear implant	(A) Applicants who have an audiogram: An audiogram. (B) Applicants who attend a School for the Deaf. You must have a letter confirming your attendance from Principal of School for the Deaf OR Evidence of Disability Form 2027. (C) Applicants with a cochlear implant: You must have an existing report confirming cochlear implant OR Evidence of Disability Form 2027 DARE do not accept reports from high-street retailers	(A) Applicants who have an audiogram: A diagnostic or clinical audiologist registered with the Irish Academy of Audiologists (IAA) OR HSE audiologist. (B) School for the Deaf: Principal of School for the Deaf. (C) Applicants with a cochlear implant: Ear, nose and throat (ENT) consultant OR Cochlear Implant Programme Coordinator	Any age
Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD) – Dyspraxia	Evidence of Disability Form 2027 OR Existing report	Occupational therapist OR Neurologist OR Physiotherapist OR Paediatrician	Any age
Mental Health Condition	Evidence of Disability Form 2027 OR Existing report	Consultant psychiatrist on specialist register	Less than three years. Dated after 1 February 2024.
Neurological condition (including brain injury and epilepsy)	Evidence of Disability Form 2027 OR Existing report	Neurologist OR Other relevant consultant	Any age

Type of disability	Appropriate documents	From what type of professional	How old can the report be?
Physical disability	Evidence of Disability Form 2027 OR Existing report	Orthopaedic consultant OR Other relevant consultant appropriate to the disability or condition	Any age
Significant Ongoing Illness	Evidence of Disability Form 2027 OR Existing report	Relevant consultant or specialist appropriate to the disability or condition	Less than three years. Dated after 1 February 2024.
Speech and language communication disorder	Evidence of Disability Form 2027 OR Existing report	Speech and language therapist	Any age
Dyslexia or significant literacy difficulties* (please see important information below)	(A) Applicants who have a psychological assessment report identifying dyslexia must submit this report	(A) Psychologist	Any age
Students may apply under one of the following categories: (A) Applicants who have a psychological assessment report identifying dyslexia OR (B) Applicants who have significant literacy difficulties but do not have a psychological assessment report identifying dyslexia	(B) Applicants who have significant literacy difficulties but do not have a psychological assessment report identifying dyslexia must submit Section D: School Statement	(B) Special Educational Needs (SEN) Teacher The School Principal or Deputy School Principal must sign the Section D: School Statement	

Type of disability	Appropriate documents	From what type of professional	How old can the report be?
Dyscalculia or significant numeracy difficulties* (please see important information below)	Psychological Assessment Report	Psychologist	Any age

***Important note for:**

- applicants with dyslexia or significant literacy difficulties
- applicants with dyscalculia or significant numeracy difficulties

If you have dyslexia or significant literacy difficulties, you must submit:

- a full psychological assessment report
- OR**
- Section D: School Statement.

In addition, applicants with dyslexia or significant literacy difficulties must also have two literacy attainment scores at or below the 10th percentile (Standard Score of 81 or below). This must be from testing carried out on or after 1 February 2025.

Applicants with dyscalculia or significant numeracy difficulties

Applicants with dyscalculia or significant numeracy difficulties must submit a full psychological assessment report. In addition, applicants with dyscalculia or significant numeracy difficulties must have one numeracy attainment score at or below the 10th percentile (Standard Score of 81 or below). This must be from testing carried out on or after 1 February 2025.

Where to get your attainment scores

You can get your attainment scores from one (or a combination) of the following sources:

- scores from school-based attainment testing
- scores from attainment tests carried out by a psychologist.

Testing must have been carried out on or after **1 February 2025**.

All applicants must submit an EIS completed by their school.



Tips for submitting evidence of disability reports

If you submit an existing report, make sure it has all the information below

- It is completed and signed by the appropriate professional.
- It includes the same details as requested on the Section C: Evidence of Disability Form 2027.
- It is within the appropriate time limit.
- It contains the stamp of the professional or is on headed paper or comes with their business card.

Section D:

School Statement



Document deadline: Wednesday 10 March 2027 at 5pm

This section is only relevant if you are applying under the dyslexia or significant literacy difficulties category. This checklist can help.

Are you applying under the dyslexia or significant literacy difficulties category?	Yes ☐	No ☐
If 'Yes', do you have a psychological assessment report identifying dyslexia?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Please submit that if yes.		
If 'No', you must submit Section D: School Statement in support of your application.		
You can download the Section D document from: www.accesscollege.ie/dare-supportingdocuments		
The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Teacher in your school must complete your School Statement.	☐	
The School Principal or Deputy School Principal in your school must sign it.	☐	
You must also submit an Educational Impact Statement with literacy attainment scores dated on or after 1 February 2025.	☐	

Important instructions for your DARE application

1. Contact DARE if you need help

If you need advice or guidance about your application, please contact any member of the DARE team at the participating colleges (see page 11 for contact details).

2. Give yourself time

Very often it can take several months to gather your Evidence of Disability documents so start gathering them as soon as possible.

3. Stick to timelines

All deadline dates are strictly followed and we do not accept late applications.

4. Tell us about all of your disabilities

DARE can assess all of your disabilities for eligibility under DARE. This means you must give us the correct Evidence of Disability documents for all the disabilities that you tell us about.

5. You must send us documents in English or Irish

You need a certified English translation of documents not issued in English or Irish in the first instance. You also need certified A4 photocopies of these original documents. A professional translation service can help certify all documents if you ask them to. This may incur a fee.

You are responsible

You are responsible for making sure that you have completed your DARE application fully, accurately and on time. Your school is not responsible for your application form or for sending documents on your behalf to the CAO.

DARE policy on correspondence

DARE will only discuss your application with you, your parent(s) or guardian(s) or a person nominated by you. Any correspondence from a third party will not be accepted.

Please check your email for important CAO notifications about the DARE application process.



Important: posting documents to CAO

Where to send your documents

By Wednesday 10 March 2027 at 5pm, post your Educational Impact Statement and Evidence of Disability documents to:

DARE Applications 2027
CAO
Tower House
Eglinton Street
Galway

Always include your CAO number

You must include your name and correct 2027 CAO number on all documents you send to CAO.

How to label your pages

On the front of each page, write:

- the page number
- your CAO application number
- your name
- the date.

Keep originals

Keep the originals of all documents and proof of postage.

Get proof of postage

You can get a free certificate of posting as proof of postage from the post office.

Enclose stamped postcard

Include a stamped, self-addressed postcard with your documents. DARE will send this back to you, so you know that your documents arrived safely at CAO.

DARE will not contact you about missing, incomplete or incorrect documents, so please make sure that you have supplied all documents DARE ask for by Wednesday 10 March 2027 at 5pm. Please contact a DARE advisor if you have any questions before you submit your documents.



Next steps in the application process

What happens next

Once you have provided your Evidence of Disability documents and Educational Impact Statement by Wednesday 10 March 2027, DARE will assess your application to see if you are DARE eligible.

How DARE assess applications

To be eligible for DARE, your disability must have had a negative impact on your secondary school education.

DARE can only assess your application if you have provided:

- appropriate Evidence of Disability documents that meet the DARE criteria.
- an Educational Impact Statement that meets the DARE criteria – you must meet the correct combination of educational impact indicators. (See pages 23-24)

Documents can only be assessed if you answered Yes to Question 1 on Section A of the fully completed SIF by Wednesday 1 March 2027 at 5pm. These criteria were established with various expert groups across the sector. These include college professionals, practitioners, medical and psychological and disability professionals.



What happens if I am eligible for DARE?

You can compete for one of the DARE reduced points places on offer in the colleges and universities taking part in DARE.

You will receive an email with the outcome of your DARE application in late June 2027.

You must still meet minimum entry and course requirements.

You must meet the minimum entry and course requirements to be considered for one of the reduced points places. For example, this may mean that you must achieve a certain grade in a particular subject.

Please also read page 39 where DARE explains language waivers (exemptions) as these can be relevant for some applicants.

Check out requirements

You can also find details of places available and minimum course entry requirements on www.accesscollege.ie



What happens if I am ineligible for DARE?

DARE will let you know why your application was ineligible.

You may still get into college if you meet the entry requirements for the course of your choice if you have enough points and there are enough places. If you do get into college this way, you can still get many academic, personal and social supports while studying at college.



I am ineligible – can I have my application reviewed?

If you receive an ineligible outcome, you can have your application reviewed through the Review and Appeals process. This process aims to make sure that all DARE applicants are treated fairly, and the assessment procedures are applied consistently.

You can find further information on the Review and Appeals process at www.accesscollege.ie/dare/review-appeals



Who can I contact if I receive an ineligible outcome?

If you get an ineligible outcome, you can contact participating colleges who have a staff member who can advise you on how to apply to DARE's Review and Appeals process.

You can find the list of participating colleges on page 11 of this handbook or visit www.accesscollege.ie



If I am not eligible for DARE, are other supports available if I get a college place?

If you are not eligible for DARE, there are other supports available to you in college. All students with a verified disability, regardless of whether they come through DARE or not, can get many academic, personal and social supports while studying at college.

You can get more information on the support available in college at www.accesscollege.ie

You should also apply for financial support for college. SUSI stands for Student Universal Support Ireland. SUSI is the main source of financial assistance available from the Irish State for students in full-time:

- Post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLCs)
- Higher education undergraduate courses
- It offers different types of grants to students who qualify.

Steps to take

- Create a SUSI account as soon as SUSI opens each year
- For detailed information on financial support and student grants when going to higher education, log on to: www.susi.ie.
- Use the **Grant Eligibility Reckoner** to find out if you meet SUSI's criteria to receive student grant funding. [SUSI Eligibility Indicator - Get Started](#)
- Apply early and return the documents it requests as soon as possible.
- Tick the SUSI option on your CAO application to share your college course details with SUSI.

Things to know

Have you considered...

Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)?



You should apply to both HEAR and DARE if it is relevant to you. The Higher Education Access Route is a college admissions scheme for school leavers (under 23) who live in the Republic of Ireland who due to their economic or social background are underrepresented in higher education (college). If your secondary school education has been impacted by your socioeconomic background, if eligible, HEAR may help you get into college on reduced points.

For more information see www.accesscollege.ie/hear

You can apply for both DARE and HEAR

What to do if you are eligible for both DARE and HEAR

Students with disabilities from disadvantaged backgrounds face the greatest obstacles when it comes to going to college. Colleges taking part in DARE and HEAR have agreed to prioritise students with disabilities from disadvantaged backgrounds when allocating reduced points places. The aim is to increase the numbers of students in higher education facing this 'double disadvantage'.

Important: If you are HEAR and DARE eligible, you are considered a priority applicant and can compete for reduced points priority offers.

Things to remember

Language waivers

Some colleges have language general entry/matriculation requirements for some courses. Before applying for any course, it is important to check the minimum entry requirements on the college website and prospectus. If you do not meet these requirements and you believe you may be entitled to an exemption, you should make an application to the relevant body (see www.cao.ie/exemptions).

Please note if you have been granted an exemption from completing Irish at secondary school by the Department of Education, it will still be necessary to follow the steps outlined at www.cao.ie/exemptions in order to obtain an exemption from a college's minimum entry requirements. A school exemption will not be sufficient so make sure to check this out.

Fitness to practise

Students on most professional health or teaching courses must complete a medical declaration form at some point. This form confirms that they do not have a disability or Significant Ongoing Illness that may delay or prevent them starting or completing the professional programme.

Further information is available on www.accesscollege.ie/dare/help/

Checklist for application

Educational Impact Statement Complete with your school.	☐
Evidence of Disability Check that your documents have been completed by the appropriate medical or educational professional – within the last three years if applicable. (See pages 29-32 for age limits of reports.)	☐
Check that your Evidence of Disability is: Signed, AND	☐
Stamped or on headed paper or comes with a business card	☐
Applicants with dyslexia or significant literacy difficulties Applicants with dyslexia or significant literacy difficulties must submit: A full psychological assessment report of any age OR Section D: School Statement AND	☐
Attainment scores (literacy) dated on or after 1 February 2025	☐
People with dyscalculia or significant numeracy difficulties Applicants with dyscalculia or significant numeracy difficulties must submit: A full psychological assessment report of any age AND	☐
Attainment scores (numeracy) dated on or after 1 February 2025	☐

Send your supporting documents to:

DARE Applications 2027

CAO, Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway

by Wednesday 10 March 2027 at 5pm.

DARE | **DISABILITY
ACCESS
ROUTE TO
EDUCATION**

We wish you the
best with your
application
to DARE

