

RESTRICTIONS

As a CAO applicant you may experience one or more of the following restrictions based on your course choices, your category of application, or restrictions imposed by the HEIs that you wish to apply to. Please read the following sections carefully:

General Restrictions

1. Making a late application – individual HEIs may have restrictions on late applications, for example, some HEIs may not consider late applications from certain categories of applicant. In particular, mature applicants, and those presenting qualifications other than recently taken EU school-leaving examinations, should check the relevant HEI website before making a late application.

APPLICATION



2. Making changes to your course choices – there are a number of intervals when you can make changes to your CAO application. However, if you are applying for a restricted course, or if you are a mature applicant, you may not be able to introduce courses using the free Change of Mind facility which opens in May and closes on the 1 July at 5pm. For more information about making changes to your application go to page 27.



Restricted Courses

3. Applying for a restricted course – you must have applied to CAO by 1 February 2026 at 5pm if you wish to apply for a restricted course. The restricted course must be included on your course choices list by that date, or added to your application using the facility to amend course choices (for a fee of €10) before 1 March at 5pm.

Restricted courses normally require additional assessment procedures, for example, the submission of a portfolio, an oral assessment or interview, or a written assessment. Restricted courses are identified in the handbook by the

words “(Restricted - see page 3)” on the same line as the restricted course’s title. Please make sure to acquaint yourself with the additional requirements, if any, of the restricted course(s) that you have applied for and go to page 24 for more information about interviews and assessments.

Exception: If a restricted course shares the exact same assessment procedures with a course you had applied for by 1 February 2026, you may be permitted to introduce it on a Change of Mind. You should consult with the relevant HEI before introducing such a course.

Mature Applicants

4. Mature applicants – most HEIs will require mature applicants, who wish to be assessed on mature grounds, to have applied to CAO by 1 February 2026 at 5pm, and include course choices by that date or add them using the facility to amend course choices (for a fee of €10) before 1 March at 5pm. (This restriction does not apply if the applicant wishes to be considered on the basis of school leaving qualifications only.) For more information about applying to CAO on the basis of mature years go to www.cao.ie/mature

Supplementary Admissions Routes

5. Applying for DARE and/or HEAR – to be considered for DARE and/or HEAR, applicants must have registered on the CAO system by 1 February 2026 at 5pm. To apply to DARE, you must answer YES to Question 1 (‘Do you wish to be considered for DARE?’) on Section A of the fully completed Supplementary Information Form (SIF) by 5pm on 1 March 2026.

To apply to HEAR, you must indicate on your CAO application that you wish to apply for HEAR and fully and correctly complete all elements of the online HEAR form by 5pm on 1 March 2026.

Supporting documents for DARE and/or HEAR applicants must be sent to CAO offices before 10 March 2026 at 5pm.