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CAO Press Release

CAO Advice for Applicants

The CAO application deadline of February 1st at 5:15 pm is fast approaching, and it is extremely important that anyone considering applying to CAO for an undergraduate place at a higher education institution gets to work immediately.

At this stage in the year, almost one-third of applicants will have started their application, but there are still a lot of people out there who have not yet taken the first step.

If you have yet to register on the system, or if you have registered and are still unsure about the courses that you wish to apply for, it is important that you take note of the following points:

1. Apply early.

The CAO online application form allows you to enter your personal information and register on the system without having to enter your course choices. It is best to start your application now and get your application number; you can then login to your account using the 'My Application' facility to add or remove or change course choices for no extra charge up to January 31st. Applicants who apply online before January 20th at 5:15 pm benefit from a discounted application fee of €25 – the normal application fee is €40.

2. Do not leave your application to the last minute.

Please allow for problems such as your browser timing out, your payment not processing, or any other issues which may result in you being unable to submit your application by the deadline. All application deadlines are final.

3. Check that you meet the minimum entry requirements for the courses that you are interested in.

Every year CAO receives a large number of applications that do not meet the minimum entry requirements. Applicants who obtain the points for a specific course will not be offered a place if they have not met the minimum entry requirements (e.g. a third language or a Higher C3 in a specific subject).

4. Enter your course choices in genuine order of preference.

Applicants should not place their course choices based on assumptions about points or expected examination results, but on the basis of their genuine preference from one to ten on both the Level 8 and Level 7/6 lists.

5. Watch out for restrictions.

Most applicants will be familiar with the change of mind facility which opens in May and is available until 5:15 pm on July 1; it is important to note, however, that a number of courses cannot be introduced at this stage including Mature Nursing, Medicine and courses that require a portfolio or interview. These courses are highlighted in the CAO Handbook and in the prospectuses of the higher education institutions. Similarly, applicants applying through the 'Late Application' facility, which closes on May 1st at 5:15 pm, cannot apply for restricted courses and will also pay an increased application fee of €50 for online applications or €80 for paper applications.

6. The Change of Course Choices facility becomes available from February 5th to March 1st.

After the normal application closing date, the Change of Course Choices facility becomes available for applicants who have applied to CAO by the deadline. This allows registered

applicants the opportunity to introduce or remove courses for a fee of €10, including restricted courses

7. HEAR and DARE applicants must start preparing supporting documents early.

For applicants applying for the HEAR and DARE schemes you must apply to CAO by February 1st and complete the online HEAR or DARE (or both) forms before March 1st at 5:15 pm. All supporting documents must be received by CAO by April 1st at 5:15 pm – collecting all of the necessary supporting documents can take eight weeks or more, so it is essential that you start your application early.

The majority of applicants apply to CAO online, and we encourage all applicants to use this method as it allows greater flexibility for the applicant and helps to reduce the number of errors recorded.

There are a number of useful resources available on the CAO website including a Demo Application facility, the CAO Handbook, and CAO video guides. Applicants with queries about their application are encouraged to review the CAO Handbook, the FAQs section of the CAO website, and if their question is not answered they can e-mail CAO through the 'Contact Us' page at www.cao.ie.

A guide for parents and guardians is also available to download from the 'Information for Parents' section of the CAO website.

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For more information contact Eileen Keleghan, communications officer, CAO on 091 509800