

Dear Principal/Guidance Counsellor,

September 2023

This CAO mailing contains the HEAR DARE application literature and a small quantity of CAO Handbooks, as well as CAO information posters containing the application closing dates and promoting the interactive CAO Handbook.

An interactive/digital version of the CAO Handbook will be available for students to view at www.cao.ie/handbook over the coming weeks. Similar to the 2023 version, this interactive handbook presents course information in a user-friendly, searchable format designed specifically for viewing on mobile devices (the model is adaptable and intuitive so it will display differently on desktop, tablet and mobile). Students will have an opportunity to personalise their own handbook and save their courses of interest to their device. A version of the personalised handbook can be saved by the student to view offline should access to the internet be an issue. Please take some time to view the **new features** in the **2024 version**. A pdf version of the handbook is also available.

Following on from feedback received at the November conferences, the Handbook section of the website now contains printable PDFs of the 2024 course pages. These condensed PDFs will contain all of the course codes, titles, special conditions (e.g. restricted, portfolio, audition, etc.), and the name of the campus as they appear in the Handbook at time of going to press. Changes (such as cancelled courses, added courses and course title changes) will as usual be published in the Important Changes section of the CAO website.

CAO applications may be made online from 6 November at noon and we ask that you remind your students to register as early as possible to encourage familiarity with the system. As you know, the courses that they select now can be amended up to 1 February for no extra charge, and students who apply online before 5pm on 20 January 2023 may avail of the discounted application fee of €30. **As always, we ask that you encourage your students to apply early and supply any supporting documentation (e.g. HEAR DARE documentation) as soon as possible.**

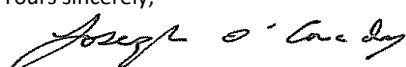
I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to some upcoming events and additional information:

- The provisional dates for the **2023 CAO Autumn Conferences**, in association with the Institute of Guidance Counsellors and the Higher Education Institutions, are 7, 8, 14 & 15 November at Kilkenny Ormonde Hotel, Radisson Blu Hotel Limerick, Hillgrove Hotel Monaghan, and Johnstown Estate Enfield respectively. An online webinar will also be offered on 10 November for those who are unable to attend an in-person event. Full details and an online registration link will be available on the CAO website (Guidance/Schools section) from the 6 October at noon. **Online registration will close on 27 October at midnight.**
- From 2024, the number of application categories on the CAO application form will be reduced to seven, with category 3 (2001 or earlier FETAC Level 5/6 (NCVA Level 2/3) Exams) and category 6 (Further Education) being merged into the 'Other Further Education' category.
- A number of single/double page information sheets are currently being prepared based on the different categories of qualifications, for example, Leaving Certificate, QQI FET, GCE and Mature, which you will be able to find in the 'Applicants' section of the 2024 website.
- **Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)** - Applicants with a disability will be able to complete Section A (Application Information) of the **Supplementary Information Form (SIF)** when they apply online. Applicants who wish to be considered for the DARE scheme must complete this form and indicate on the form that they wish to be considered for DARE by answering Yes to Question 1 by 5pm on 1 March. DARE applicants must submit the DARE Educational Impact Statement (EIS) and also Evidence of Disability to arrive in CAO no later than 5pm on 15 March.
- **Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)** - Applicants from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds may complete the HEAR online application form by 5pm on 1 March and submit supporting documentation to be considered for supplementary entry and post-entry supports to arrive in CAO no later than 5pm on 15 March.
- Information on DARE and HEAR can be found on www.accesscollege.ie

In November, you will be able to view the demonstration version of the online application form to see how the entire 2024 online application form is set out, including the SIF/DARE and HEAR sections.

Again, we look forward communicating with you at one of the conference events in November, and if you have any questions or require any assistance throughout the year please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



Joseph O'Grady,

General Manager