

Central Applications Office, Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway, H91 X25V, Ireland.

Dear Principal/Guidance Counsellor,

December 2025

1 Points scores, offers and acceptances data, and specific statistical information

To view the above information, please go to the 'Guidance/Schools' page, click into 'Schools Message Board'. The charts will show the minimum points scores that were required for entry to courses in 2025. In addition, for each course we also show the mid-point score of those who were offered places. Summary data about 2025 offers and acceptances is also included. The points charts are in Excel format to allow you to sort and filter the information. This will allow you to filter by subject area, level, institution, round, etc. We hope you find this information helpful.

If you wish to have data on the destinations of your students, please see letter included in the 'Schools Message Board'.

2 Important Changes to courses in the 2026 Handbook

Since the publication of the 2026 Handbook, some institutions have made changes to the courses on offer. This information is available on the CAO website (go to www.cao.ie/handbook) and will be updated as we receive new information from HEIs. The course information in the personalised version of the CAO Handbook is updated on a weekly basis.

3 Additional information available on the CAO website

We ask you to encourage applicants to visit the CAO website and become familiar with the services on offer, particularly in the 'Applicants' section. Applicants should also be encouraged to regularly interact with their CAO account, particularly the 'Correspondence' section which will contain a log of all of the emails from CAO containing important updates and instructions. The 'Have a Question' page contains a virtual assistant and a number of FAQs broken down by category which your students/clients should find helpful.

We have prepared and placed on the website the following information which Guidance Counsellors have requested (this will be updated as more information comes to hand from HEIs): Calendar of test and interview dates for 2026; Details of HEI Open Days; Links to HEI prospectuses and contact details for Admissions Officers, School Liaison and Access Officers (go to cao.ie/hei); A HEI map (go to cao.ie/heimap) and a Demo Application facility. In the 'Guidance/Schools' page you will find a link to 'Guidance Counsellor Resources' which contains a slideshow presentation on the CAO process, a presentation and guide for parents and guardians, posters and video guides for sharing on social media.

A checklist has been added to the Mature Applicant section of the website – go to www.cao.ie/mature to view.

4 Supplementary Entry Routes

The Supplementary Information Form for applicants with a disability or specific learning difficulty has two purposes: to facilitate applicants in alerting HEIs of any special needs and any facilities that might be required; and to supply information to be considered for supplementary admission routes including the DARE scheme. The HEAR form should be completed by applicants who wish to be considered on the basis of socio-economic disadvantage. DARE and HEAR online application forms must be completed by 5pm on 1 March (applicants must have applied to CAO by 1 February at 5pm). Information is available on the website www.accesscollege.ie and in the Access Routes section of the CAO website. We ask that you encourage students interested in applying for either scheme to start the process early and ensure that they have their documentation submitted to CAO well in advance of the published deadline of 5pm on 10 March 2026. **Applicants should allow for potential delays in gathering documentation from third parties and remember that CAO deadlines are final.**

5 Exemptions

It is important to note that exemptions are a separate matter to supplying HEIs with information about a disability or specific learning difficulty. If an applicant, for any reason, is seeking exemptions from minimum entry requirements (e.g.

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exemptions from Irish or modern language requirements) then they should contact the Admissions Offices of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) they are applying to (or, in the case of NUI institutions, they should apply to the NUI without delay - see www.nui.ie for details). Applicants must make arrangements for exemptions each year they apply. More information on exemptions can be found at www.cao.ie/exemptions

6 **Changes to the CAO Application form for 2026**

From 2026, the title field has been removed, and the date of birth will appear in long form beside the DOB text box to minimise applicant error.

A document upload facility has been introduced this year for all qualifications categories that require supporting documents. When applicants log in to the Qualifications and Assessments section, depending on the category of qualification that they are presenting, they will see an 'Upload Supporting Documents' facility. For assistance in uploading documents, please go to www.cao.ie/upload. Applicants can still post documents if they wish, but they should not do both. **Please note:** HEAR, DARE, Disability and Graduate Medicine Documents must still be posted to CAO by the relevant deadlines.

Additional instructions have been added to the CAO application form, including the addition of a display within the Qualifications and Assessment section which will show applicants all seven categories, indicating those which the applicant has already selected.

Please also note that an additional instruction has been added to the CAO Handbook advising applicants to supply a unique and valid email address. The instruction on page 5 reads: "The email supplied must be a unique email address (i.e. the same email address must not be used for more than one application) that is accessible to you and only you throughout the application and registration process".

7 **Offers and Acceptances Schedule for 2026**

We intend to publicise details of the 2026 Offers and Acceptances Schedule as soon as CAO and HEIs agree the dates. This will be soon after the Leaving Certificate resulting date is provided by the State Examinations Commission.

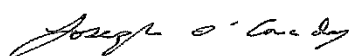
8 **Webinars**

A recording of the Information Evening for Students/Parent is available at cao.ie/webinar page. For those who may have missed the November Conferences, a recording on the online November Conference is also available at www.cao.ie/webinar

9 **CAO Mailing List**

Thank you to those of you who have already signed up to the CAO email mailing list for Guidance Counsellors and Principals. If you have not yet registered to receive email updates directly from CAO, you may do so by clicking on the link in the 'Guidance/Schools' section of www.cao.ie

Yours sincerely,



Joseph O'Grady
General Manager