

# Information for 6th Year Students and Parents

2020/2021



- Applying to the CAO
- SUSI Grant
- HEAR / DARE Application Process

# Guidance Service in Donabate Community College

## Guidance Counsellors

Ms M. O'Brien

Ms. A. Chaloner



## What do Guidance Counsellors do?

Guidance Counsellors are professionally trained to undertake the following task within the school guidance programme.

Guidance Counsellors empower students to make decisions, solve problems, change behaviour and resolve issues in their lives in relation to Personal, Educational and Career Issues.

- **Personal Counselling**

Individual, group or class work to promote interpersonal communication skills, decision making, self-awareness and the ability to plan

- **Educational Guidance**

This involves individual, group or class work to assist decision making in relation to choice of courses, subject and levels. It includes such topics as motivation and learning, study skills and examination techniques.

- **Career Guidance**

Individual, group and class work to assist decision making in relation to education and training courses, employment opportunities, job search skills work and other life roles.



# CAO Information

The **Central Applications Office** processes applications for undergraduate courses in Irish Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs)

**CAO Application Process Opens**  
**5 November 2020 at 12:00pm**

**CAO**  
**[www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)**

**Early Online Application**  
**Closing Date**  
**20 January 2021 at 5:15pm (€30 fee)**



**Normal Application Closing Date**  
**1 February 2021 at 5:15pm (€45 fee)**

**Late Application Closing Date**  
**1 May 2021 at 5:15pm (€60 online fee)**

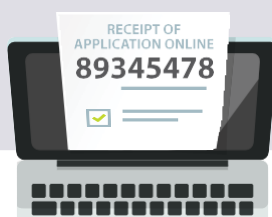
**Statement of Application**  
**Sent to all applicants by the end of May**



**Change of Mind Closing Date**  
**1 July 2021 at 5:15pm**

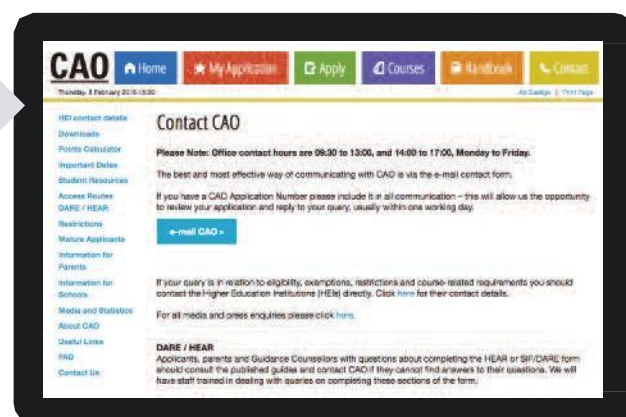


**When contacting CAO please send your query via the Correspondence Section of your CAO Account. Include your CAO application number and as much information as possible to help us answer your query.**



**All correspondence from CAO should be checked carefully to ensure that there are no errors or omissions.** Make sure to check that all personal details, examination numbers and qualifications are recorded correctly to avoid any disappointment at the offers stage.

**This is your last chance to change your course choices.** You may not be able to apply for some of the restricted courses listed in the handbook, so please refer to HEI literature and the CAO Handbook before introducing a restricted course code.

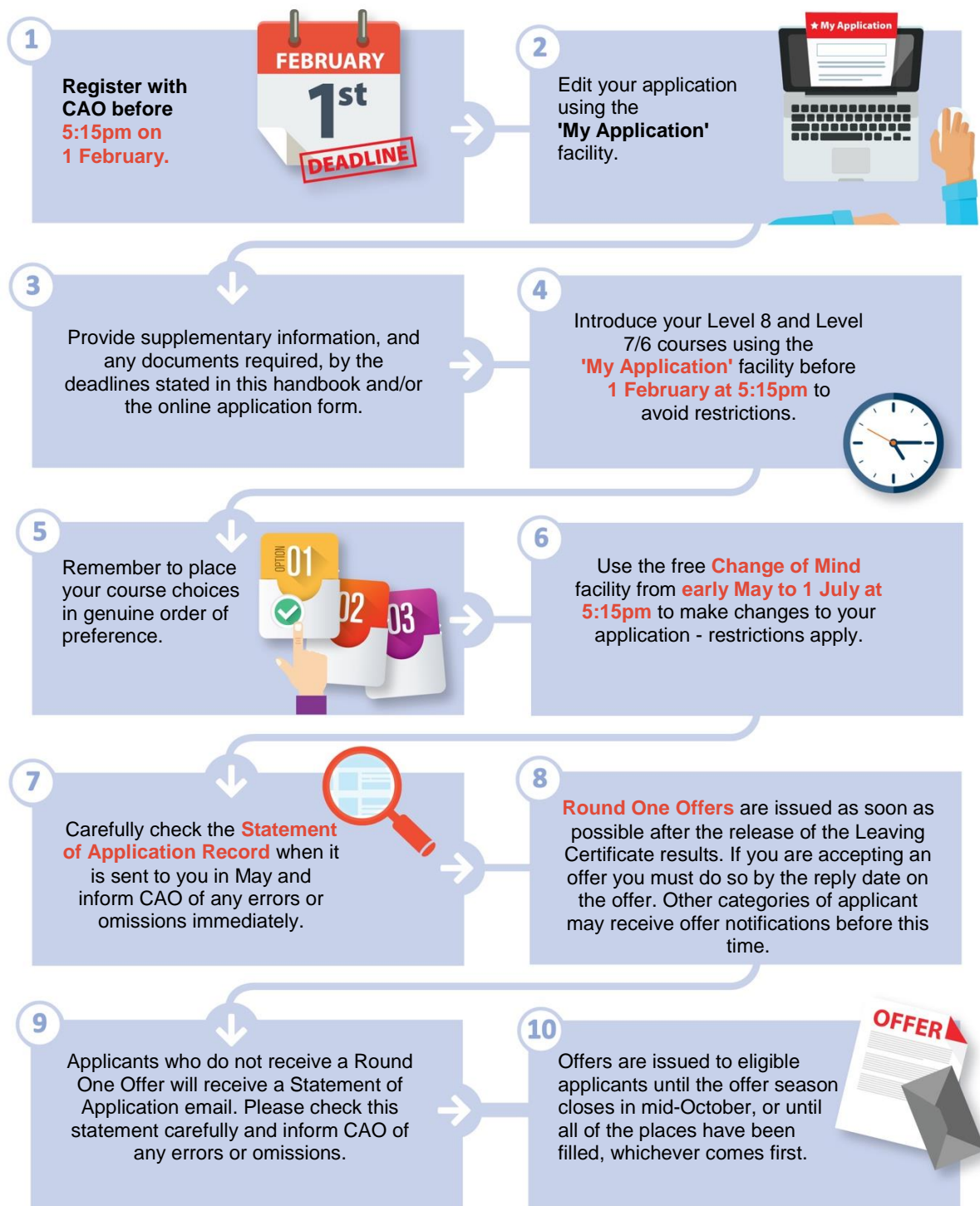


**CAO**

CAO, Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway

Tel: 091 509800 Visit: [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)

# A summary of the major stages of the CAO Application Process





# Online Applicant Checklist

<b>Before Applying</b>	✓
I have read the CAO handbook.	
I have researched the courses that I am interested in applying for.	
I am familiar with the minimum entry requirements for each course and any restrictions that apply.	
<b>The Application</b>	
I have obtained the online receipt of my application and have printed it off for future reference.	
I have checked the email sent to me by CAO on receipt of my online application for any errors or omissions.	
I have checked the email sent to me by CAO after entering my course choices to make sure that all of my courses are correct and in my order of preference.	
I have included all examination details, including current year exams, and have checked that they are correct.	
I have checked any subsequent correspondence received from CAO.	
<b>For applicants who must send supporting documents as part of their application:</b>	
I have read the Qualifications and Assessments section that is relevant to me (pages 5-8) and page 12 of the CAO handbook which provides instructions for submitting supporting documents to CAO.	
I intend to get a Certificate of Posting when I post the envelope containing my supporting documents to CAO.	
<b>After the Normal Application Closing Date</b>	
I have received my Statement of Application Record (posted to all applicants before the end of May).	
I have notified CAO of any errors or omissions contained in my Statement of Application Record within 7 days of receiving the Statement.	
I have submitted my changes, if any, to CAO via the Change of Mind facility before 1 <sup>st</sup> July at 5:15pm.	
I have taken note of any restrictions to the introduction of courses after the 1 <sup>st</sup> February deadline.	
<b>The Offer Rounds</b>	
I have checked my email account and the 'My Application' facility to find out if I have received an offer.	
I have received my Offer Notice <b>OR</b> another Statement of Application Record and checked for any errors or omissions contained in either document.	
<b>If accepting an offer:</b> I have accepted my offer online via the 'My Application' facility by the reply date <b>OR</b> I have returned the Offer Acceptance by post to reach CAO by the reply date. I have not accepted both.	
<b>If no offer was received:</b> I have checked the second Statement of Application Record to make sure that the details held on file for me by CAO are correct and I have notified CAO immediately of any errors or omissions contained in the Statement of Application Record.	

**Please Note:** This document may be used as a reference tool throughout the CAO application process, however, it does not replace the CAO handbook.

The CAO handbook must be read carefully by all applicants before making an application through CAO.



## Introduction

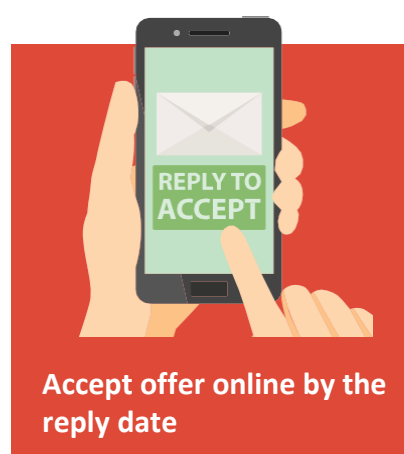
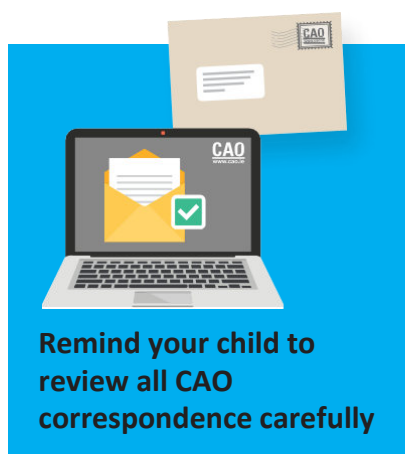
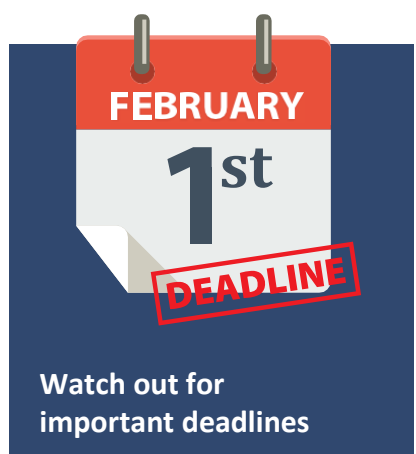
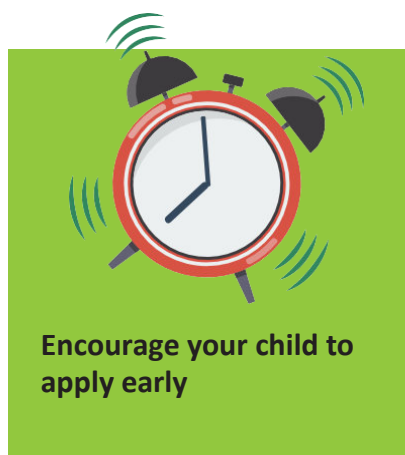
Welcome to ***The CAO: A guide for parents and guardians***. This document has been prepared by the Central Applications Office (CAO) to assist parents and guardians supporting a student in their undergraduate application to Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

**The CAO is responsible for processing applications and recording acceptances for HEIs, but all decisions on admissions are made by the individual institutions and not by CAO.**

The information provided in this guide is tailored for parents and should not be used by students. Students must carefully read the CAO Handbook, distributed to their school in September, which contains information on all of the courses, restrictions, deadlines, fees and application guidelines. All students should also seek the advice of their school guidance counsellor before completing their CAO application.



## Your role as a parent/guardian



Throughout this guide, we use the terms 'parent', 'guardian', and 'child', but please note that this document has been prepared for a parent, step-parent, guardian, carer or supporter of someone applying to CAO.

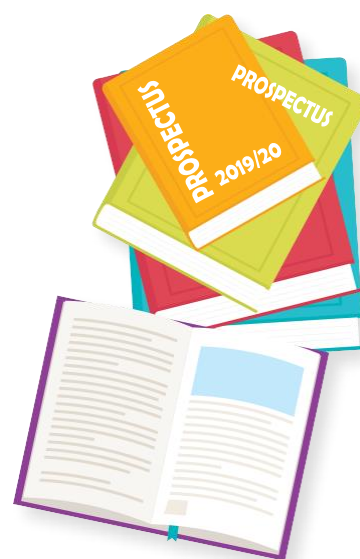
## Helping your child to choose their higher education courses

It is extremely important that your child takes the time to review all of the courses and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) available to them.

Courses are listed in the CAO Handbook and can also be searched using the 'Courses' facility at [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie).

Students should request a prospectus or visit the website of the institution that they are interested in attending. **When deciding on courses, your child must make sure to check the minimum entry requirements for each of the courses and take note of any restrictions, such as early application dates, supplementary information that may need to be submitted, or if an interview forms part of the qualification process;** such courses are referred to in the handbook as restricted courses and late application or an application on Change of Mind may not be available options.

When helping your child to decide what courses they want to apply for, you should also take some time to consider the financial implications of their decision; consider the cost of accommodation, food, and travel expenses for every year of study.



### Helpful Tips

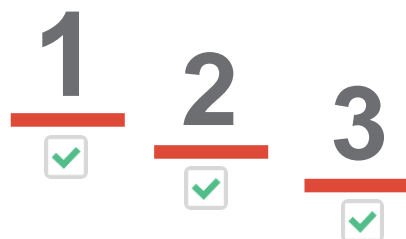
If you know of any family members or friends who are attending the institution that your child is interested in applying to, or who have completed the courses that they are interested in studying, then you should arrange to meet with them to discuss the course and institution in greater detail. Attendance at Open Days and Education Fairs can also be helpful.





## Completing the application form

The majority of students now complete the application form online. Students who submit a form online may avoid some of the many common pitfalls experienced by those who submit a paper application form, for example entering an invalid course code.



**Applicants should place their courses choices in genuine order of preference, and not based on predictions about what the points score will be or how they will perform in their examinations.**

### Personal details

Your child should take care when entering their personal details, for example their date of birth and email address. They must also inform CAO of the examinations that they will be taking or that they have completed in the past. If we do not have this information in advance your child cannot be credited for it at the offers stage. CAO must also be notified of any exemptions, for example exemption from Irish or a third language.

Ample time should be allowed for the completion of the application form. Occasionally, browsers will time-out and information may be lost; CAO has no control over this. Deadlines are strict, so applicants should avoid leaving an application to the last minute.

Where supporting documents are required please number, date and write the CAO application number on the front of each page, and refer to the CAO Handbook for more information. Applicants applying for the **DARE and/or HEAR schemes** should allow time for the completion of the online forms and gathering the necessary supporting documentation in advance of the deadline. For more information visit [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie).



### CAO application number

When your child submits an online CAO application they will receive an e-mail containing details of their registration, an e-mail verification code, and their CAO application number. This number is extremely important as it will be used by your child for all interaction with CAO throughout the year.

### My Application facility

This is where your child will log in to their CAO account once they have registered on the CAO system. They will need their CAO application number, their date of birth, and the account password that they created at the registration stage.

### Choosing courses

There are two course choices lists – the Level 8 and Level 7/6 lists. Applicants can enter 10 course choices on both lists. The two lists are independent of each other - the only time the applicant must choose between them is at the offers stage if they receive an offer off both lists in the same round.

NFQ levels	Major Award-Types
Level 8	Honours Bachelor Degree (HD)
Level 7	Ordinary Bachelor Degree (DG)
Level 6	Higher Certificate (HC)

## Important correspondence from CAO

CAO communicates with applicants via e-mail, text and post at different stages throughout the year. All correspondence from CAO should be treated as extremely important and checked carefully to make sure that the information held on file by CAO is correct. **Please ensure that your child checks their e-mail account regularly.**

### Application number email (immediately after applying online)

When your child applies online their first correspondence with CAO will be in the form of an automated e-mail which will contain your child's application number, an e-mail verification code and the application details that they have provided.

### Email correspondence

CAO will communicate with applicants via email at various intervals throughout the application process. All CAO correspondence must be read carefully and any errors or omissions notified to CAO immediately via the Contact form on our website [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie).

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all relevant correspondence is received and dealt with appropriately. Please make sure to regularly check the email account provided at the application stage.

### Statement of Application Record (end of May)

Before the end of May, all applicants (online and paper) will receive a Statement of Application Record. This is an extremely important communication, instructing applicants to carefully review and verify their account information. Any errors or omissions (e.g. an incorrect or missing examination number) must be communicated to CAO immediately via the Correspondence Section of their CAO Account.

If your child has not received the Statement of Application Record by the end of May you must contact CAO via [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie) and we will issue a duplicate copy.

### Offer Notification/Statement of Application Record (mid-August or earlier for some applicants)

At the offers stage, your child will either receive notification of an offer, or a Statement of Application Record (by e-mail). If they receive a Statement of Application Record this is because they have not been deemed eligible for an offer in this round. You must ensure that your child checks that all of the information that CAO currently holds on file is correct, including their examination details. If your child receives an offer notification this means that they have been deemed entitled to a place on one of their Level 8 or Level 7/6 courses, or both.

Please check that the information contained in the Offer Notification is correct, and inform CAO of any incorrect or omitted information in your child's CAO Account. A further explanation of the offers stage is provided later in this document.



## Making changes to a CAO application

There are a number of deadlines which must be noted when your child is making amendments to their CAO application. Changes to some personal information cannot be carried out online and your child will have to post the amendment with their CAO application number to CAO, Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway (please obtain and keep a certificate of postage).

### Amendment deadline

Date	Deadline
Early November – 1 Feb at 5:15PM	Change of Course Choices facility available online (FREE)
Early February – 1 March at 5:15 PM	Online facility to amend course choices available (FEE: €10)
Early May – 1 July at 5:15 PM	Change of Mind facility available (FREE)

It is important to note that there are restrictions on introducing courses using the Change of Mind facility - page 3 of the CAO Handbook outlines these restrictions.

### To make changes to course choices

(during the periods outlined above):



- Log in via the 'My Application' facility and go to add/change course choices
- Introduce all courses on the 'new list' in the preferred order of preference, remembering to click 'Continue with course changes' to save the information
- Check the acknowledgement e-mail sent to the e-mail address supplied when making the application. Make sure to check that the changes have been recorded completely and correctly.

For more information on the Change of Mind facility watch the video guide in the student Resources section.

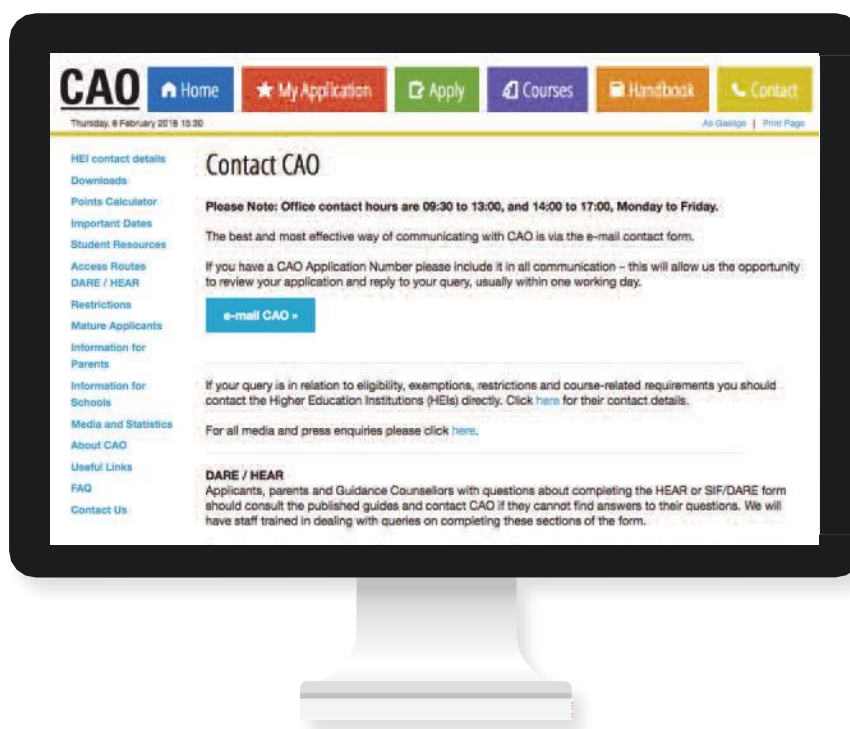
## Communicating with CAO

If you wish to make general enquiries with CAO on behalf of your child you must have their application number, full name and date of birth.

CAO staff members will only be able to discuss details of your child's account once you can verify knowledge of that information, for example, if you wish to discuss course choices you will be asked to verify the courses that are listed on your child's application. The same applies for examination details and results. If you do not have any of this information CAO cannot communicate any information about your child's application to you.

The best method of communication for you or your child is via the CAO website **www.cao.ie**.

Using the online '**Contact**' facility and quoting the application number will allow CAO time to review your child's file and revert with an answer to the query, in writing, within one working day. You can also call CAO on **091 509800**, but please note that due to the large number of applicants each year our phone lines are extremely busy.





# SUSI Grant

**SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland)** is Ireland's single national awarding authority for all higher and further education grants

# Eligibility Criteria



**PLC Student**



**Undergraduate Student**



**Postgraduate Student**



**Student Studying Outside the State**

## Are you eligible?

You should use our Eligibility Reckoner on the SUSI website ([www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie)) to give you an idea if you meet the criteria to receive Student Grant funding.

**To be eligible for a grant you must qualify under the following criteria:**

### Nationality and Residency:

- You must be an Irish, EU, EEA or Swiss National or have specific leave to remain in the State; and
- You must be ordinarily resident in Ireland the EU, EEA or Switzerland for 3 of the last 5 years. If you were resident outside the Irish State, it may affect the type of funding you could receive.

### Course:

- You must be progressing in your education (increasing your NFQ level); and
- You must be attending an approved course in an approved institution.

### Income:

- Your reckonable income (income calculated for grant purposes) must fall under the specified thresholds. This income will be a factor in determining what type of funding you could receive; and
- Applications are assessed with regard to gross household income from the previous year.

## Class of Applicant

Knowing what class of applicant you are is very important in deciding if you may be eligible for a grant, if or how you should apply and whose income is taken into account when assessing your application for funding. Students' Applicant Class falls into two categories:

- Dependent; and
- Independent.

**As a Dependent Student you may fall into either one of two categories:**

- **Dependent**  
If you are under 23 years of age on January 1st of the year of your first point of entry into further or higher education you are automatically classed as a dependent student and you are assessed based on your parent's/ legal guardian's income and your own income; OR
- **Mature Dependent**  
Over 23 years of age on January 1st of the year of your first point of entry into further or higher education and still residing with your parents/ legal guardians.

**As an Independent Student you must be:**

- 23 years of age or over on January 1st of the year when you first enter/re-enter further or higher education; and
- You must have been living independently from your parents/legal guardians from the October in the year prior to your first point of entry/re-entry into further or higher education and you will be required to provide evidence of this.



# Grant Process

## Step 1



Make Your  
Application

## Step 2



Supply Supporting  
Documentation

## Step 3



Receive Grant  
Decision

## Step 4



Receive Your  
Payment

### 1. Make your application

You must have an online account with SUSI before you can make your grant application. For information on how to create an account, please go to [www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie).

#### Fill in and submit your online application.

Please ensure that you provide complete and accurate information (dates of birth, PPS numbers and bank details in particular) as failure to do this will delay processing of your application. Please note that you must apply to SUSI each year to renew your application.

### 2. Supply supporting documentation

Based on the information supplied in your online application form you will receive either a refusal letter or a letter requesting the supporting documents required to further process your application.

### 3. Receive grant decision

You will be advised of your grant decision.  
Your application may be:

- **Awarded**

An award letter is issued to you offering you a grant and highlighting the further steps you need to take before your grant can be paid; or

- **Refused**

A refusal letter is issued to you. This letter will also highlight the further steps you may take if you wish to request a review of your grant decision. These steps are also outlined in the SUSI Reviewing your Grant or Appealing your Grant processes available on [www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie)

### 4. Receive your payment

Maintenance grants are paid directly into your bank account and fee grants (or student contribution) are paid directly to your college.

#### **To ensure payment of your grant, you must have:**

- Provided your bank details to SUSI (maintenance grants only) – this can be done at any time through your online grant application account;
- Had your course details confirmed by the CAO to SUSI or submitted your Final Course Acceptance (FCA) form on-line to SUSI; and
- Been confirmed to SUSI by your college as registered and attending your course.



## Postgraduate Student



## PLC Student



## Student Studying Outside the State



## Undergraduate Student

Rate	Less than 4 dependent children	Between 4 and 7 dependent children	8 or more dependent children	Income Threshold Increase per additional person in college
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No maintenance 50% tuition fees or 100% student contribution	€49,840	€54,765	€59,455	+€4,830
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No maintenance 50% student contribution	€54,240	€59,595	€64,700	+€4,830
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### SPECIAL RATE

#### The conditions to qualify for Special Rate are:

- Total household reckonable income must not exceed €24,500; and
- Reckonable income must include one of the long term Department of Social Protection payments which qualify you for Special Rate as prescribed under the Student Grant Scheme. (see [www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie) for a list of eligible payments)

SPECIAL RATE OF MAINTENANCE		Reckonable income must be under:		
		€24,500	€24,500	€24,500
Post Leaving Certificate Studies	Special rate PLC Maintenance grant available(45Km or Under)	€2,375	€2,375	€2,375
	Special rate PLC Maintenance grant available (Over 45Km)	€5,915	€5,915	€5,915
Undergraduate Studies	Special Rate Undergraduate Rate of Maintenance grant available (45Km or Under)	€2,375	€2,375	€2,375
	Special Rate Undergraduate Rate of Maintenance grant available (Over 45Km)	€5,915	€5,915	€5,915
Postgraduate Studies	Special rate Postgraduate Maintenance grant (45Km or Under)	€2,375	€2,375	€2,375
	Special Rate Postgraduate Maintenance grant (Over 45Km)	€5,915	€5,915	€5,915

PLC:	Eligible for Maintenance grant only (No fees paid for PLC courses).
Undergraduate:	Eligible for Fees (field trip element and tuition); Student Contribution and Maintenance grant.
Postgraduate:	Eligible for Fee Contribution; Special Rate of Maintenance for those who are eligible for Special Rate Fee Contribution.

Rate	Less than 4 dependent children	Between 4 and 7 dependent children	8 or more dependent children	Income Threshold Increase per additional person in college
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100% rate of maintenance + 100% student contribution	Reckonable income must be under:			
	€39,875	€43,810	€47,575	+€4,830
100% Adj. Rate of Maintenance grant available (45Km or Under)	€1,215	€1,215	€1,215	
100% Non Adj. Rate of Maintenance grant available (Over 45km)	€3,025	€3,025	€3,025	

75% rate of maintenance + 100% student contribution	Reckonable income must be under:			
	€40,970	€45,025	€48,890	+€4,670
75% Adj. Rate of Maintenance grant available (45Km or Under)	€910	€910	€910	
75% Non Adj. Rate of Maintenance grant available (Over 45km)	€2,270	€2,270	€2,270	

50% rate of maintenance + 100% student contribution	Reckonable income must be under:			
	€43,380	€47,670	€51,760	+€4,670
50% Adj. Rate of Maintenance grant available (45Km or Under)	€605	€605	€605	
50% Non Adj. Rate of Maintenance grant available (Over 45km)	€1,515	€1,515	€1,515	

25% rate of maintenance + 100% student contribution	Reckonable income must be under:			
	€45,790	€50,325	€54,630	+€4,670
25% Adj. Rate of Maintenance grant available (45Km or Under)	€305	€305	€305	
25% Non Adj. Rate of Maintenance grant available (Over 45km)	€755	€755	€755	

# Income Thresholds and Grant Award Rates



Rate	Less than 4 dependent children	Between 4 and 7 dependent children	8 or more dependent children	Income Threshold Increase per additional person in college
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Postgraduate Fee Contribution (standard rate)	Reckonable income must be under:			
	€31,500	€34,615	€37,580	+€4,980
Rate of Fee Contribution grant available	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000	

Postgraduate Fee Contribution (special rate)	Reckonable income must be under:			
	€24,500	€24,500	€24,500	
Rate of Fee Contribution grant available	Maximum of €6,270	Maximum of €6,270	Maximum of €6,270	



Visit [www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie)  
for more information.



# HEAR / DARE

## Applications

The **Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)** is a college and university admissions scheme which offers places at reduced points to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds

The **Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)** is a college and university admissions scheme which offers places on a reduced points basis to school leavers with disabilities

# DARE Application Timeline

From November 2020		<p>CAO applications open from <b>5 November 2020 at 12 noon</b>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review the DARE Handbook with your parent(s)/guardian(s).</li> <li>2. Make a CAO application at <a href="http://www.cao.ie">www.cao.ie</a>.</li> <li>3. Fill in the online Supplementary Information Form (SIF) at <a href="http://www.cao.ie">www.cao.ie</a>.</li> <li>4. Complete your Educational Impact Statement with your school.</li> <li>5. Gather your Evidence of Disability documentation.</li> </ol>
By 1 February 2021		Apply to CAO by 17:15 on 1 February.
By 1 March 2021		You must indicate your wish <b>to be considered for DARE by ticking 'Yes' to Question 1</b> and complete Section A (Questions 1-5) of the Supplementary Information Form (SIF) on <a href="http://www.cao.ie">www.cao.ie</a> .
By 15 March 2021		<p>You must return the completed, signed AND stamped</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Educational Impact Statement (Section B)</li> <li>2. Evidence of Disability (Section C) or other evidence of Disability to the CAO, Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway by 17:15. Make sure your documents are clear and can be easily read. Please number each page and write your CAO application number, name and the date on the front of each page.</li> </ol> <p>Faxed/ emailed documents are not accepted.</p>
April – June 2021		Assessment of DARE applications.
In late June 2021		<p>You will be notified of the outcome of your DARE application.</p> <p>DARE Review and Appeals Application.</p>
Early August 2021		Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the Review and Appeals application.
August 2021		<p>Leaving Certificate Exam Results.</p> <p>Eligible DARE applicants compete for reduced points places.</p> <p>CAO Offers to eligible DARE applicants.</p> <p>Course offers are made and should be accepted through the CAO.</p>
Late August / Early Sept. 2021		Attend Orientation and register with Disability Support Services.



# Introduction to DARE

## What is DARE?

DARE is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school-leavers whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education.

DARE offers reduced points places to school leavers who, as a result of having a disability, have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education.

## Who can apply to DARE?

DARE is for school leavers under the age of 23 as of 1 January 2021 with a disability, who have been educationally impacted as a result of that disability. Applicants to DARE can present with an Irish Leaving Certificate, A-Levels and/or other EU qualifications.

## What types of disabilities does DARE consider?

- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (including Asperger's Syndrome)
- Blind/ Vision Impaired
- Deaf/ Hard of Hearing
- Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD) – Dyspraxia
- Mental Health Condition
- Neurological Condition (including Brain Injury and Epilepsy)
- Physical Disability
- Significant Ongoing Illness
- Speech and Language Communication Disorder
- Specific Learning Difficulty (including Dyslexia and Dyscalculia)

## Prioritisation of Eligible DARE Applicants with a Physical or Sensory Disability

Research has identified that students with physical and sensory (blind/ vision impaired or deaf/ hard of hearing) disabilities are particularly underrepresented in higher education in Ireland relative to all students with disabilities. In order to increase the numbers of DARE students with physical and sensory disabilities being admitted to higher education, the DARE colleges have agreed to prioritise these two groups when allocating reduced points places.

## Important Information

Mature applicants and applicants applying on the basis of Further Education and Training (FET) results have different admission routes. You can get further information on these routes from college and university websites.

## What are the benefits of making a DARE application?

If you apply to DARE and meet the application criteria (that is, are deemed eligible for DARE) you may be offered a place even if you do not have enough Leaving Certificate points for your preferred course. Each participating college and university has a reserved number of places to offer eligible DARE applicants at lower Leaving Certificate points.

## How do Reduced Points Work?

An example of a reduced points offer would be where the Leaving Certificate points for a particular course is 366 points. An eligible DARE applicant could be offered a place with a lower points score, e.g. 356 points. This applicant would also, like all other applicants applying to college, need to meet the minimum entry requirements and any specific programme requirements before being considered for a DARE reduced points offer. The reduction in points for DARE places can vary every year. The amount of points a particular course is reduced by is dependent on a number of factors, such as:

- The overall number of places on the course,
- The number of reserved DARE places on the course,
- The number of DARE eligible applicants competing for these reserved places.

## Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)

HEAR is a third level alternative admissions scheme which offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers who are resident in the Republic of Ireland and are under represented at Higher Education due to their socio-economic circumstances. You should apply to both HEAR and DARE if they are relevant to you. For more information see [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie).

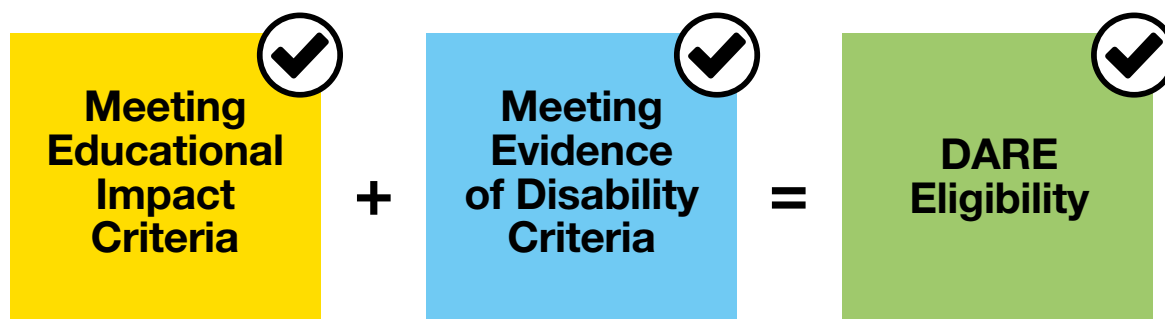
## Can I apply to DARE and HEAR?

### If I am eligible for both DARE & HEAR:

Research has shown that students with disabilities from disadvantaged backgrounds face the greatest obstacles when it comes to progression to higher education. In order to increase the numbers of students in higher education, facing this 'double disadvantage', colleges participating in DARE and HEAR have agreed to prioritise this group when allocating reduced points places.

# 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

Has your disability/ condition impacted you in a combination of the following indicators:

1. Have you received intervention or supports in post-primary school?
2. Has it impacted on your attendance or regularly disrupted your school day?
3. Has it affected your school experience and wellbeing?
4. Has it impacted on your learning or exam results?
5. Has it caused any other educational impact?
6. **Required for applicants with a Specific Learning Difficulty:** is it severely impacting on your literacy or numeracy skills?

Applicants with a Specific Learning Difficulty must meet Indicator 6 plus one other indicator.

All other applicants must meet any combination of two indicators from Indicators 1 to 5.

Please see pages 12-15 of this handbook to view what documentation you are required to submit.

## Meeting DARE's Evidence of Disability Criteria

DARE has specific requirements for the evidence of disability documentation for each type of disability or condition. Please see pages 16-19 of this handbook to view what documentation you are required to submit.

Detailed information on the evidence of disability criteria which are used to assess your evidence of disability documentation is available under the Providing Evidence of Your Disability Section on [www.accesscollege.ie/dare](http://www.accesscollege.ie/dare).

# Essential DARE Application Information

## How do I apply to DARE?

To apply to DARE you must agree to the DARE Terms and Conditions (see page 23). Applicants applying to DARE must:

1. Be under the age of 23 as of **1 January 2021**.
2. Apply to the CAO by 17:15 on **1 February 2021**.
3. No later than 17:15 on 1 March 2021, disclose your disability and/ or specific learning difficulty in your CAO application and fully and correctly complete Section A of the Supplementary Information Form (SIF). 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 SIF by 17:15 on 1 March 2021**.
4. Download Section B Educational Impact Statement (EIS) and have your school complete the form. Return the EIS to CAO to arrive by **17:15 on 15 March 2021**.
5. Download Section C Evidence of Disability, and have it completed by the appropriate medical professional (only if you do not already have a report verifying your disability which meets the DARE criteria). Return it to CAO to arrive by **17:15 on 15 March 2021**.
6. Applicants with a specific learning difficulty are asked to provide a full psychological assessment of any age completed by an appropriately qualified psychologist instead of the Section C Evidence of Disability form. This report must be accompanied by **attainment scores from tests administered by your school and/ or an appropriately qualified psychologist**.

## Important Instructions

- Get assistance from your parents/ guardians and use this handbook to help you complete your DARE application.
- Send Section B Educational Impact Statement and Section C Evidence of Disability documents to the CAO, Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway by **15 March 2021**.

# Guide to providing evidence of your disability

This is a guide to help you identify what supporting documents are required as part of your DARE application. If your type of disability does not appear in the list below, please go to the “Providing evidence of your disability” section on [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie) or contact a member of the DARE Team for guidance.

Type of Disability	Appropriate documentation	Type of professional	Required age of report
Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	Evidence of Disability Form 2021 <b>OR</b> Existing report.	Consultant Psychiatrist <b>OR</b> Psychologist <b>OR</b> Neurologist <b>OR</b> Paediatrician.	Must be less than three years old i.e. dated after <b>1 February 2018</b> .
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (including Asperger’s Syndrome)	Evidence of Disability Form 2021 <b>OR</b> Existing report.	Consultant Psychiatrist <b>OR</b> Psychologist <b>OR</b> Neurologist <b>OR</b> Paediatrician.	No age limit.
Blind/ Vision Impaired	Evidence of Disability Form 2021 <b>OR</b> Existing report.	Ophthalmologist <b>OR</b> Ophthalmic Surgeon.	No age limit.
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: Audiogram (B) Applicants who attend a School for the Deaf: Letter confirming attendance from Principal of School for the Deaf <b>OR</b> Evidence of Disability Form 2021. (C) Applicants with a Cochlear Implant: Existing report confirming cochlear implant <b>OR</b> Evidence of Disability Form 2021 (DARE does not accept reports from high street retailers).	(A) Applicants who have an audiogram: Diagnostic/ 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 <b>OR</b> Cochlear Implant Programme Coordinator	No age limit.

Type of Disability	Appropriate documentation	Type of professional	Required age of report
Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD) – Dyspraxia	Evidence of Disability Form 2021 <b>OR</b> Existing report.	Occupational Therapist <b>OR</b> Neurologist <b>OR</b> Physiotherapist <b>OR</b> Paediatrician.	No age limit.
Mental Health Condition	Evidence of Disability Form 2021 <b>OR</b> Existing report.	Consultant Psychiatrist on specialist register.	Must be less than three years old i.e. dated after <b>1 February 2018</b> .
Neurological Condition (including Brain Injury and Epilepsy)	Evidence of Disability Form 2021 <b>OR</b> Existing report.	Neurologist <b>OR</b> Other relevant Consultant.	No age limit.
Physical Disability	Evidence of Disability Form 2021 <b>OR</b> Existing report.	Orthopaedic Consultant <b>OR</b> Other relevant Consultant appropriate to the disability/condition.	No age limit.
Significant On-going Illness	Evidence of Disability Form 2021 <b>OR</b> Existing report.	Relevant Consultant/ Specialist appropriate to the disability/condition.	Must be less than three years old i.e. dated after <b>1 February 2018</b> .
Speech and Language Communication Disorder	Evidence of Disability Form 2021 <b>OR</b> Existing report.	Speech and Language Therapist.	No age limit.
Specific Learning Difficulty (including Dyslexia and Dyscalculia)	Psychological Assessment Report	Psychologist	No age limit.

**\*Important note for applicants with specific learning difficulties.**

In addition to a Psychological Assessment Report of any age completed by a psychologist which clearly states a diagnosis of a specific learning difficulty (dyslexia/ dyscalculia), applicants with a specific learning difficulty **MUST** also have two literacy or two numeracy attainment scores at or below the 10th percentile (Standard Score of 81 or below) from testing carried out on or after **1 February 2019**.

These attainment scores can be from one (or a combination) of the following sources:

- 1) Scores from school-based attainment testing.
- 2) Scores from attainment tests carried out by a psychologist.

Attainment testing must have been carried out on or after 1 February 2019 and all applicants must submit an EIS completed by their school.





# Key Dates

## From November gather supporting documents early

- Complete the Educational Impact Statement with your school.
- Check that your Evidence of Disability documentation has been completed by the appropriate medical/ educational professional:
  - within the last 3 years if applicable. (See pages 18-19 for age limits of reports.)
  - is signed AND stamped OR on headed paper OR accompanied by a business card.
- Applicants with an SLD, submit a full psychological assessment report of any age AND attainment scores dated after **1 February 2019**.

**By 1 February 2021 at 17:15 apply to CAO. Go to [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie) and click Apply.**

## By 1 March 2021 at 17:15. Complete Online Supplementary Information Form

- Answer YES to Question 1 “Do you want to be considered for the Disability Access Route to Education” on the Supplementary Information Form (SIF) **by 17:15 on 1 March 2021**.
- If you are applying to carry your DARE eligibility forward from 2020 to 2021, provide your 2020 CAO application number under Q1 (b) (see page 9) and click Apply.
- Save and submit your application.

## By 15 March 2021 at 17:15 post your supporting documents to CAO.

- Please number each page and write your CAO application number, name and the date on the front of all documents submitted to CAO.
- Keep the originals of all documents and proof of postage.
- DARE will not contact you about missing, incomplete or incorrect documentation, so please ensure that you have supplied all documents requested by **15 March 2021** at 17:15. Please contact a DARE advisor if you have any questions in advance of submitting your documentation.

# Colleges that take part in DARE

Institution	Telephone	Email	Website
National College of Ireland	(01) 659 9269	dare@ncirl.ie	www.ncirl.ie
University of Limerick	(061) 234 847	dare@ul.ie	www.ul.ie/disabilityservices
Athlone Institute of Technology	(090) 646 8142	dare@ait.ie	www.ait.ie
Cork Institute of Technology	(021) 433 5138	dare@cit.ie	www.cit.ie/dare
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/services/ institute-student-services/ disability-support-services
Dundalk Institute of Technology	(042) 937 0237	dare@dkit.ie	www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/ student-supports/
Galway Mayo Institute of Technology	(091) 742 392	dare@gmit.ie	www.gmit.ie/access-and-disability
Institute of Technology, Carlow	(059) 917 5603	dare@itcarlow.ie	www.itcarlow.ie/access
Institute of Technology, Sligo	(071) 913 7355	dare@itsligo.ie	www.itsligo.ie
Institute of Technology, Tralee	(066) 714 5636	dare@ittralee.ie	www.ittralee.ie
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	(074) 918 6172	dare@lyit.ie	www.lyit.ie
Limerick Institute of Technology	(061) 293 112	dare@lit.ie	www.lit.ie
Marino Institute of Education	(01) 805 7752	access@mie.ie	www.mie.ie/access
Mary Immaculate College	(061) 204 927	dare@mic.ul.ie	www.mic.ul.ie
Maynooth University	(01) 708 4600	dare@mu.ie	www.maynoothuniversity.ie/ access-office
NUI Galway	(091) 495 804	dare@nuigalway.ie	www.nuigalway.ie/disability/ student-entry-routes/dare/
Pontifical University, Maynooth	(01) 708 4600	admissions@ spcm.ie	www.maynoothcollege.ie/ dare-scheme
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	(01) 402 2228	dare@rcsi.ie	www.rcsi.ie/study
St. Angela's College, Sligo	(071) 919 5515	dare@stangelas. nuigalway.ie	www.stangelas.nuigalway.ie
Technological University Dublin	(01) 885 1014	dare@tudublin.ie	www.tudublin.ie/dare
Trinity College Dublin	(01) 896 1968	dare@tcd.ie	www.tcd.ie
University College Cork	(021) 490 4848	dare@ucc.ie	www.ucc.ie/dss
University College Dublin	(01) 716 7123	dare@ucd.ie	www.ucd.ie/all
Waterford Institute of Technology	(051) 302871	dare@wit.ie	www.wit.ie

# HEAR

## Higher Education Access Route Application Information 2021

### DARE HEAR Application Information Days

See details at:  
[www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie)

### What is the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)?

The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is a college and university scheme which offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers, resident in the Republic of Ireland, who are under represented at Higher Education due to their socio-economic background.

HEAR has been set up by a number of colleges and universities as evidence shows that long-term poverty can have a negative effect on how well a student does at school and whether they go on to college.

HEAR applicants must meet a range of financial, social and cultural indicators to be considered for a reduced points place and extra college support.

### What are the benefits of filling in a HEAR Application?

**Reduced Points Places:** Each participating college has a reserved number of places to offer eligible HEAR students at lower Leaving Certificate points.

**Extra College Support:** If you get a place through HEAR you will receive a variety of academic, personal and social supports while at college.

Examples of extra college supports may include:

- An Orientation Programme to introduce you to college life.
- Extra tuition if required, study skills and exam preparation.
- One to one meetings with student advisors.
- Social gatherings/mentoring.
- Extra financial assistance when available/advice regarding grants and scholarships.

### What HEAR is not

HEAR is not your maintenance grant. The maintenance grant is the main source of financial assistance available from the Irish State for students in full-time Post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLCs) and full-time higher education undergraduate courses.

HEAR is an admissions scheme to help students who may not traditionally go on to third level. Students applying to HEAR are encouraged to find out more information on the maintenance grant by logging on to [susi.ie](http://susi.ie). Additional information on financial assistance for third level students is available at [www.studentfinance.ie](http://www.studentfinance.ie).

### Who can apply to HEAR?

HEAR is for school leavers under the age of 23 as of 1 January 2021 who are resident in the Republic of Ireland. HEAR applicants must meet a range of financial, social and cultural indicators to be considered for a reduced points place and extra college support.

## How do I fill in a HEAR application?

### Applicants applying for HEAR must:

1. Be under the age of 23 as of 1 January 2021.
2. Apply online to CAO by 17:15 on 1 February 2021. CAO applications open on 5 November 2020 at 12 noon.
3. No later than 17:15 on **1 March 2021, indicate in your CAO application that you wish to apply for the HEAR scheme and fully and correctly complete all elements of the online HEAR application form.** Once you have completed the HEAR application form you will get a checklist which tells you which documents you need to supply.
4. **Post your supporting documents to arrive in CAO** no later than 17:15 on **15 March 2021.**

### To complete your online HEAR Application you must:

Get assistance from your parent(s)/guardian(s).

Use the **HEAR 2021 Handbook** to help you answer all relevant questions on your online HEAR application.

You can download the HEAR 2021 Handbook at **[www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie)**.

## HEAR Application Timeline

<b>From November 2020</b>	Review the HEAR Handbook with your parent(s)/guardian(s). Make a CAO application at <a href="http://www.cao.ie">www.cao.ie</a> . Fill in the online HEAR Application at <a href="http://www.cao.ie">www.cao.ie</a> . Gather your supporting documents. <b>Remember, they can take several weeks to issue.</b>
<b>By 1 February 2021</b>	Apply to CAO by 17:15 on 1 February.
<b>By 1 March 2021</b>	Complete all elements of the online HEAR Application Form by 17:15 on 1 March. Gather all supporting documents relevant to your application.
<b>By 15 March 2021</b>	Submit copies of supporting documents to CAO, Tower House, Eglinton Street Galway by 17:15 on 15 March. Make sure your copies are clear and can be easily read. Please number each page and write your CAO application number and the date on the front of each page. Faxed/ emailed documents are not accepted. <b>Keep the original of all documents and obtain a certificate of posting from An Post every time you post supporting documents to CAO.</b> For confirmation that the documents you posted arrived safely in CAO, enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard with details of the documents you have submitted.
<b>April – June 2021</b>	HEAR Application Assessment.
<b>In late June 2021</b>	Applicants notified of outcome of HEAR Application.
<b>End June / Early July 2021</b>	HEAR Review and Appeals Application.
<b>August 2021</b>	Leaving Certificate exam results. CAO offers. Successful HEAR Applicants notified. Accept CAO offer. Accept HEAR offer of extra college supports.
<b>Late August / Early Sept. 2021</b>	Attend mandatory HEAR orientation programme.

## Should I apply

HEAR applicants must meet a range of financial, social and cultural indicators (criteria) to be considered for a reduced points place and extra college support. Here is a list of all the HEAR indicators:

1. **Income:** Your family income falls on or below the HEAR Income Limit for the year 2019.
2. **Medical / GP Visit Card:** Your family has a Medical Card / GP Visit Card that was in date on 31 December 2020.
3. **Means Tested Social Welfare:** Your family received a means-tested payment from the Department of Social Protection for at least 26 weeks in 2019.
4. **Socio-economic Group:** You belong to a group that is under-represented in higher education based on the occupation and employment status of your parent(s) or guardian(s). The under-represented groups are the Non-Manual Workers Group and the Semi and Unskilled Manual Workers Group.
5. **DEIS School Attendance:** You completed five years in a second level school that takes part in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) scheme run by the Department of Education and Skills.
6. **Area Profile:** You live in an area where there is concentrated disadvantage – in other words an area where, for example, there is high unemployment and poverty and where only a small proportion of adults have attained third level education.

**You must meet Indicator 1, the HEAR Income Limit, plus a correct combination of 2 other indicators to be eligible for HEAR. The combinations are:**

Indicator	Indicator	Indicator	Indicator
1 + 2 + 4 or 5 or 6	1 + 3 + 4 or 5 or 6	1 + 4 + 5 or 6	1 + 5 + 6

Indicator 1, the HEAR Income Limit, is calculated by:

- How many children there are in your family;
- How many people in your family are in full time education;

Use the table to estimate if your family income is equal to or less than the HEAR income limit.

Number of dependent children* in your family	HEAR Income Limit
Fewer than 4	€45,790
4-7	€50,325
8 or more	€54,630

**Add €4,670 to the total family/household income for every sibling/parent enrolled in a full time college, university or post leaving certificate course.**

\*A dependent includes:

- a sibling under the age of 16 years on 1 October 2020.
- a sibling over the age of 16 years on 1 October 2020 who is either:
  - attending post primary education.
  - attending a full time course in FET or higher education.
  - medically certified as permanently unfit for work.
- a parent attending a full time course in FET or higher education.

## Colleges that take part in HEAR

Higher Education Institution	Email	Website
Athlone Institute of Technology	hear@ait.ie	www.ait.ie
Cork Institute of Technology	hear@cit.ie	www.cit.ie/hear
Dublin City University	hear@dcu.ie	www.dcu.ie/access
Dundalk Institute of Technology	hear@dkit.ie	www.dkit.ie/student-life/student-supports/
Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology	hear@iadt.ie	www.iadt.ie
Galway Mayo Institute of Technology	hear@gmit.ie	www.gmit.ie/access-and-disability
Institute of Technology Carlow	hear@itcarlow.ie	www.itcarlow.ie
Institute of Technology, Sligo	hear@itsligo.ie	www.itsligo.ie
Institute of Technology, Tralee	hear@ittralee.ie	www.ittralee.ie/
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	hear@lyit.ie	www.lyit.ie
Limerick Institute of Technology	hear@lit.ie	www.lit.ie
Marino Institute of Education	access@mie.ie	www.mie.ie/access
Mary Immaculate College	hear@mic.ul.ie	www.mic.ul.ie
Maynooth University	hear@mu.ie	www.maynoothuniversity.ie/access-office
National College of Ireland	hear@ncirl.ie	www.ncirl.ie
NUI Galway	hear@nuigalway.ie	www.nuigalway.ie/accesscentre/hear
Pontifical University, Maynooth	admissions@spcm.ie	www.maynoothcollege.ie/hear-scheme
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	hear@rcsi.ie	www.rcsi.ie/study
St. Angela's College, Sligo	hear@stangelas.nuigalway.ie	www.stangelas.nuigalway.ie
Technological University Dublin	hear@tudublin.ie	www.tudublin.ie/hear
Trinity College Dublin	hear@tcd.ie	www.tcd.ie/trinityaccess
University College Cork	hear@ucc.ie	www.ucc.ie/en/uccplus/
University College Dublin	hear@ucd.ie	www.ucd.ie/all
University of Limerick	hear@ul.ie	www.ul.ie/access

**CAO Helpdesk** | Email CAO by clicking Contact Us at [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie) | 091 509 800 | [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)

### Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)

DARE is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school-leavers whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education.

DARE offers reduced points places to school leavers who as a result of having a disability have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education.

**You should apply to both DARE and HEAR if they are relevant to you.**

Applicants who apply and are deemed eligible for both DARE and HEAR will be prioritised by the participating colleges and universities when offering their reduced points places.

**For more information on DARE see [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie).**

# **DARE and HEAR**

## **Application Information Days**

**Saturday  
9 January  
2021  
10am – 2pm**

**Application  
Information Days  
will take place  
online for 2021.  
Further information on  
DARE HEAR application  
days 2021 will be  
published on  
[accesscollege.ie](https://accesscollege.ie)**