

Information for 6th Year Students and Parents



Part 2 **2020/2021**

- How to accept your CAO offer
- How to defer your place
- Vacant Places

The offers stage

There are three main rounds of offers: Round A, Round Zero, and Round One.

After Round One offers have been accepted, CAO then issues Round Two offers for remaining places. Subsequent offers are issued by CAO as necessary until late Sept to fill any vacancies that may arise. For the full timetable of offer and acceptance dates check the 'Important Dates' section of www.cao.ie.



The Offer Rounds

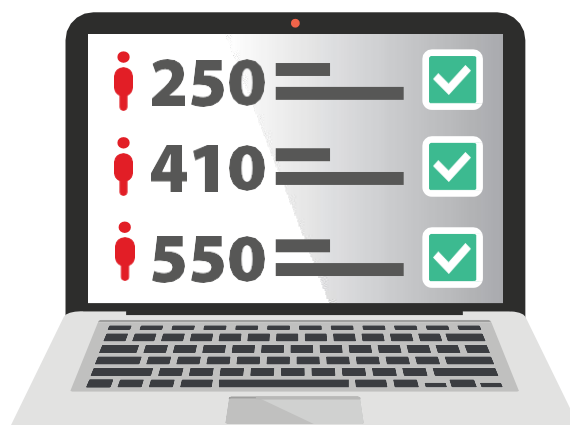
Round	Category of applicants
Round A (early July)	Deferred applicants; mature applicants; mature nursing/midwifery applicants; and applicants who have completed an access course.
Round Zero (early August)	Graduate entry medicine applicants; additional mature, deferred and access applicants; and applicants presenting QQI FET/FETAC for consideration for entry to courses with a quota for QQI FET/FETAC applicants.
Round One (Mid-August)	All applicants applying on the basis of school leaving examination results, regardless of year completed (including QQI FET applicants applying for non-quota courses)
Round Two and subsequent offers (late-August to mid-October)	All applicants applying on the basis of school leaving examination results, regardless of year completed (including QQI FET applicants applying for non-quota courses).

If your child is applying on the basis of school leaving examination results, regardless of the year completed, they may receive an offer in Round One. Round One offers will be issued as soon as possible after the current year Irish Leaving Certificate Examination results become available.

The Common Points Scale

In 2017, a new Leaving Certificate Grading Scale and Common Points Scale was introduced. From 2017, all applicants, regardless of the year that they sat their Leaving Certificate examination, will be competing using this new Common Points Scale. For more information on the scale go to www.transition.ie.

A Points Calculator for current year and pre-2017 Leaving Certificate candidates is available at www.cao.ie. You will also find more information in the 'Student Resources' section of our website (click on the Applicant Scoring page).



Accepting an offer

If your child decides to accept an offer they should accept the offer online before the reply date. If they receive an offer off both lists in the same round they must choose between them; they can only accept one offer from either their Level 8 or their Level 7/6 list in the one offer round.

Accepting an offer in Round One will not prevent your child from receiving an offer of a higher preference course in subsequent offer rounds.

If a place on a higher preference course becomes available in a later round, and if your child is entitled to this place, they may receive an offer which they can choose to accept or ignore. **Accepting the new offer will automatically cancel the previous acceptance.**

If your child accepts an offer online they will receive an acknowledgment e-mail and they can check that their acceptance has been recorded online at www.cao.ie.



Deferring a place

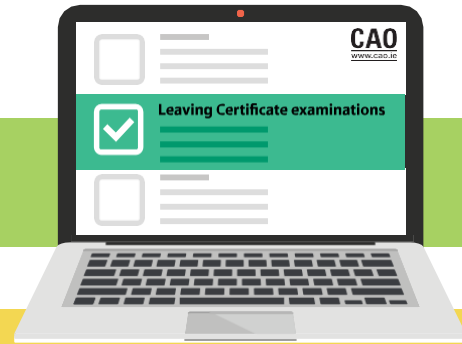
If your child decides to defer an offer of a place they must write or e-mail immediately to the Admissions Office of the appropriate HEI. They must give their name as it appears on their CAO application, quote their CAO application number and the course code of the offer they wish to defer, and set out the reason(s) for the request. They must mark “DEFERRED ENTRY” clearly on the envelope or in the Subject Line of their e-mail.

The letter or e-mail must arrive in the Admissions Office at least two days before the “Reply Date” shown on the Offer Notice. The HEI will communicate their decision to your child. If the deferral is not granted, your child may then accept the offer for the current year providing they record the acceptance by the reply date.

How offers are issued

Example:

The applicant's leaving Certificate results are released to CAO.



CAO checks if the applicant meets the minimum entry requirements for each of their chosen courses.

CAO calculates a points score for all of the courses that the applicant is eligible for.



The applicant is placed on a list for each of their eligible courses. Their position on the list is determined by their points score relative to the other eligible applicants for that course. The list is commonly referred to as the 'Order of Merit' list.

The colleges instruct CAO to make X number of offers for each course.

The offers are issued to applicants based on their position on the list. The applicant with the highest points score will be offered the first place, the second highest will be offered the second place, and so on until all places have been offered.

The points score of the last person to receive an offer in that round is the cut-off point for that course, i.e. the points that are published for that course for that round.

The applicant will receive an offer of the course highest up on their preference list that they are deemed eligible for. If they are eligible for an offer on their 2nd preference course they will not receive an offer for any lower preference courses.

How offers are issued *contd.*

Later offer rounds

In a later round the applicant may be deemed eligible for an offer of a course higher up on their preference list. They can choose to accept this higher preference offer even if they have already accepted a lower preference offer in an earlier round.

Random number selection

For some courses random number selection may also be a factor. Before students are placed on the Order of Merit list for a course they are assigned a random number. If there are five applicants with an identical points score competing for one remaining place, random number selection applies and the place will be offered to the candidate with the highest random number.

No offer received

If your child does not receive an offer in the first round of offers they will receive a Statement of Application e-mail. Please check this document carefully to ensure that all of the information is correct, for example, their examination number and results.

In the absence of an offer in Round One, it is important to consider other options and consult with a guidance counsellor if possible. Your child may still receive an offer in Round Two or subsequent offer rounds. They may also choose to make an Available Places application (see below) via www.cao.ie.

Other options include further education, taking a year out and reapplying to CAO, repeating the Leaving Certificate, apprenticeships, and studying abroad. It is important to remind your child that there are many options available to them.

Available places

If your child does not receive an offer in subsequent rounds, or if they are unhappy with the offer that they receive, they may apply through the Available Places facility on the CAO website. This facility opens in the days after Round One offers are made available online. The Available Places facility lists all of the courses which institutions have not yet filled. Applicants who meet the minimum eligibility criteria may apply for such courses. An application for an Available Places course does not guarantee an offer.

For more information watch the 'Available Places' video guide in the 'Student Resources' section of www.cao.ie.



About CAO Available Places

If Higher Educational Institutions have any new courses that open for application after the Change of Mind deadline, or if any places remain unfilled in particular courses after all offers have been made and the waiting lists of applicants meeting minimum entry requirements have been exhausted, such vacancies will be advertised.

Click [here](#) to watch a short video resource about the Available Places facility.

Where there are available places in specific courses, HEIs will advertise these on the CAO website. Before making an “Available Places” application, those matching the description “Restricted Categories of Applicant” on Page 3 of the CAO handbook should first consult with the Admissions Office of the HEI concerned.

- Persons who have not applied already may make an Available Place application on payment of a fee of €45.00.
- Persons who have applied already (whether placed or not) may apply for an Available Place on-line without payment of a further fee (when available).

- Applicants for available places must meet the normal minimum entry requirements for the course(s) in question. Previously published points in an earlier round of offers should not be taken as an indication of the points required for entry to available places.
- The Available Places application procedure is similar to the Change of Mind procedure. However, except for courses in which available places have been advertised, you may not re-order your original course choices. Log in to your application using 'My Application' and click on 'Add Level 8 Available Place Course' or 'Add Level 7/6 Available Place Course' as appropriate and follow instructions.
- Available place course codes may only be inserted higher in your list of preferences than any offer which you have received to date.
- If you still wish to be considered for any existing courses, you must insert all available place courses below those you wish to retain.
- If you have already applied to CAO this year, then an Available Places application is not separate to your existing application, you are inserting courses into your existing list of course choices.
- The Available Places application procedure is similar to the Change of Mind procedure. However, except for courses in which available places have been advertised, you may not re-order your original course choices.
- You may only have a total of 10 course choices in any course list (Level 8 and Level 7/6). If you wish to add an available place course to a list already containing 10 entries, the course code at the bottom of the list (i.e., preference 10) will be deleted.
- Mature applicants and applicants who have qualifications other than 1985-2021 Irish Leaving Cert and/or 2002-2021 QQI FET/FETAC Level 5/6 must contact the appropriate HEI before completing an application.
- Remember to follow the fundamental rule of the CAO application system, i.e. **place your course choices in genuine order of preference**. If you place an available place course as your first preference and you get an offer on this course, then you will not be offered any course lower in your order of preference.

- Acceptance of an offer of an Available Place automatically cancels and supersedes any previous offer(s) and acceptance(s).