

A photograph of a modern two-story building with a red brick section on the left and a white section on the right. The building has large glass windows and a central entrance. The sky is overcast. The text is overlaid on the image.

Donabate Community College

CAO Information Evening

- Welcome -



The Guidance Service in DCC:

Guidance Counsellors are professionally trained to meet the

- Personal Counselling
- Educational Guidance and
- Career Guidance

Needs of students in our school

This evening we will be looking at:

- DARE Applications
- SUSI Grants & HEAR
- Applying to college abroad
- Applying to the CAO
- Important dates
- Questions

DARE

Disability Access Route to Education

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

To be eligible for DARE, you must meet both the evidence of disability criteria and educational impact criteria.

DARE

Disability Access Route to Education

Some of the benefits can be:

- Reduced Points
- Orientation programmes
- Learning support
- Assistive technology
- Library support
- Exam accommodations
- Educational Support Worker
- Academic tuition

DARE Applicants can apply under the following headings:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (including Asperger's Syndrome)
- Attention Deficit Disorder / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Blind / Vision Impaired
- Deaf / Hard of Hearing
- DCD - Dyspraxia
- Mental Health Condition
- Neurological Conditions
- Speech & Language Communication Disorder
- Significant Ongoing Illness
- Physical Disability
- Dyslexia/ Significant Literacy Difficulties
- Dyscalculia/ Significant Numeracy Difficulties

More information about the DARE programme can be found at accesscollege.ie

**If you think your child may be eligible for DARE and we have not spoken to them yet, please email us at:
alicechaloner@donabatecc.ie
lillianmcgrotty@donabatecc.ie**



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

SUSI offers funding to eligible students in approved full time third level courses.

For more information go to susi.ie

HEAR Scheme

- The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is a higher education admissions scheme for Leaving Certificate students (under 23) whose economic or social background are underrepresented in higher education.
- More information is available at www.accesscollege.ie/hear

PLCs

Do not apply through the CAO – apply directly to the college website.

Courses normally open in January.

Going to the UK:

UCAS deadline is 14th January

- Brexit implications
- Fees – up to £9,250
- (Free fees for Scotland have gone)
- ucas.co.uk

European Colleges

- [Eunicas.ie](https://eunicas.ie)



Applying to College In Ireland

What you need to know:

- **College requirements**

- (minimum of 6 subjects)

- **Faculty requirements**

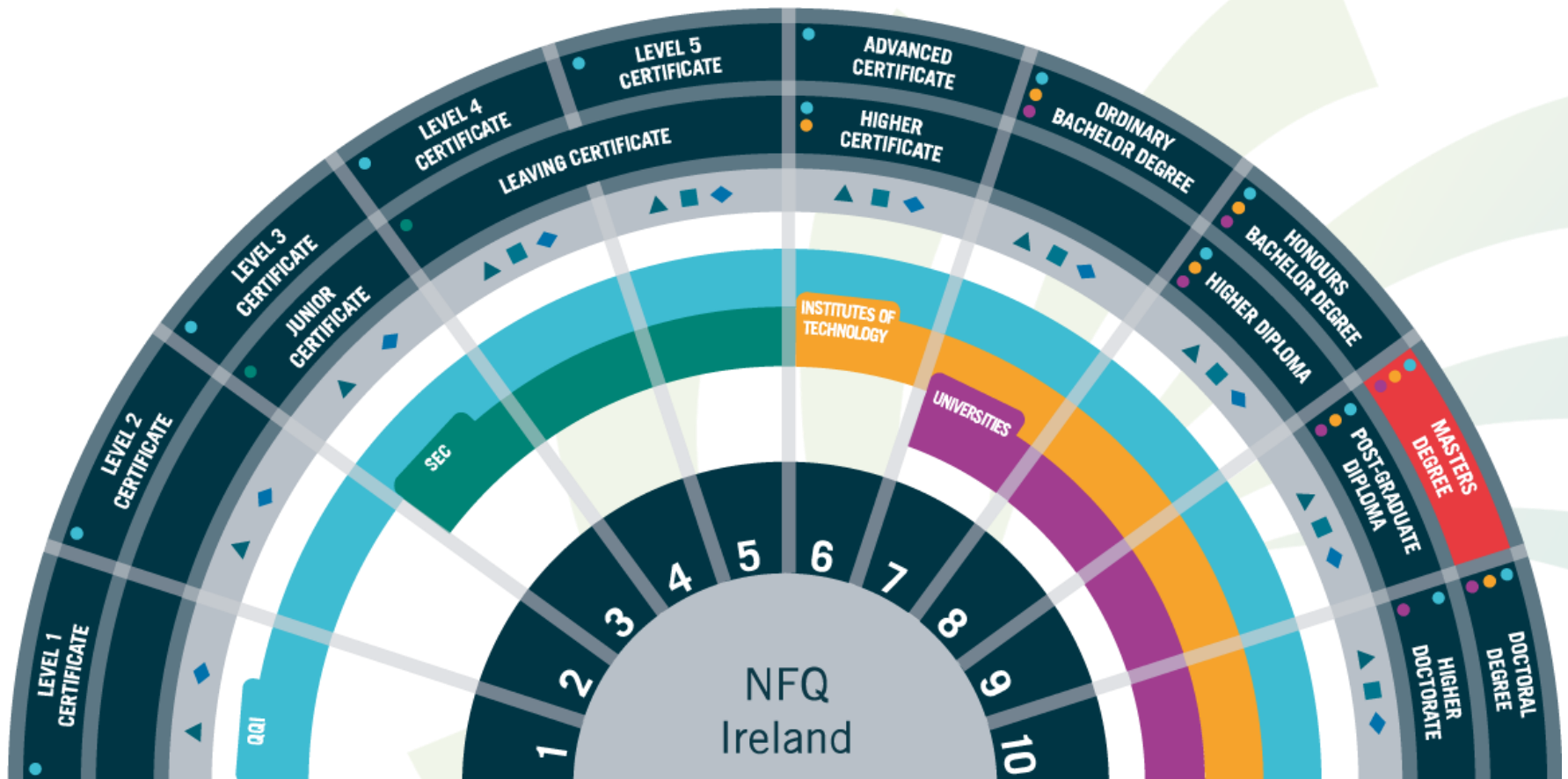
For example:

- H4 in Irish for primary teaching
- H4 in Maths for Honours (level 8) Engineering courses

- **Points**

- Remember points are only an indicator of how popular a course is
- Points vary year to year

National Framework of Qualifications



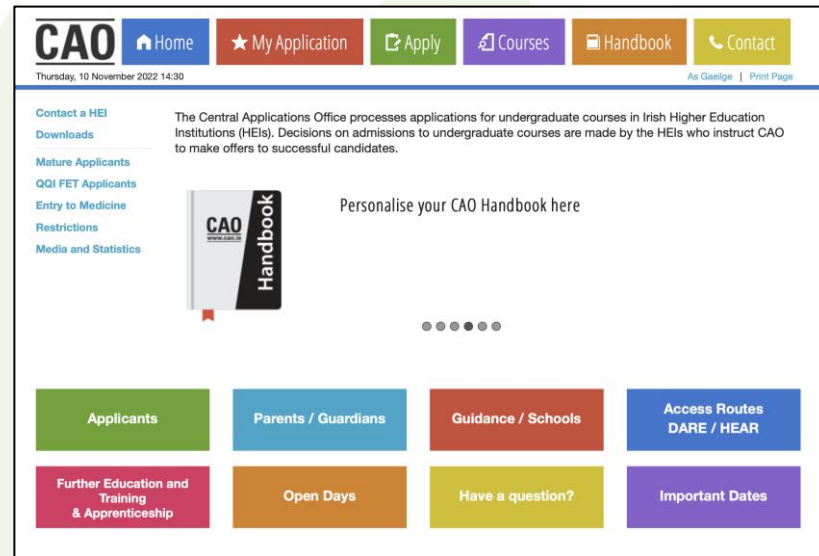
The CAO (Central Applications Office)

If you want to go to college
in Ireland, you must apply
through the Central
Applications Office
www.cao.ie

It Is YOUR Choice

It Is YOUR Responsibility

It Is YOUR Decision



2023 CAO Application (September/October 2023 entry)

Before Applying:

1. If you previously started your 2023 CAO application and have received a 2023 application number, proceed instead to the "My Application" facility where you may view/edit your application.
2. Read the [2023 CAO Handbook](#)
3. Read the [Course Changes](#) to view important changes to courses.

You may wish to use the [interactive demo facility](#).

Instructions

- In any one year, you may NOT present more than one application. If you think you may have already submitted an online application or you have already received a 2023 CAO application number, please proceed instead to the "My Application" facility. **There will be no refunds given to applicants who make more than one application.**
- The fee for an online application is currently €45
There is an online discounted fee of €30 if you apply before 20th January (17:00).
For further information on fees and closing dates, please view the [fees table](#).
- Applicants making an on-line application may pay the application fee using a Credit or Debit Card (Visa or MasterCard). Alternatively, applicants may pay the application fee in advance at a bank within the Republic of Ireland using an Application Fee Payment Form. If you have not received an Application Fee Payment Form, it may be obtained by contacting CAO.
- Applicants must **not** make more than one application (either on-line or paper). An extra **€10** penalty charge will be levied if an applicant submits more than one application (either on-line or paper).
- Mature applicants (those 23 years of age on or before the 1st of January 2023) and applicants who have qualifications other than the 1985-2023 Irish Leaving Cert and/or 2002-2023 QQI FET/FETAC Level 5/6 must complete the relevant sections of the application form and **post supporting documents to the CAO without delay**. Please read [here](#) for further instructions.
N.B. All documents must be clearly marked with your name and CAO Application Number.
- **Residence outside the EU (Past or Present):** If you have at any time resided, or are at present resident, outside the EU, then you may be required to apply direct to some HEIs. It is important that such applicants

Once you are registered with the CAO, you are given a CAO application number (sent instantly by email and text). Once you receive this – log in to the CAO website to fully complete your application.

You should keep this safe

You can change your mind online free of charge until 5pm on 1st of February

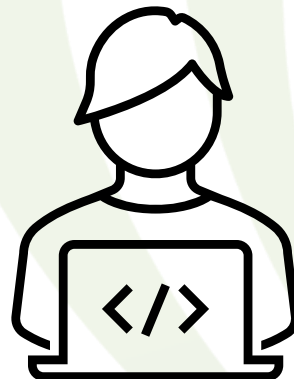
After that changes can be made from 5th May to 1st July at 5pm.

In May you will be sent a confirmation of course choices

Check all details carefully

Notify the CAO of any errors

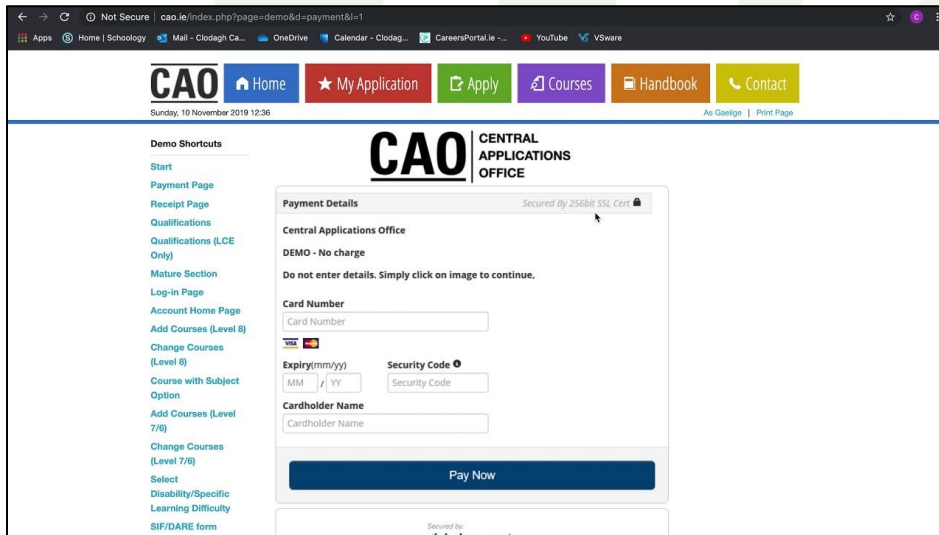
You will also be sent a change of mind form in May
The final date for changing your mind is July



Choosing courses on your CAO application:

You can choose up to **10** honours degree **Level 8** courses

You can choose up to **10** higher certificate / ordinary degree / **Level 6 & 7** courses



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the CAO (Central Applications Office) website. The browser's address bar shows the URL: cao.ie/index.php?page=demo&d=payment&l=1. The website's navigation menu includes links for Home, My Application, Apply, Courses, Handbook, and Contact. The main content area is titled "Payment Details" and is secured by 256-bit SSL. It displays the following information:

- Central Applications Office**
- DEMO - No charge**
- Do not enter details. Simply click on image to continue.**
- Card Number**: A text input field for the card number.
- Expiry (mm/yy)**: Two text input fields for the month and year of expiry.
- Security Code**: A text input field for the security code.
- Cardholder Name**: A text input field for the cardholder's name.
- Pay Now**: A prominent blue button to proceed with the payment.

On the left side of the page, there is a "Demo Shortcuts" section with a list of links: Start, Payment Page, Receipt Page, Qualifications, Qualifications (LCE Only), Mature Section, Log-in Page, Account Home Page, Add Courses (Level 6), Change Courses (Level 8), Course with Subject Option, Add Courses (Level 7/8), Change Courses (Level 7/8), Select, Disability/Specific Learning Difficulty, and SIF/DARE form.

Making your choice...

List your courses in genuine order of preference

Your first choice is the course you want to do most

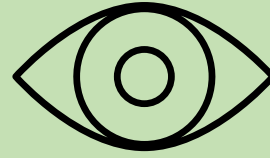
Ignore the points

Go for what you want most



Getting Information

Where to look...



- Prospectuses
- College websites
- Open days
- Talk to friends
- Talk to your guidance counsellor
- Class talks
- Qualifax.ie
- Careersportal.ie



Qualifax: every course explained



When it comes to your learning journey, the possibilities are endless. But it can be a little overwhelming. Qualifax can help you discover your pathway.

Our comprehensive database of up to 15,000 courses is here to help students, jobseekers, parents, guidance professionals and graduates explore their education and training options. So whether you're a student looking for a CAO course or an employee interested in microcredentials for that next promotion, we have you covered.



CAO



Further education and



Adult learners

Some General Tips:

- Consider subjects taught on the course
- Consider options within the course
- The distance from home
- Good career opportunities
- Cost – fees etc
- Consider some level 7's which may have access routes into level 8s.

How the CAO works

In short...

You get an offer when you satisfy all College Requirements, Faculty Requirements & Points Requirements.

Some people don't accept offers, so I can get a higher up offer in Round Two or Three.

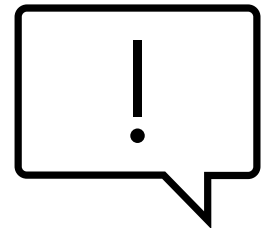




classroomguidance.ie

The important things are:

- Know what the course involves before you apply.
- Apply in your genuine order of preference.
- Ignore points.
- Only apply for courses you genuinely want to do
- You can only be offered places in later rounds in courses you have put above your first round offer.
- Example: in the 1st round, you get offered your 3rd choice. In later rounds, you can only be offered a place in your 1st or 2nd choice (if applicable).



Restricted Applications

Some courses consider more than just points.

Eg: Interviews, Tests, Auditions, Portfolios or Projects

These are conducted around Easter

These courses can't be added to your application after February 1st

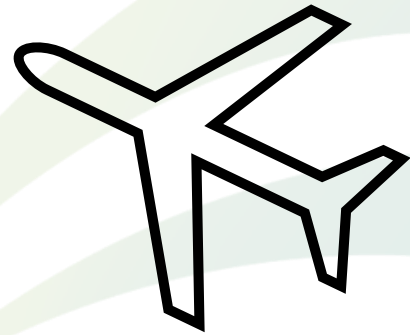
They can be changed or dropped



Deferring a Place

Deferring means that you don't want to take your place this year but will do so next year.

- Some courses can not be deferred, check beforehand.
- Once the offer comes do not accept it.
- Write IMMEDIATELY to the college concerned.
- They will let you know if the offer will be deferred.



Offer and Acceptance



Made one week after leaving cert results.

Made by post and online.

You can get an offer from both lists (Levels 6 & 7 and Level 8).

You can only accept one. Accept online or by post. No need to pay any money

Some extra things to note:

If you are a DARE candidate, you must answer YES to Question 1 on Section A by the 1st of March and have your supporting documentation to the CAO to arrive by 17:00 on 15th March

If you are exempt from Irish & / or a third language you must complete an “*NUI Exemption Form*” to ensure you meet the entry requirements for NUI Colleges – I will be in contact with these students over the coming weeks.

2025 / 2026 Important Dates

5th November	CAO opens
20th January (17:00)	Apply online by this date to avail of the discounted application fee of €35
1st February (17:00)	Normal closing date for applications.
Test centre sitting: 13-16th February	HPAT Test - Undergraduate Entry to Medicine
1st March (17:00)	Closing date for amending course choices Closing date for completion of mature section of application form Closing date for final completion of online HEAR/DARE forms
10th March (17:00)	Latest date for HEAR/DARE supporting documentation to arrive in CAO
5th May (12:00)	Online Change of Mind facility becomes available (Free)
Before End of May	Statement of Application Record sent to all applicants (Contact CAO if you do not receive it)
1st July (17:00)	Change of Mind closes

In Summary:

- Get lots of information – refer to CAO online handbook and college websites.
- Read the instructions.
- Be on time with applications.
- Check regularly for emails / texts from CAO and respond accordingly.
- Courses in **YOUR** order of preference.

Helpful Resources:

- College websites
- www.cao.ie
- www.qualifax.ie
- www.careersportal.ie
- www.accesscollege.ie (DARE & HEAR)
- www.susi.ie (SUSI grants)
- Classroom Guidance on YouTube (great for explanation videos)
- Follow colleges on social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok etc.
- Leaving Cert Guidance podcast on Spotify

Further Questions?

- If you have any further questions in relation to the CAO, DARE / HEAR or SUSI please contact us at:

lillianmcgrotty@donabatecc.ie

alicechaloner@donabatecc.ie

Thank you!