

# GUIDANCE UPDATES

Sandymount Park ETSS



## CAREERS NEWS

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

As students near the end of their secondary school journey, this is a time filled with opportunities and important decisions. Whether they are considering further education, training, employment, or other pathways, the choices they make now will shape the next stage of their lives. This guide aims to provide valuable information and reminders to help you provide support and guidance during this critical time.

## KEY FEATURES

1. CAO dates going forward
2. Finding Student accommodation
3. Weekly Senior Cycle checklist
4. HEAR/DARE applications & National Application Information Day
5. SUSI grant
6. Post Leaving Certificate courses (PLC's)
7. Apprenticeships
8. Studying in Europe: key facts and dates
9. Studying in the UK/ Northern Ireland
10. Students with Irish exemptions
11. Second chance Math's exams for students.
12. Scholarships
13. Contact and support

# 1.CAO (Central Applications Office)

**IMPORTANT 6th years:** THE CAO OPENED FOR APPLICATIONS ON THE 5th of NOVEMBER 2024. Please ensure your child has registered with CAO. I will meet with all 6th year students again in January to confirm their CAO choices. 6th year students must have registered with CAO prior to meeting with me in January, otherwise we cannot access their CAO application to advise.

**Note:** please refer to the November Information evening CAO Power Point for guidelines on making CAO choices: **REMEMBER - GENUINE ORDER OF PREFERENCE!** The slides can be accessed on the school Guidance and Counselling website.

Over 25 New CAO Courses have been introduced for 2025 applicants – you can check these out by on [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie)

All students have been shown how to access the CAO handbook on the CAO website [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie). The CAO website also contains lots of short information video guides. I recommend that parents/guardians check this with your child as it contains all information on the following:

- CAO application process.
- Change of mind facility.
- Offer of places.
- Accepting/declining places.
- What to do if you do not receive a place.
- Deferrals

**Note:** You will also find links to information on Post Leaving Cert courses/FET (Further Education and Training) and Apprenticeships on the CAO website. Please click on this link: [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)

## Key dates for the CAO are as follows:

- **5 November 2024:** CAO online application facility opens.
- **20 January 2025:** 5.15pm-early closing date-€30
- **1 February 2025:** 5.15pm-normal closing date-€45
- **1 March 2025:** 5.15pm-closing date for completion of HEAR/DARE forms.
- **15th March 2025:** 5.15pm-closing date for submitting HEAR/DARE documents to CAO
- **1 May 2025:** 5.15pm-closing date for late applications-€60
- **5 May-1 July 2025:** free change of mind facility open.

## 2.FINDING STUDENT ACCOMODATION

For students planning to attend college outside of Dublin/Kildare, I recommend you organise student accommodation as soon as possible. On-campus student accommodation books out very fast and it is very often a lottery. Many colleges are open for booking on campus accommodation from January 2025. You can book accommodation before you sit your Leaving Cert. Your booking deposit will be refunded if you do not get a college place. Please check the college websites for further information on student accommodation.

**Note:** The students' union can be very helpful in finding information on student accommodation. You can find contact details for the student's union on the college websites.

Types of accommodation: Digs, Self-catering /house share, on campus accommodation, homestay.com, Airbnb.

## 3.WEEKLY LEAVING CERT CHECKLIST

Every week CareersPortal.ie publish a **Senior Cycle Weekly Checklist** for you to stop, take five minutes and check you have everything in order. Doing this will help you have everything in place for the next step on your career journey. Please click on the link below to access this information.

[www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie) - Bottom of Home page under NEWS.

## 4.HEAR/DARE APPLICATIONS [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie)

### HEAR (Higher Education Access Route)

The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is an admissions route for school leavers who for social, financial, or cultural reasons are under-represented at third level education.

### AM I ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR HEAR?

- Family income below €46 790 (less than 4 children)
- Family income below €51 325 (4-7 children)
- Medical/GP visit card in date on 31 December 2024
- Means tested social welfare for 26 weeks in 2024
- Socio-economic group underrepresented at third level.
- You live in an area of concentrated disadvantage.

**All income is based on year 2023.**

**You must meet the income limit and the right combination of two other indicators.**

### **WHAT SUPPORTS WILL I GET?**

- Reduced points.
- Extra money (on request if needed).
- Guidance/support while at college.
- Pre-college orientation week.

**You must indicate on your CAO form that you wish to be considered for HEAR.**

### **WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED TO SUPPLY TO THE CAO IF I AM APPLYING TO HEAR?**

- P21 or notice of assessment if you are a PAYE worker (go to [www.revenue.to](http://www.revenue.to) to order this)
- Social welfare form signed and stamped by local Social Welfare Office (download from CAO website).
- RP50 notice of redundancy or retirement lump sum payment.
- Letter from TUSLA for children in care (download from CAO website).

### **HEAR APPLICATION TIMELINE**

- **1 February 2025:** apply to CAO
- **1 March 2025:** Complete all elements of the HEAR application form. Gather all supporting documents.
- **15 March 2025:** Submit copies of documents to the CAO. Keep original documents and get a certificate of postage from An Post every time you post something. There is no need to send it by registered post.
- **April-June 2025:** HEAR screening.
- **Late June 2025:** Applicants notified of outcome of HEAR applications.
- **End June 2025:** HEAR rechecks.
- **August-**Leaving Certificate Results, CAO offers, HEAR offers
- **Late August/Early September 2025:** Mandatory HEAR orientation programme.

## **DARE (Disability Access Route to Education)**

This is a supplementary admissions scheme which offers college places to students with disabilities.

### **WHO SHOULD APPLY?**

Anyone whose disability has had a significant impact on educational performance in school.

### **WHAT SUPPORTS WILL I GET?**

- Reduced points.
- Orientation programme.
- Learning support.
- Assistive technology.
- Library support.
- Exam support.
- Academic tuition.

### **DARE APPLICATION TIMELINE**

- Apply to the CAO by **1 February 2025**
- Fill out DARE application form by **1 March 2025**
- Submit completed academic reference to CAO by **15 March 2025** (Anne will advise).
- Submit your evidence of disability documentation to the CAO by **15 March 2025** (consultant report)

## **NATIONAL INFORMATION DAY SATURDAY THE 11TH OF JANUARY 2025!**

The In-person DARE HEAR Information Day is taking place in various locations in the higher education institutions on January 11th from **10 am – 2 pm**. These events give DARE and HEAR applicants a chance to meet one-on-one with DARE and HEAR Practitioners, ask questions about their application and gain insights into the kind of supports their local college or university provides for students who apply to DARE or HEAR.

Please see all the locations linked below, and register your interest.

[DARE HEAR National Information Day Saturday the 11th of January 2025! - Access College](#)

## 5.SUSI GRANT (Financial aid for students)

- You must indicate on your CAO application that you will be applying to SUSI. Click yes under SUSI on your CAO application.
- All income is based on **year 2024**.
- The SUSI grant opens in April 2025.
- The priority Application Closing Date for new applicants is Thursday 9 July 2025. You can apply after this date but you most likely will not have your maintenance money in time for starting college.
- Please click on the link below to access very simple easy to follow videos on all aspects of SUSI: <https://susi.ie/susi-information-videos/>
- All information relating to SUSI can be found at [www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie)

## 6.POST LEAVING CERTIFICATE COURSES (PLC)

### SOME FACTS ABOUT PLC COURSES

- PLC courses are nationally recognised.
- It is a good idea for you to try out a course if you are not sure what you want to do or not ready to start a degree course.
- They are an alternative to repeating your Leaving Certificate if you do not get enough points to do your desired course.
- You normally take 8 subjects or modules as part of your PLC course.
- Colleges will expect you to get between 3-8 distinctions in order to secure a place in a HEI. The more popular the course the more distinctions you will need.
- A distinction is the highest grade you can get in your subject/module. Other grades include Pass or Merit.

### HOW DO I APPLY FOR A PLC COURSE?

- Go directly to the PLC college website.
- Fill out the simple PLC application form.
- You need to have your medical card/PPS number with you.
- Your application is submitted to the college.
- You will be called to interview.
- Shortly after you will be told if you have secured a place.

**Note:** You can apply to PLC colleges now.

## AM I GUARANTEED A PLACE IN A UNIVERSITY/3RD LEVEL INSTITUTE WHEN I FINISH MY PLC COURSE?

- You are **not** guaranteed a place. This will depend on how well you do in the PLC. However, colleges are reserving more places for PLC candidates. So, for example, if you want to do a general science degree, if you don't secure a place in UCD you will have a good chance of securing a place in TU Dublin or another of the Technological Universities to do the science degree.
- You can get an idea of how many PLC points are required for different courses and how many places are reserved for PLC candidates by clicking on the links below. The maximum PLC points you can get is 390.

**CHECKING MY PLC POINTS:** <https://careersportal.ie/qqi/>

## CHECKING HOW MANY PLACES ARE RESERVED IN UCD FOR PLC CANDIDATES:

<https://www.ucd.ie/registry/prospectivestudents/admissions/undergraduateapplicants/alternativeentryroutes/qqi-fetentryroutes/>

## CHECKING HOW MANY PLACES ARE RESERVED IN TU DUBLIN FOR PLC CANDIDATES:

<https://www.dit.ie/studyatdit/undergraduate/entryrequirements/qqiplevel5/>

Please note: All PLC candidates are entitled to apply for a SUSI grant.

## 7.APPRENTICESHIPS

### TO SECURE AN APPRENTICESHIP YOU MUST:

- Apply through a general recruitment process when the apprenticeship is advertised **OR**
- Seek an employer who is willing to take you on as an apprentice ([www.irishjobs.ie](http://www.irishjobs.ie))
- Once you have found an employer contact your local SOLAS office and they will guide you through the next steps. ([www.solas.ie](http://www.solas.ie))
- Remember, even if your employer is not registered with SOLAS, he/she can register in order to take you on as an apprentice. This is a simple process.
- Once you are taken on by an employer you must be registered with SOLAS within two weeks. if you are not registered within two weeks, your apprenticeship may be extended.

While many people are aware of the traditional craft apprenticeships such as Electrician/Plumber/Carpenter; since 2016 the range of industries covered by apprenticeships has grown significantly. Some of the **new apprenticeships** include:

- Accounting Technician.
- ICT Software Developer
- Laboratory Technician and many more.

For all information on Apprenticeships including Types of Apprenticeships/How to apply/Current Apprenticeships available please visit [www.apprenticeships.ie](http://www.apprenticeships.ie)

Lots of up-to-date information on apprenticeships in addition to video descriptions of different apprenticeships can also be found on [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie)

## **HELP WITH SECURING APPRENTICESHIPS**

The following topics will be covered in Careers class in Term 2 and 3 (and at student's individual careers meeting)

- A List of the top firms in Ireland to contact regarding apprenticeships.
- How to complete a CV and a CV template. Students can also ask for individual support on this.
- Covering Letter templates and support with completing covering letters.
- Interview techniques and tips.

## **8.STUDYING IN EUROPE**

There are 1000 undergraduate programmes in a full range of subjects in universities across Europe, that are delivered through English.

### **SOME FACTS ABOUT STUDYING IN EUROPE**

- Some European universities are ranked higher than Irish universities.
- Entry requirements for many European Universities are often lower than those of Irish and UK universities. However, standards are very high, and you will have to work hard when you get in.
- Many programmes (but not all) will just look for NUI matriculation requirements of six passes in the Leaving Certificate with at least grade H5 in two subjects and O6 in four subjects. However, this does not mean programmes of study are easier in European Universities.



- There are no fees in many European countries. Denmark, Norway, Sweden Finland, Austria and Malta are free of fees. Tuition fees in Italy are fixed with reference to family income. They are between €400-€4000 per year. Irish students pay an average of €1500 (including for Medicine)
- In the Netherlands tuition fees of €2038 apply with a supplement of about €1000-€1500 for some Liberal Arts and Science Courses.
- Students can apply for interest free loans in some countries including the Netherlands (20 years after graduation to pay off) and Denmark.
- Students working part-time can get grants or loans of up to €800 per month. Please be aware that in order to avail of the grant in the Netherlands students must also work during the summer months unless facilitated by their employer.

### **KEY DATES FOR APPLYING TO EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES**

- **15 January 2025:** Application deadline for a limited number of programmes in the Netherlands.
- **15 March 2025:** Application deadline in Denmark.
- **18 April 2025:** Second round application deadline for most programmes in Denmark.
- **April-May 2025:** Entrance tests in Dublin for leading Polish and Hungarian Veterinary and Medical schools.
- **1 May 2025:** Application deadline for many programmes in Dutch universities (although many have deadlines as late as 1 July)
- **June-August 2025:** Different application deadlines for most programmes in Dutch universities of Applied Sciences.
- **31 July 2025:** Second round offers in Denmark.
- **July 2025:** Application deadline for entrance test for Medical schools at public Italian universities (for entrance in 2025)

### **ANYONE CONSIDERING STUDYING IN EUROPE**

I would strongly recommend you go to [www.unicas.ie](http://www.unicas.ie) . For a fee of €30 you will be guided through the application process. You can also apply to up to 8 different courses/universities with the help of Eunicas.

**Note:** If you are entitled to a SUSI maintenance grant you can use this for European Universities.

## 9. Studying in Northern Ireland or the UK

Studying in Northern Ireland or the UK offers Irish students access to a wide range of highly regarded universities and courses. Students applying through **UCAS** (the central application system for UK universities) can choose up to five courses at universities across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Tuition fees for Irish students are typically the same as those for UK students, with tuition costs in Northern Ireland generally lower than in the rest of the UK. Additionally, Irish students benefit from the Common Travel Area agreement, which allows them to live, study, and work in the UK without requiring a visa.

### KEY DATES FOR APPLYING TO UCAS

- **29 January 2025:** (the main application deadline for most courses)
- **26 February 2025:** Extra opens. If your child has used all five choices and is not holding an offer, they can add another choice using Extra.
- **4 July 2025:** Extra closes.

**Note:** It is important to research individual courses and universities for specific requirements and deadlines.

For more detailed information see [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

## 10. STUDENTS WITH IRISH / LANGUAGE EXEMPTIONS

Only students who have applied to a NUI college need to concern themselves with sending in documentation regarding Irish exemptions.

The NUI colleges are as follows:

- University College Dublin
- University College Cork
- University of Galway
- Maynooth University
- and associated colleges with the colleges listed above.

If a student has an Irish exemption, they MAY be entitled to an exemption from the Modern Language requirement for their course. Please click on the link below to access information regarding Irish/Modern Language exemptions. This is an online application. You must have relevant documentation ready when you apply as you can only apply in one sitting. Your Guidance Counsellor can support you in making this application.

Please click on the link below for information on the documentation you need:  
<https://www.nui.ie/news/2023/Exemptions.asp>

**Note:** There is no rush with this, however, the sooner you get it done the better. As soon as you have your CAO number, you can apply. NUI will not accept applications later than 21st July 2025.

All questions relating to NUI Irish and Modern Language exemptions are answered if you click on the following link. <http://www.nui.ie/college/entry-requirements-faqs.asp>

## 11. SECOND CHANCE/ALTERNATIVE MATHS EXAM

Several colleges hold a Second Chance Maths exam for students who may not achieve the minimum Maths entry requirement for their course.

- Many of these courses are in the Engineering/Science/Technology areas.
- Most colleges will offer tutorials in advance of sitting the exam, which is usually held in August.
- The Maths test is set at a similar standard to the Honours Leaving Certificate Maths exam.
- TU Dublin also holds a test at Easter each year.

The colleges which hold the competency Maths test are as follows:

- TU Dublin
- MUT – Munster Technological University
- Maynooth University
- University of Galway
- University of Limerick
- SETU (South East Technological University)

**IMPORTANT:** Please check with any college you have applied to if you are unsure of achieving the Maths requirement. More colleges may have come on board this year to provide the test.

If a student has applied for an Engineering/Technology/Science/Business course in any college (in addition to the above) they need to contact the college to see:

- If there is a Maths Competency test available and the date of the test for 2025 entry.
- Whether there are tutorials/past papers available.

## 12.SCHOLARSHIPS

There are more than 300 scholarships available to students with a very wide criteria for eligibility. Scholarships open for application from December 2024. Information can be found at [www.studentfinance.ie](http://www.studentfinance.ie) and [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie) and <https://sportsscholarshipsireland.com/>

**NOTE:** It is important that students contact colleges directly regarding scholarships as criteria may change from year to year.

UCD AD ASTRA Scholarships are now open for application.

## 13.CONTACT AND SUPPORT

Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries or concerns and I will be happy to help **amulhall@sandymountparketss.ie**