

## CAO (Central Applications Office)

*The Central Applications Office (CAO) processes applications to first year undergraduate programmes at the Higher Education Institutes in Ireland.*

### Two Types of CAO Applications

#### STANDARD

- Students applying on the basis of **Leaving Cert** results (1985- to date)
- Students applying on the basis of **FETAC/QQI** awards (2002- to date)

#### NON STANDARD

- **Mature students** (over 23 on 1<sup>st</sup> Jan of the year of course entry)
- Students with further education qualifications prior to 2002.
- Students who have previously attended third level courses.
- Students with school leaving exams from other countries or from Ireland prior to 1985.

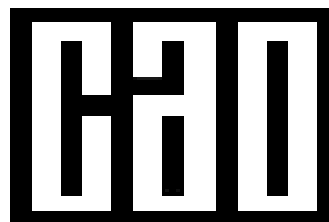
### Leaving Certificate Applicants

Scores from your best 6 subjects in the Leaving Cert are counted for point's purposes. Scores are calculated according to the table below.

#### Leaving Cert Points Calculation

Grade	Higher	Ordinary
1 (90-100)	100	56
2 (80-90)	88	46
3 (70-80)	77	37
4 (60-70)	66	28
5 (50-60)	56	20
6 (40-50)	46	12
7 (30-40)	37	0
8 (0-30)	0	0

- Colleges offer bonus points to applicants with higher level mathematics. 25 points are offered to applicants who score H6 or above.
- Some colleges offer points to student for foundation mathematics. See page 18 CAO Handbook.



### FETAC/QQI Applicants

With a full FETAC/QQI Level 5 Award you can apply to a range of courses at Higher Education Institutes in Ireland.

Some courses accept applicants with any full award at Level 5. In this case the award results are converted to points based on a standardised scoring system and applicants are competing for places with Leaving Cert applicants.

Other courses accept applicants only with specific linked FETAC/QQI Level 5 awards. In this case there may be a quota of places reserved for further education applicants who are competing only against other applicants holding further education qualifications for one of these places.

Some colleges/ courses do not accept FETAC/QQI qualifications for entry purposes.

See the **Student Resources Section** of the **CAO website** for more information.

There is a QQI Points Calculator at Careers Portal:  
<http://www.careersportal.ie/qqi>

## Mature Students

Non-standard applicants should complete Part B of the form if filling in a paper application. The online application will only ask you to fill the sections applicable to you based on your answers to the questions on the first page.

For mature students this will mean completing a supporting statement and supplying copies of relevant documentation.

In most local colleges including University of Limerick and Limerick Institute of Technology mature students apply through the CAO. Mature students do not have to satisfy the educational requirements for most courses.

Instead they compete against other mature students on the basis of their application form, an interview and sometimes a written test or portfolio presentation.

Mature applicants to some courses at UCC, NUIG, UL and UCD have to sit an MSAP test which assesses general skills and abilities developed over the course of your education and life experience. This test involves two sections - a written English section and a multiple choice section measuring reasoning skills. It currently costs €75 to sit this test.

### What should a supporting statement contain?

- Reasons for wanting to undertake this degree
- Programmes potential contribution to future career or life plans.
- Highlight experience or skills gained through employment, voluntary work or personal interests which have prepared you to undertake this degree programme.
- Your knowledge and understanding of the career area in which you have an interest.
- The preparation you have made for undertaking a degree programme.

**NB Mature Students are strongly advised to contact the admissions of the college they hope to apply to well in advance of the closing date for CAO submissions**

**In most colleges the closing date for receipt of mature student applications is the 1<sup>st</sup> February at 5.15pm. Some colleges have a different deadline.**

### Application Fees for CAO

€25 online discounted (if submitted online by 20<sup>th</sup> Jan 5.15pm)

€40 normal application (if submitted by 1<sup>st</sup> February 5.15pm)

€50 late online application (if submitted online between 1<sup>st</sup> Feb and 1<sup>st</sup> May 5.15pm)

€80 late paper application (if submitted by post between 1<sup>st</sup> Feb and 1<sup>st</sup> May 5.15pm)

Once application is submitted you can use the online change of mind facility for free as many times as you like up until 1<sup>st</sup> July at 5.15pm.

**Please note that it is very important to list your courses choices in genuine order of preference as you will always be offered the highest choice to which you are entitled.**



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