





“Options After School”

6th Year Parent
Information Evening

Aims:

- To support you in understanding the options after school
- To explain how to apply for PLCs, apprenticeships and other training programmes
- To inform you of the CAO process
- To explain SUSI, HEAR and DARE
- To emphasise the importance of student research and student responsibility

Options After School



Third Level College



Post-Leaving Certificate Courses



Apprenticeships



Further Training & Employment

Leaving Cert Class of 2025

- **Colleges:** SETU Waterford & SETU Carlow, Maynooth University, MTU Cork & MTU Tralee, TUS Limerick, TU Dublin, UL, WCFE, Ormonde College, Carrick on Suir FET Centre, Clonmel CTI, Belgium
- **Courses:** Business, Social Studies, Biomedical Engineering, Arts, Computers, Engineering, Linguistics, Childcare, Culinary Arts, Analytical Science, Coaching, Agricultural Science, Wildlife Biology, Microbiology, Quantity Surveying, Hairdressing
- **Apprenticeships & Training:** Royal Navy, Army, Electrician, Engineering, Electrical Instrumentation, Hairdressing, Mechanics



Post-Leaving Certificate Courses

What is a PLC?

- 1 or 2 year course after school
- 5 passes (06/H7) or pass LCA
- Courses in a number of areas:
 - Childcare, Beauty Therapy, Hairdressing, Business, Computers, Animal Care, Psychology, Social Care, Health Care/Pre-Nursing, Art and Design, Journalism, Photography, Media, Construction, Pharmacy Assistant, Sports and Leisure, Travel and Tourism

Why do a PLC?

- Great option for students who
 - Want to prepare for the world of work
 - Are unsure about what they want to do
 - Don't feel ready for 3rd level
 - Don't achieve required points
- Work experience element
- Inexpensive
- Susi maintenance grant
- Level 5 or 6 QQI qualification

How to apply for a PLC?

1. Students register with www.fetchcourses.ie and apply for a course
2. The college (W.C.F.E., C.T.I. Clonmel) will then email & ask them to register with them
3. Students will be called for an interview
4. Students are usually offered a place or placed on a waiting list
5. Students who have been offered a place send in a copy of results when issued in August



Apprenticeships

What is an Apprenticeship?



- Earn as you Learn model
- Usually 4 phases on-the-job and 3 phases in college
- Wide variety of careers; carpenter, electrician, blocklayer, lab technician, insurance practitioner, accounting technician
- Internationally recognised qualification
- Huge demand and increase in female apprentices

How do Apprenticeships Work?

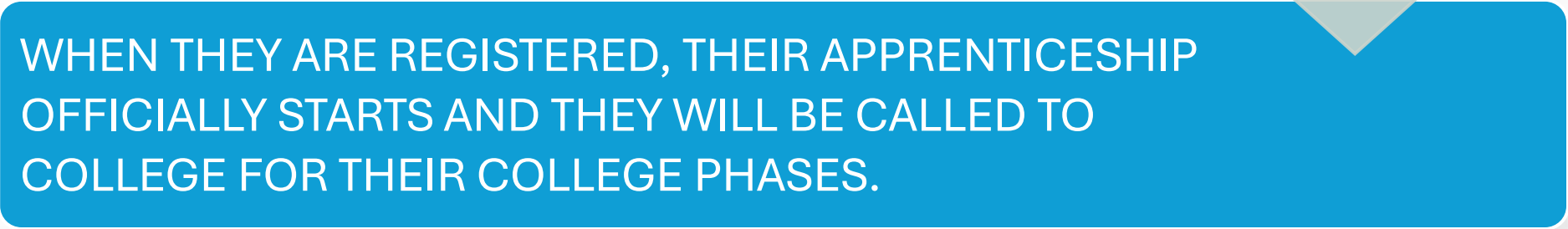
STUDENT MUST FIND A SOLAS- REGISTERED EMPLOYER
WILLING TO HIRE THEM

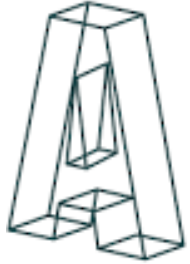


WHEN THEY GET THEIR RESULTS, THEIR EMPLOYER MUST
REGISTER THEM WITH SOLAS



WHEN THEY ARE REGISTERED, THEIR APPRENTICESHIP
OFFICIALLY STARTS AND THEY WILL BE CALLED TO
COLLEGE FOR THEIR COLLEGE PHASES.





**GENERATION
APPRENTICESHIP**
www.apprenticeship.ie

- Talk to family members, neighbours, friends
- Gain experience in the trade
- Look out for national recruitment for ESB, Bus Eireann, Irish Rail etc.
- From Easter start to contact people/ businesses expressing your interest
- Bigger companies will start to recruit from March- Laboratory Assistant/ Mechatronic Engineering/ Electrical Instrumentation
- Ask Ms. Jensen & Ms. O'Neill for contacts
- Follow the jobs board **jobalert.ie** on Facebook for Tipperary/Waterford/Kilkenny to see local job advertisements

Visit

www.apprenticeship.ie



Guidance on apprenticeship options

A Freephone Helpline is available for advice and support on apprenticeship options. Contact us today:
1800 794 487. Open 12pm-6pm Monday-Friday.

Apprenticeship.ie- 'Find Apprenticeship Employers'

- Directory of Employers updated monthly



Other Training

- Gardaí/Defence Forces: National recruitment drives will be advertised on radio and social media
- Lidl, Aldi, Retail, Banks etc: Applications on websites and national recruitment drives on radio and social media

CAO

www.cao.ie

CENTRAL
APPLICATIONS
OFFICE



CAO

What is the CAO?

- The Central Applications Office (CAO) processes all applications for 3rd Level Colleges.
- After the Leaving Certificate results in August, the CAO issues all course offers to students.
- Students accept courses through the CAO.
- Applications are made **online** and cost €35 up to Jan 20th and then €50 until Feb 1st.

www.cao.ie



- **Personal Details:** Name, date of birth, address, phone number
- **Qualifications:** for students sitting their Leaving Certificate only tick Irish Leaving Certificate 2026 (1st box)
- **Email:** do not use school email
- **Payment:** via debit or credit card
- **Password:** to create and keep safe
- **School name and address**
- **Course choices:** add Level 8 and Level 7/6 course codes
- **Additional information:** SUSI grant, NUI exemptions, disability or specific learning difficulty/ DARE application, HEAR application



CENTRAL
APPLICATIONS
OFFICE

- **Students can apply for up to 20 courses**

10 Level 8 Honours Degree Courses

10 Level 7 Ordinary Degree/ Level 6 Higher Certificate Courses

- **Courses must be put in order of preference!**
- *After the closing date of Feb 1st, students can change the order of their courses or put in new non-restricted courses when the change of mind facility opens in May until July 1st.*

Filling up choices on the CAO Form
Order of Preference is the RULE!

LEVEL 8 (Honours Degree Courses)	LEVEL 6 & 7 (Higher Cert & Ordinary Degree Courses)
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

Order of Preference

APPLICATION

1

APPLICATION

2

PLACE YOUR
COURSES IN
GENUINE ORDER
OF PREFERENCE!



How do CAO decide who gets in?

- Colleges tell the CAO how many places to offer on each course
- CAO then checks that applicants have met the entry requirements for the course. Applicants are then put in a queue in order of their results or Leaving Certificate points.
- Some courses also add on points for portfolios/auditions etc
- Offers go out to the applicants that make the cut
- Students will receive an offer for the highest numbered course on their application where they made the cut
- Students can receive a maximum of 2 offers;
1 Level 8 and 1 Level 7/6

CAO Offers

- CAO offers come out a few days after the Leaving Cert results (2025 Date 22nd August)
- Students will receive a maximum of 2 offers- 1 Level 8 Offer and 1 Level 7/6 Offer
- Students can accept 1 offer
- If accepting an offer, they must do so by the reply date on the offer notice
- If you are not accepting an offer, ignore it

August 2026 UK

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
31	27	28	29	30	31	1	2
32	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
22	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
24	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
25	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
26	31	1	2	3	4	5	6

Research is Key!

- Keep an open mind- write down the name of any course on a college website/prospectus that sounds vaguely interesting and look into it.
- Use Careersportal to find similar courses in different colleges.
- Look at courses that involve your favourite school subject and general interests.
- Do look at the subjects/modules you will study on the course.
- Do not be put off by a couple of subjects you don't like.
- Put courses in genuine order of preference.
- Have a variety of courses including aspirational, realistic and safety net.
- There is no such thing as the 'perfect course' but there are courses out there that you are most suited to.

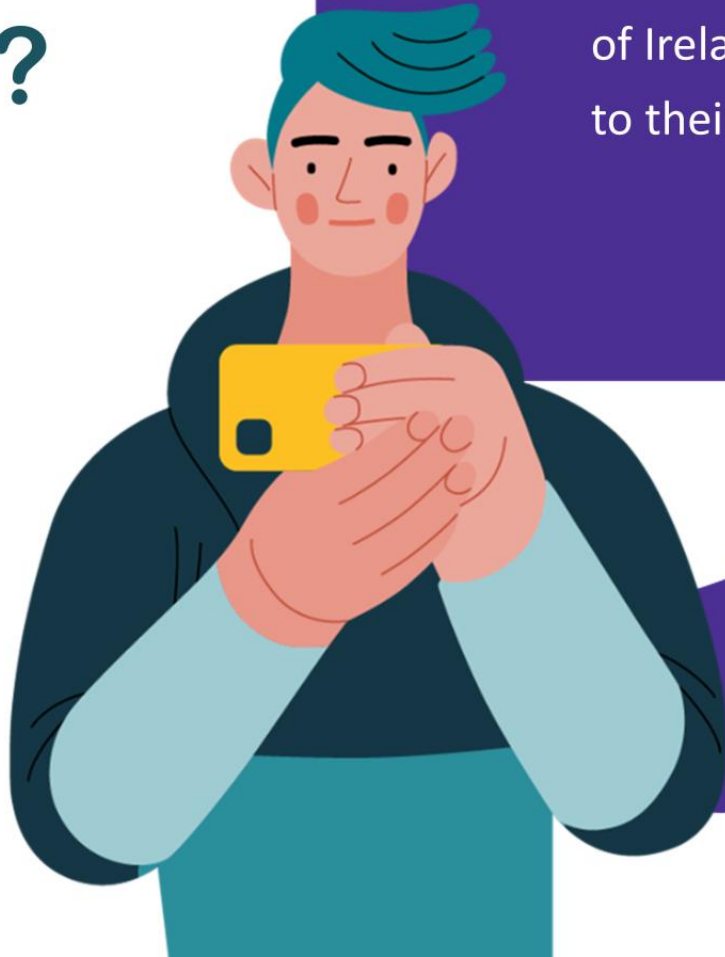
How can you help?

Your role as a parent/guardian



What is HEAR?

The Higher Education Access Route is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school leavers, resident in the Republic of Ireland, who are under-represented at Higher Education due to their socio-economic background.





Why apply to HEAR?

- Reduced points CAO offers in the participating colleges provided you meet the minimum entry requirements.
- Post-entry supports such as financial, academic, social and personal.



Criteria for HEAR 2026

1. Was your household income on or below €46,790 in 2024?
2. Do you or your family have a Medical Card/GP Visit Card?
3. Did your parents/guardians receive a means-tested social welfare payment for at least 26 weeks in 2024?
4. Have you attended a DEIS second level school for five years?
5. Do you live in an area of concentrated disadvantage or have you experienced homelessness within the last two years?



How do I apply?

1. Apply to CAO at www.cao.ie by 17:00 on 1 February 2026.
2. Review your HEAR Handbook with your parents or guardians.
3. Complete all elements of the online HEAR application form by 17:00 on 1 March 2026.
4. Submit **clear copies** of supporting documents requested on your checklist to CAO by 10 March 2026.



What is DARE?

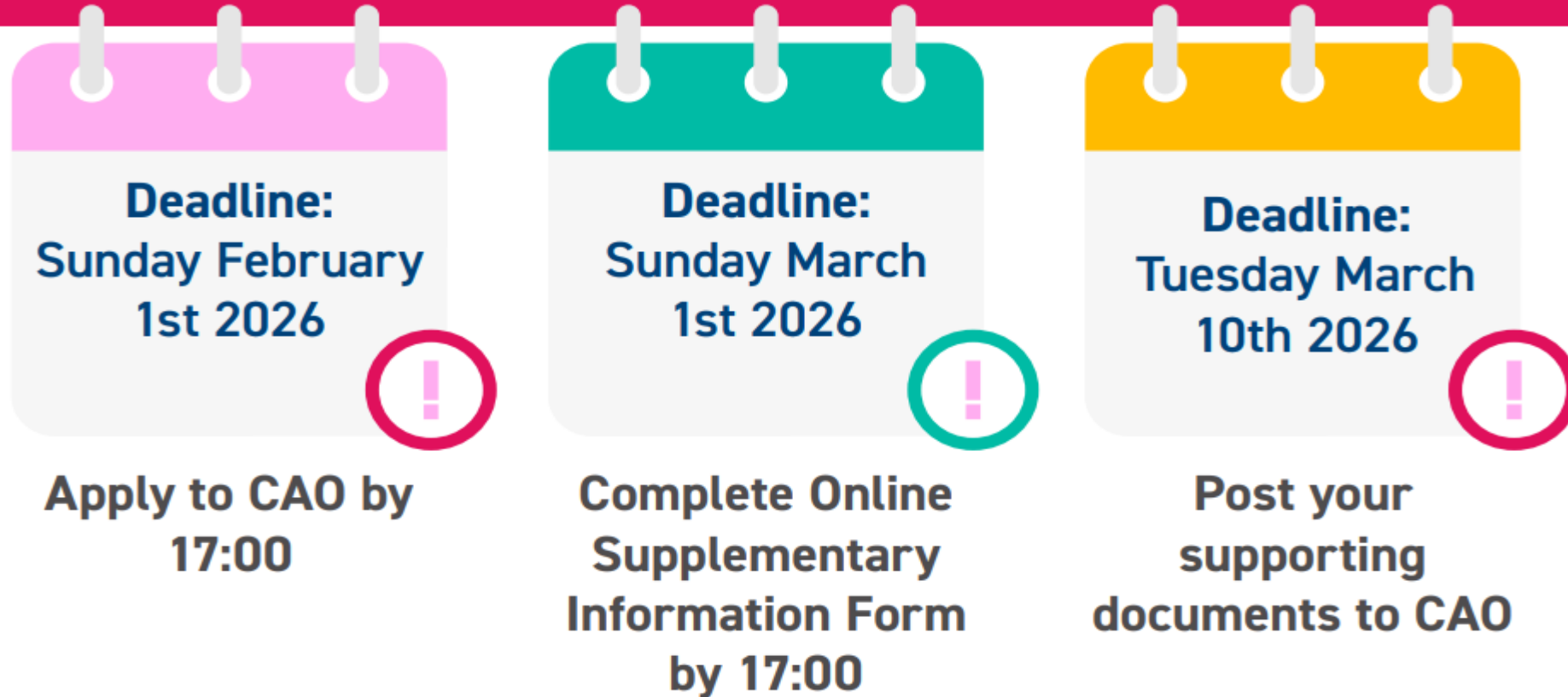
The **Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)** is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school-leavers whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education.

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.

Disabilities eligible for consideration

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (including Asperger's Syndrome)
- ADD/ADHD
- Blind/Vision Impaired
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- DCD – Dyspraxia
- Dyslexia/Significant Literacy Difficulties
- Dyscalculia/Significant Numeracy Difficulties
- Mental Health Condition
- Neurological Condition (Incl. Brain Injury & Epilepsy)
- Physical Disability
- Speech & Language Communication Disorder
- Significant Ongoing Illness

Key Dates



- Your son/daughter should let school know asap if they intend to apply for DARE.



- Students can apply for a SUSI grant if they are doing a CAO or a PLC course
- Grant applications will open April 2026
- In order to be eligible for a grant your household income needs to meet certain criteria
- The amount the student receives depends on the household income and if the college is above or below 30km from the household address
- Top tips:
 - Organise all tax/income documentation early in 2026
 - Use the 'eligibility indicator' on www.susi.ie to get an indication of whether the student is eligible
 - Deadlines are important
 - Instructional videos on the website are excellent

2025!



- To receive a full 100% rate the household income for 2024 must be less than **€47,010** (*Budget 2026 increased income threshold to €120,000*)
- The student will receive **€1,774** per academic year if they live within 30 km of the college
- The student will receive **€4,292** per academic year if they live over 30 km of the college
- The student will also receive the **€2,500** student contribution
Student contribution reduced in the Budget from €3,000 to €2,500



- *The amount a student receives depends on household income up to €120,000. For example, a household income of less than €58,470 will receive the full student contribution fee of €2,500 and €1,666 (non-adjacent).*
- Where a household has earned less than €27,400 they may be entitled to a special maintenance rate.



- Means tested -Parents income- Tax year 2024
- Register SUSI April 2026
- Student needs to disclose if they have a part-time job
- If the part-time job is within school holidays they can earn up to €8,424 without it being counted as 'household income'
- Must /can reapply each year as family circumstances may change.
- Grant for 1 PLC and one 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year, 4th year on a CAO course
- Students can drop out by 31st October* if unhappy in their course. A full refund will be given of the student contribution.
- SUSI will have to be informed
- Organise tax documents early

6th Year Important Dates

November 2024

- Nov 5: CAO Opens
- Nov 7: SETU Open Day
- Nov 12: Study Skills Workshop

February 2025

- Feb 9: Mock Exams Begin

March 2025

- Mar 20–25: Provisional Oral Exams

March–April 2025

- Mar 30 – Apr 10: Easter Break

June 2025

- Jun 3: Leaving Certificate Exams Begin

August 2025

- Aug 22 (approx): Leaving Certificate Results
- Following Wednesday: CAO Offers Released

Final Thoughts

- The Leaving Certificate is a difficult year. Motivation and perspective are key.
- A regular study plan needs to start early to avoid unnecessary stress and to achieve potential.
- Having a supportive parent/guardian is really helpful in keeping them motivated and keeping stress at bay.
- Encourage them to talk to you/guidance counsellor/teacher if they are feeling stressed or confused.
- Course research is essential and is their responsibility- focus on the subjects they will study in each year not just the course title!
- Deadlines are strict and are the students' responsibility.
- Students should have a Plan A,B & C!

Contact Information

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