

Presentation Clonmel

CAO & Further Education

Information Night for Parents of 6th Year Students 2026



Choosing a career....

- Is a time consuming process rather than a single event
- There is no single correct or perfect career choice but rather there are many equally suitable career choices for most people.



Useful Resources to help you begin....

www.careersportal.ie

wwwucas.com

www.cao.ie

www.careersnews.ie



Useful Resources...

Each college has its own website to help you in your search....



Level 5- Certificate

- 1 or 2 years full time
- Apply through www.fetchcourses.ie Classroom & Work Experience component
- Gen. requirements; 5 O6 and Interview
- Can be used for entry to 3rd Level where:
 - Good results in FETAC exams
 - Necessary links to 3rd level course are in place
- Does not affect your CAO application

Level 6 - Higher Certificate

- 5 O6 to include Irish/English & Maths
 - Necessary LC Points
 - How to apply? CAO
 - Examples of courses at level 6:
- Higher Certificate in Business (SE420) SETU Waterford Campus

Level 7 - Ordinary Degree

- Institutes of Technology
- 3 years full time
- Apply through CAO
- Gen. entry requirements - Maths + Irish / English + 3 other subjects (including specific course requirements)

or

- Linked Level 6 (Higher Certificate) at required level

Level 8 - Honours Degree

- 4 years full time
- Available in TU's, Universities, Private Colleges,
- Apply through CAO
- Gen. entry requirements
- 2H5 + 4 others including specific course
- requirements or
- Linked Ordinary Degree at required level

Applying to College- Fetac

- Fetac - Further Education and Training Awards Council
- There are hundreds of schools and colleges across the country that offer FETAC courses.
- Commonly known as PLCs - eg:
(FETAC) National Vocational Certificate Level 5 – Nursing Studies (5M4349) at Waterford College of Further Education:
www.wcfe.ie

Benefits of FETAC

No points
required

Qualification
after 1 year

Qualification to
allow you to
work

Steppingstone
into third level
education

Studying
something you
have an interest
in

FETAC contd.

- These courses are aimed at preparing students for work
or
- They can be used as a springboard for getting into college



Tertiary Degrees

- New tertiary degrees
- www.nto.ie
- First one or two years spent in College of Further Education or ETB and last 2/3 years in University or TU.
- No points required.
- Interview and/or personal statement may be required

Applying to College - CAO

- CAO – www.cao.ie
 - apply online by Jan. 20th, 2026 €35
 - normal closing date Feb. 1st, 2026 €50
 - Final Change of Mind July 1st, 2026



CAO - Central Applications Office

Processes all the undergraduate

applications made by students to the

Universities and colleges in Ireland

Offers are issued and acceptances recorded by the
CAO

CAO - 3 Steps to entry

- Minimum entry requirements
- Course requirements
- Points



CAO Packs



Each student should have downloaded the CAO handbook



Online application



Closing dates are very strict



Online facility opened Nov. 5th, 2025



Once registered, student receives application number to be used for all further CAO correspondence

The CAO Form



May choose up to 20 courses



10 level 8 (Honours Degrees)



10 level 7/6 (Ordinary Degrees & Higher Certs)



Your choices on level 8 list do not affect the choices on the level 7 list!



COURSES MUST BE LISTED IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE N.B.

Apprenticeships

- Level 5-9
- Usually 4 years
- On the job and off the job training
- Paid for the 4 years
- Traditional trades
- Chef, butcher, hairdresser, insurance, accounting technician, ICT, Logistics
- www.apprenticeship.ie

HEAR Scheme

- Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)
is a college and uni. admissions scheme which **offers places on reduced points and extra college support** to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds
- For students under the age of 23 as of Jan. 1st, 2026
- For eligibility see: www.accesscollege.ie

How do I apply for HEAR?

- Students tick the appropriate section of online CAO form to be considered
- Will be asked questions relating to family's financial situation
- Indicate your wish to apply for HEAR no later than Mar. 1st, 2026
- Submit evidence to CAO to support application no later than 10 Mar 2026

DARE (Disability Access Route to Education)

- Is a scheme which offers college places on reduced points to students with a disability
- Students who have the ability to benefit and succeed in higher education but are unable to meet the points required due to the impact of their disability should apply to DARE

DARE continued

- Most of the colleges take part in DARE and reserve a number of places for applicants of the scheme. See www.accesscollege.ie
- DARE is applied online
- Student indicates intention to apply to DARE by ticking appropriate box no later than Mar. 1st, 2026
- Evidence of a disability must be submitted no later than 10th March 2026

Financial Support/ Student Grant

- Application for student maintenance grant is now online : SUSI- Student Universal Support Ireland
- Students can begin applications in May. Susi will do an initial assessment. If you get through this they they will send you a pack outlining the documents/evidence you need to send them eg. Birthcert, P21, P60, statement from Dept. of social protection, notice of assessment for self employed - www.studentfinance.ie - excellent website for all your financial questions.

Scholarships

All colleges have scholarships which students can apply for if they meet the criteria.

Each college has different criteria, different awards, different deadlines and different scholarships

Sport

Academic

Choral

Accommodation

Many colleges have campus accommodation.

Applications open at different times

Some first come first served

Some a lottery system

Deposits vary- most have a non-refundable amount

Check out college websites

All colleges have accommodation offices

Final Thoughts

Each student has access to Careers Interviews with the Guidance Counsellor

Career Guidance class each week

Students are advised to research the college material carefully and thoroughly

Excellent resources available online

www.cao.ie

www.fetchcourses.ie

• www.apprenticeship.ie

www.nto.ie