

Opportunities after Leaving Certificate

An overview for parents and guardians



Context of this Presentation

- Overview of main points
- Direction to websites for full information
- Students receive the same information in more detail in Guidance classes in both Fifth and Sixth Year and they receive updates from colleges etc. through Edmodo
- Parents can also access Edmodo if they wish - just ask your daughter.



Details are Correct at time of compilation i.e. January 2021

- ▶ This presentation is an overview.
- ▶ Changes can occur especially in 2021 as organisations deal with the pandemic.
- ▶ Please check on relevant websites any information of particular interest to you and your daughter well before the deadlines.



Types of Applications to be Covered

- ▶ Applying to Colleges of Further Education (CFE)
- ▶ Applying to the CAO
- ▶ Applying for apprenticeships



Introduction to the Following

- ▶ Finances
- ▶ Grants
- ▶ DARE Disability Access Route to Education
- ▶ HEAR Higher Education Access Route
- ▶ Restricted courses in the CAO system
- ▶ Applying for Medicine



Colleges of Further Education

► Further Education in Specific Areas

Types of courses

Vocational e.g. Beauty Therapy, Hairdressing, Childcare, Office Administration

Qualification: QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) (Fetac) Level 5 (1 year) and QQI (Fetac) Level 6 (2 years)

Other professional qualifications such as CIBTAC (Confederation of International Beauty Therapy and Cosmetology) and Accounting Technician are also available.



Colleges of Further Education

- ▶ Entry requirements - Passes in five Leaving Cert subjects, Foundation Level is generally acceptable.
- ▶ Courses are of one or two year's duration leading to employment or to higher education in both universities and Institutes of Technology



Colleges of Further Education examples in this area

- ▶ College of Commerce Cork
- ▶ St. John's Central College Cork
- ▶ C.S.N. Cork
- ▶ Mallow College



How to Apply?

- ▶ Directly to the college on-line (not through CAO)
- ▶ Usually from January of Sixth Year
- ▶ First Round Interviews start in March or April. Interview 10-15 minute to assess suitability.
- ▶ Work Experience related to the course is a great advantage. Bring a small folder of work if applicable e.g. photos of hairstyles



Fees

- ▶ Government fee of €200 a year but Medical Card holders and are exempt.
- ▶ Many colleges charge around €250 Student Registration Fee to cover clubs and services.
- ▶ For some courses students need to buy equipment which can cost around €1000.
- ▶ For a small number of courses students pay exam fees of approx. of €500 to professional bodies



Stepping Stone Courses

- ▶ Applying to Colleges of Further Education can be a stepping stone to Institutes of Technology and Universities
- ▶ Students can apply to the CAO using the qualification they receive in the CFE i.e. QQI Level 5 instead of their Leaving Cert results.



System for using QQI Level 5 to apply to Institutes of Technology

- ▶ QQI points for 8 best modules (Students would need to aim for Distinctions)
- ▶ Maximum 390 points for any IT course except Nursing
- ▶ Apply to CAO using these points in the same way as Leaving Cert points



QQI Level 5 Links System for Universities and all Nursing courses

- ▶ Students must do a “linked” or connected course e.g.
- ▶ e.g. Legal Studies Level 5, 5M3789 in College of Commerce links with UCC Law, Government, Arts and Music courses
- ▶ Distinctions would be required in certain modules.
- ▶ Check links on each university website or prospectus.



The Number of Places for CFE Students in University Courses

- ▶ There are a limited number of places kept for College of Further Education students
- ▶ **For Nursing** there are so many applicants and so few places (20) there is random selection. (A lottery system)
- ▶ However this problem does not arise for many other courses.



A Good Insurance Policy

- Depending on what they are interested in and which colleges they apply for, students who generally **gain less than 390 points**, would be well advised to apply for Colleges of Further Education Courses as well as CAO courses.



The CAO

- ▶ Central Applications Office processes applications to Higher Education Institutes
- ▶ Universities
- ▶ Colleges of Education e.g. Mary Immaculate
- ▶ Institutes of Technology
- ▶ Private fee Paying Colleges e.g. Griffith College Cork



Levels of Courses

- ▶ Students have 20 choices ie. 10 choices of Level 8 courses (Honours Degrees) and 10 choices of Level 6 and 7 courses (Higher Certificates and Degrees)
- ▶ **Always list courses in order of personal choice.**
- ▶ Remember students who begin Level 6 and 7 courses receive a Level 8 Honours Degree after 4 years



Free Fees Initiative

- ▶ Participating College (excludes private colleges)
- ▶ First Undergraduate Course (Full- time course)
- ▶ EU citizen (plus special categories e.g. Refugee Status)
- ▶ Have been resident in an EU country for three of the five years before going to college.



State Pays the Fees but Families Must Contribute

- ▶ A Student Contribution of €3,000 a year must be paid.
- ▶ However those who qualify for a Third Level Education grant have this paid for them
- ▶ Families who pay for more than one child may claim tax relief.



Grants

- ▶ www.susi.ie
- ▶ The student grants application system is called Student Universal Support Ireland, SUSI
- ▶ Apply for the student grant in April of Leaving Certificate year .
- ▶ Deadline usually early July.



Eligibility for Grants

- ▶ Some families may not be entitled to the maintenance part of the grant but may be entitled to have all or part of the Student Contribution paid by SUSI.
- ▶ It is worth the eligibility reckoner on www.susi.ie
- ▶ Students who study outside Ireland are entitled to the maintenance part of the grant.



Make Life Easier!

- ▶ Tick the box on the CAO application that allows SUSI to collect information from CAO and from Revenue.
- ▶ Collect the documentation needed in advance
- ▶ Late or incorrect applications may mean delays in receiving the payment.



Be Prepared!

- ▶ Sometimes students may be charged the Student Contribution if their grant has not been processed but it will be refunded when the grant comes through.



Documents which may be Needed

- ▶ Long form of Birth Certificate
- ▶ Junior Certificate Results
- ▶ Possibly P45, P21 for tax year ended December of Sixth Year
- ▶ Statement re Social Welfare payments (This is on a form which is only available on the SUSI website from April of Sixth Year)
- ▶ Documents re separation or divorce if relevant



Documents needed by the Self-Employed

- ▶ <https://susi.ie/quick-links/self-employment-farming-or-rental/>



Advice

- ▶ If you have a particular query SUSI have a helpline which is very easy to access.
- ▶ emailing support@susi.ie or phone the support desk (Tel: 0761 087 874).
- ▶ If in doubt whether you are eligible it is always worth applying.



C.A.O. Application

- ▶ Application opens in November
- ▶ Students should register as soon as possible.
- ▶ Discounted online rate of €30 by 20th January
- ▶ €45 to apply online after 20th Jan up to 1st Feb
- ▶ **Latest date to apply is 1st May (Late fee applies)**
- ▶ **Change of Mind is free from May to 1st July.**
- ▶ Deadlines are usually 5.15p.m. on the day **but always check carefully**



Supply and Demand

- ▶ Points can go up or down.
- ▶ The points published are the points of the **last student to gain a place**. For this reason students should list some courses which have usually been at lower points than they themselves have been achieving.



Leaving Certificate Points

- ▶ Points are allocated for each grade from 12 points for an O6 to 100 points for an H1 (students have handout and table in journal)
- ▶ The **6 highest point scores** are added together.
- ▶ 25 points is added to the Honours Maths score **and if this is one of the highest 6 points it is included.**



Foundation Level Subjects

- ▶ Some colleges award points for Foundation Level Maths but other colleges do not.
- ▶ Some colleges accept Foundation Level (Maths or Irish) for entry requirements and others do not.
- ▶ Students need to check each website and make an appointment with the guidance counsellor to discuss the implication of taking this level.



Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)

- ▶ Distinction 66
- ▶ Merit 46
- ▶ Pass 28
- ▶ Automatically included if one of six highest points.



Entry Requirements

- ▶ As well as having the points students must have the basic entry requirements e.g. usually 2 or 3H5s and 4 or 5 O6s/H7s for Honours Degree (Level 8) courses
- ▶ 5 O6s/H7s for Higher Certificates or Ordinary Degrees (Level 6 or 7 courses)
- ▶ New since 2017, **H7 (30 to 39%) is a pass**, receives 37 points and qualifies for college entry



Specific Entry Requirements

- ▶ There are also specific subject requirements for certain courses e.g.
- ▶ H4 in Chemistry and in either Biology or Physics for Pharmacy in UCC
- ▶ Minimum H4 in a science subject and a language other than English for Speech Therapy in UCC
- ▶ Students must research entry requirements



Making the Most of her Opportunities

- ▶ Always list CAO courses by personal choice
- ▶ Keep track of her points (Summer and Christmas tests) and list some suitable courses which have generally been lower points. It is fine to aim high so long as students also cover their options.
- ▶ Students should research all the courses they list. Also apply to Colleges of Further Education if relevant.



Repeat Leaving Certificate

- ▶ Only one sitting of the Leaving Certificate may be counted for points.
- ▶ Entry requirements may be accumulated over more than one year except for *Medicine*.
- ▶ HPAT must be repeated as results only last for one year.



Watch out for Restricted Courses

- ▶ Courses which require a portfolio, audition or aptitude test. e.g. Art, Music, Drama or Medicine
- ▶ These courses must be entered on the CAO application by 1st February.
- ▶ Note the aptitude test for Medicine should be booked by 20th January or there will be a late fee.



Small Window of Opportunity

- ▶ Between 1st February to 1st March late applications to some restricted courses may be made.
- ▶ This should not be necessary if students do their research.



Applying for Medicine

Minimum points in Leaving Certificate

480 + all entry requirements in one sitting
of Leaving Certificate for points.

Plus

Result of Health Professionals Admissions Test
(HPAT). Max HPAT points 300



Websites

- ▶ www.cao.ie Entry to Medicine
- ▶ www.hpat-ireland.acer.edu.au
- ▶ Buy a sample test online and practise
- ▶ ucat@ac.uk for sample tests which would be helpful though not exactly the same.
- ▶ Courses are expensive and are not necessary if the student practises the sample papers.



HPAT

- ▶ This year the HPAT will be online on 20th and 21st February
- ▶ Students will receive information about this when they apply.



Disability Access Route to Education

- ▶ Students who have a disability which has affected them academically **may be accepted on lower points and will be supported in college.**
- ▶ Categories are physical, mental/emotional, learning disability and long-term illness
- ▶ www.accesscollege.ie has detailed information



Evidence

- ▶ A specialist's report of the disability on a DARE Section C form is needed (These forms will be available on website.) A GP can fill the form **based on** the consultant's report.
- ▶ In the case of learning disability a psychologist's report is needed.
- ▶ Student complete a form with the guidance counsellor indicating how the disability has impacted on her education - Section B.



Rules for Applying

- ▶ Apply to CAO and tick DARE box by 1st February
- ▶ Complete Section A online by 1st March. This states the nature of the disability.
- ▶ Send Educational Impact Statement (Section B) completed with guidance counsellor and Evidence of Disability (Section C) or psychologist's report CAO by 15th March



Deadlines

- It is necessary to start organising these documents in November of Leaving Cert as consultants and GPs may not be able to complete them at short notice.
- Students post all documents to the CAO to arrive by 15th March. Get back page of CAO handbook stamped in Post Office as proof of postage.



Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)

- ▶ Students who come from backgrounds of socio/economic disadvantage may be considered for places at lower points.
- ▶ They will also be mentored and supported in college and given a special orientation week.
- ▶ www.accesscollege.ie
- ▶ This is not a financial grant though some financial assistance may be given.



Should my daughter apply to HEAR?

- ▶ If you have a Medical card and if your daughter is going to apply for a SUSI grant it is worth applying to HEAR.
- ▶ Full details on www.accesscollege.ie



How do I apply?

- ▶ Apply to CAO, tick HEAR box by 1st Feb
- ▶ Complete Hear questions online by 1st March questions about family and income. Do this as early as possible to allow time to collect financial documents.
- ▶ Send all documents to CAO by 15th March
- ▶ HEAR uses the tax year ending the **December of Fifth Year.**



Accepting the CAO offer in August.

- ▶ If students apply for both Level 8 and Level 6/7 courses they may be offered **two courses**. It is then up to them which one to accept.
- ▶ Decide which the student wants and carefully accept it.
- ▶ **My advice always accept Round 1 offer, a Round 2 offer could still be made but the offer is withdrawn if not accepted by the deadline.**



Second Round Offers

- ▶ In Round Two, students may be offered a place on a course which was listed as a higher preference than the one they were offered in Round One.
- ▶ However there is no guarantee that a student will receive any Round Two offers.
- ▶ **Accepting a Round Two offer automatically means that the First Round offer has been given up.**



Available/Vacant Places

- ▶ Some courses may have more places than applicants. If so they will be displayed on the CAO website usually at **12.00 noon a few days after the First Round offers come out.**
- ▶ Anyone who has the minimum entry requirements may apply for one of these courses
- ▶ Accepting a vacant course means any earlier offers no longer apply. But a Round Two offer may still be made if the student puts the vacant above the courses she was offered but below her higher choices.
- ▶ .



How to Apply for an Available Place

- ▶ This is like Change of Mind except that the student can only enter an available place in the list she cannot change the order of other courses.
- ▶ Also the available place can only be entered higher than any place that the student has already been offered.



Deferring a Place

- ▶ The student should immediately check the college website to see if there is an online deferral form.
- ▶ If not email the admissions office of the college immediately stating the reason for requesting the deferral.
- ▶ Application for deferral must be made immediately on receipt of the offer.



How to Activate the Offer the Following Year

- ▶ Do not accept the CAO course in August 2021. To do so means that the student will start that year.
- ▶ In November of the 2021 year apply to the CAO but list the deferred course **and no other**.
- ▶ The student is guaranteed to get a place on that course even if the points rise.



Postgraduate Conversion Courses

- ▶ Knowledge of these opportunities can decrease stress levels for students.
- ▶ This is opportunity to qualify in something completely different once one has a degree.
- ▶ An Honours degree is needed and fees are payable.
- ▶ Selection is by interview/ aptitude test and competitive.
- ▶ There are such courses in Law, Accounting, Primary Teaching, Medicine, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Computing and many more.



Apprenticeships

- ▶ Traditional construction apprenticeships
- ▶ Apprenticeships in many areas such as insurance, accounting etc. leading to a degree (earn and learn.)
- ▶ www.apprenticeships.ie
- ▶ www.fit.ie Tech apprenticeships



Apprenticeships cont.

- ▶ Apprenticeships are an excellent option for students who would like to earn while they learn and learn by doing.
- ▶ Application dates vary and one needs to keep an eye on the website.
- ▶ Often students need to have their Leaving Cert results.



What can Parents do?

- ▶ Collect financial documents such as tax documentation for the year ending December of Fifth Year for HEAR and of Sixth Year for the SUSI grant.
- ▶ Organise the documents mentioned for DARE if they apply to your daughter.



What Parents can do (cont)

- ▶ Encourage your daughter to research every course carefully.
- ▶ Encourage her to follow her interests.
- ▶ Encourage her to **list some lower points** courses that she would also be interested in.
- ▶ Encourage her to apply to Colleges of Further.



Most Important for Parents!

- ▶ Remember that everyone has their own unique strengths and everyone must follow their own route in life.



Thank You!

- ▶ Thank you for your time and attention.

