

## What is CAO?

### CAO = Central Applications Office

The purpose of the CAO is to process all applications to undergraduate courses (Higher Certificate, Ordinary Degree and Honours Degree) in a Higher Education Institution (HEI) in the Republic of Ireland. The CAO Application system operates from the CAO premises at:

Tower House,  
Eglinton Street  
GALWAY

Phone (091) 509800 Fax (091) 562344

The CAO website is at [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)

Students wishing to go to a HEI can make **ONE** application either:

- Online ([www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie))
- Paper

### STRUCTURE OF AWARDS

Honours Bachelor Degree	Level 8
Ordinary Bachelor Degree	Level 7
Higher Certificate	Level 6

Courses provided at HEI's are at one of three levels (according to the National Qualifications Framework):

On the CAO form you can apply for up to ten level 8 courses and up to ten level 7 or level 6 courses

#### Level 8

Pref.	Course Code
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

#### Level 7 & Level 6

Pref.	Course Code
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

#### Where to find course codes:

- College Prospectus/ College website
- CAO
  - Handbook
  - [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)
- Qualifax website - [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie)
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Take special care not to put your course choices in the wrong list/level. At the offer stage you can receive one offer from each of the lists. You can only accept one offer.

You must place your course choices on the appropriate list according to the order of your preference. It is very important that preference 1 is the one you would most like to be offered. Preference 2 - your next preference, if you are not offered preference 1, and so on.

*Applicants should avoid submitting an application close to the Closing Date. The Closing Date cannot be extended. CAO can take no responsibility for any technical difficulties that may arise from any source which may result in an online application not being submitted on time.*

### Application dates and fees:

All fees are non-refundable	FEE	Closing Date
Normal application (online or paper)	€45	1 <sup>st</sup> Feb 2009 (5.15pm)
Online discounted rate	€35	20 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2009 (5.15pm)
Late online application	€70	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2009 (5.15pm)
Late paper application	€90	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2009 (5.15pm)
Change of Mind	Nil	1 <sup>st</sup> July 2009 (5.15pm)

#### Restricted Categories of Applicant:

##### (1) Mature Applicants:

Mature applicants are those seeking entry on grounds of mature years. In all cases, before applying on mature grounds, intending applicants should contact the Admissions Office or Mature Students Officer of the appropriate HEIs well in advance of application closing dates.

Normally you should be 23 years old on or before 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2009 for admission in Autumn 2009.

However, some HEIs may have a different age requirement, different definitions of mature applicants, etc. and some will consider applications received after 1<sup>st</sup> February 2009 (**but not for nursing/midwifery mature course codes**)

##### (2) Applicants Presenting Certain Qualifications:

There are restrictions on certain applicants for courses in the list of HEIs shown below. These are applicants who are presenting examinations/qualifications other than Irish leaving Certificate, Northern Ireland or British GCSEs, Fetac Level 5/6, NCVA Level 2/3

#### The HEIs concerned are:

The Institutes of Technology in Athlone, Carlow, Dundalk, Dun Laoghaire, Galway-Mayo, Letterkenny, Limerick, Sligo, Tallaght, Tralee and Waterford, as well as Tipperary Institute.

#### Before filling out the CAO form:

- (1) Read information on the HEI's, the courses, entry requirements, course content, restrictions etc
- (2) On [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie) if you click on the course code you will be linked to the page for that course on that college website

- (3) Contact the college's admissions office if you are not clear on any aspect of the information in the prospectus/ online
- (4) Read the CAO Handbook carefully
- (5) Check out whether fees are payable for the course - not all colleges come under the "Free Fees Scheme"
- (6) You are responsible for ensuring that you meet the specified entry requirements and conditions for all courses

### CAO form

The CAO form consists of 4 pages

#### PART A (pages 1 & 2)

- Page 1 = Your personal details
- Page 2 = Your course choices
  - Part A must be completed by **ALL** applicants
  - Part A will normally be sufficient for school-leavers (Leaving Certificate, under 23 years)

#### PART B (pages 3 & 4)

Is designed to cater for non standard applicants e.g. mature students (over 23 years) \*\*

(See page 3 of CAO Handbook)

\*\*If you need to complete Pages 3 & 4, you must write 'YES' in the box at the bottom of Page 2 of the form

All application documents must be submitted **together** in one envelope and must be accompanied by evidence of payment of the application fee. CAO will not accept responsibility for the safekeeping or processing of application documents which are sent separately.

**Certain restrictions may apply in the case of Mature applicants.** Such applicants, therefore, must contact the Admissions Office of the appropriate HEIs well in advance of the closing date.

HEIs wish to carefully evaluate applications from mature applicants and, therefore, need certain information which you should provide on Page 4 of the form.

1. **You should begin by explaining the relevance of your life/educational goals and objectives.** You should then continue by supplying the details and appropriate supporting documents as set out below.
2. **Final secondary level qualification awarded**, eg Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate (pre 1985 only); GCE etc. and the dates awarded
3. **Post-secondary level qualifications** e.g. Certificate, Diploma, Degree, VTOS, Fetac Level 5/6 Access, PLC etc. Show the title of the qualifications, dates, institution, subjects, levels and results.
4. **Current studies**, e.g. VTOS, Certificate, Diploma etc show the title of the qualification, dates, institution, subjects, levels and any results to date
5. **Non-certificate courses** e.g. Personal Development, etc. Show the title of the qualification, dates, institution, subjects, levels and any results to date
6. **Employment** - Show Job Title, name and address of employer, dates, duties and responsibilities
7. **Voluntary (Unpaid) Work** - Show Job Title, name and address of company or organisation, dates, duties and responsibilities
8. **Hobbies and Interests** - State these and, if appropriate, relate them to proposed study at third level.

**How are offers decided?**

- Eligible applicants (those who satisfy the basic entry requirements) are placed on an order of merit list for each course to which they have applied.  
Their position on the order of merit list is decided...
  - (a) for those presenting Leaving Certificate/FETAC 2009 results only on a points score based on their examination results.
  - (b) For mature applicants and those presenting other examinations, the place on the order of merit is based on a variety of evaluation procedures which might include examination results, interview, written application or assessment.

#### **Restricted application courses:**

Certain courses e.g. art, music, drama, have early assessment procedures e.g. aptitude tests, interviews, portfolio assessment etc. you must check with the relevant college to ensure you do not miss the application deadline. **Late applications may not be accepted.**

#### **Incorrect or incomplete applications:**

CAO reserves the right to suspend processing of any application which is considered to be either incomplete or inaccurately completed. Processing will resume only after you make good any deficiency by a specified date and upon payment of an extra fee of €10.

#### **Evidence of submitting an application:**

If there is any loss or delay of an item in the post, CAO will require proof of postage. There are four Certificates of Posting at the back of the CAO handbook. Each time you post something to CAO you should have one of the Certificates stamped at a Post Office.

**If you apply online you must save/print a copy of your receipt of online application which is your evidence of having submitted an online application.**

#### **Late Applications: received by CAO after 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2009**

- Late applications may **NOT** be made for restricted application courses.
- Mature applicant course codes for nursing/midwifery **will not** be accepted after 1<sup>st</sup> February
- Individual colleges may have further restrictions on late applications e.g. some may not consider late applications from certain categories of applicants. In particular, mature applicants, transfer applicants and those presenting qualifications other than recently-taken EU school-leaving examinations should make enquiries from the appropriate Admissions Office **BEFORE** submitting a late application.

#### **Method of paying the Application Fee:**

If you are applying from within the Republic of Ireland, you **must** either pay the fee at a **bank** using the Application Fee Payment Form (which is supplied in your application pack) or make a card payment using a credit card (Visa or MasterCard) or a debit card (Laser)

#### **Bank Payment:**

If you are in the Republic of Ireland you may use the Application Fee Payment Form to pay the application fee through a bank. The bank will retain Part Three of the Payment Form and return Parts One and Two to you. Ensure that the bank places its stamp on Parts One and Two. Keep Part Two safely for your records. Details of the fees are on Page 1 and on the reverse of the Application Fee Payment Form.

**Initial Acknowledgement:**

When you submit your online application, your 2008 CAO Application Number will appear on your "Receipt of Online Application". If you supply an email address, an initial acknowledgement will be sent to you by email. You should use your CAO Application Number in any subsequent correspondence. (See P 10 of CAO Handbook)

**Statement of Application Record:**

1. **Before the end of May** you will be sent a Statement of Application Record as a final acknowledgement and to enable you to verify that all information has been recorded accurately
2. **If you have not received the Statement by 1<sup>st</sup> June, you must write to CAO immediately. Failure to do so may have very serious consequences.**

**Change of Mind in respect of Course Choices (Closing date 5.15pm 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2009)**

After 1<sup>st</sup> May you may, if you wish, register a change of course choices online at [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie).

Alternatively, you may do so by using the Change of Mind Form which will be posted to all applicants with the Statement of Application Record in May. (*There is no fee for the change of Mind facility*)

*If you are in doubt on any aspect of completion of your CAO, please always refer to the CAO Handbook.*

Information for this fact sheet was taken from the CAO Handbook - ([www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)). Although every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this information sheet is accurate it is essential that readers should check with the appropriate organisation for the latest information. Cavan AEGIS accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information contained in this document or for any actions arising from its use.