TAKING THE NEXT STEP

A PARENT & STUDENT GUIDE TO FURTHER & HIGHER EDUCATION

The Institute Of Guidance Counsellors

2013 –2014

Contents

Taking The Next Step—A Parents & Student Guide to Further & Higher Education

## 1. National Qualification Framework (N.F.Q)

The National Framework Qualifications scale is the framework used to illustrate various education levels and works from levels 1 to 10. If a student has completed the Junior Certificate he/she is deemed to have reached level 3. If a student completes the Leaving Certificate he/she is deemed to have reached level 5. Level 6 is a Higher Certificate (normally 2 years), level 7 is an Ordinary Degree, and level 8 is an Honours Degree (normally 3 /4 years). Level 9 is a masters and level 10 is a PhD. All Higher Education Institutes within the C.A.O. application system use the Leaving Certificate for entry into Levels 6, 7, and 8.
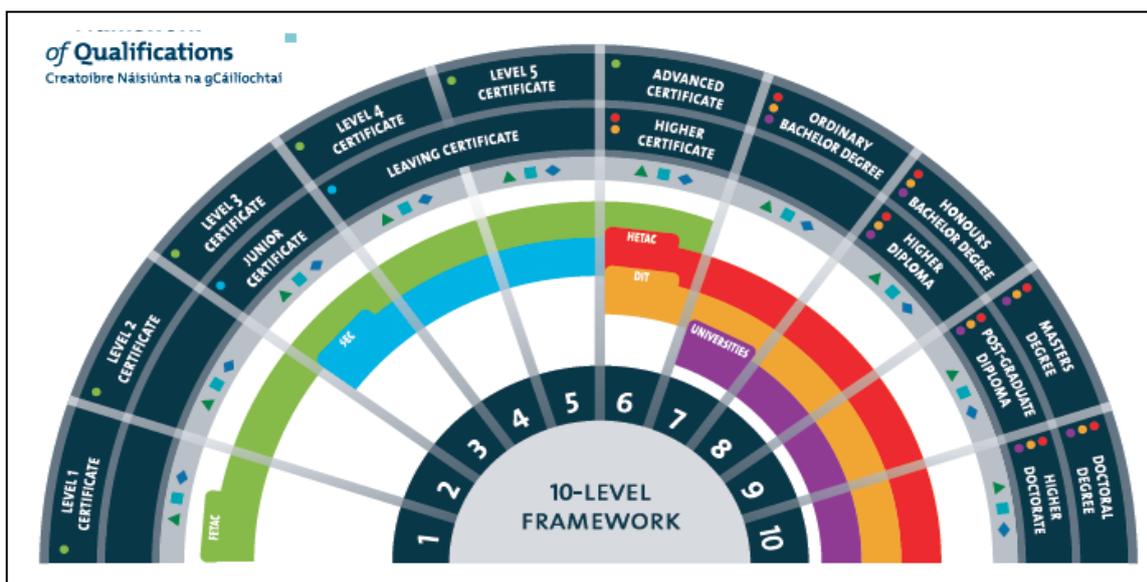
Some students obtain enough points at Leaving Certificate to enter directly into a Level 8 honours degree course. They therefore skip levels 6 and 7. Others obtain points to gain admission to a level 7 ordinary degree course and skip level 6. They can then progress and convert this level 7 into a level 8 by studying for an extra year or so.

Some students obtain points to gain admission to a level 6 certificate course. This can then be converted into a level 7 and then into a level 8.

Some students do a P.L.C. course (which require no points) and progress to a level 6 or straight into a level 7 or 8. See diagram on page 4.

**PhD
Level 10**

**Masters
Degree
Level 9**

**Honours
Degree
Level 8**

**Ordinary
Degree
Level 7**

**Higher
Certificate
Level 6**

P.L.C.'s

**Leaving
Certificate
Level 5**

**Leaving
Certificate
Level 5**

**Leaving
Certificate
Level 5**

**Leaving
Certificate
Level 5**

**Junior
Certificate
Level 3**
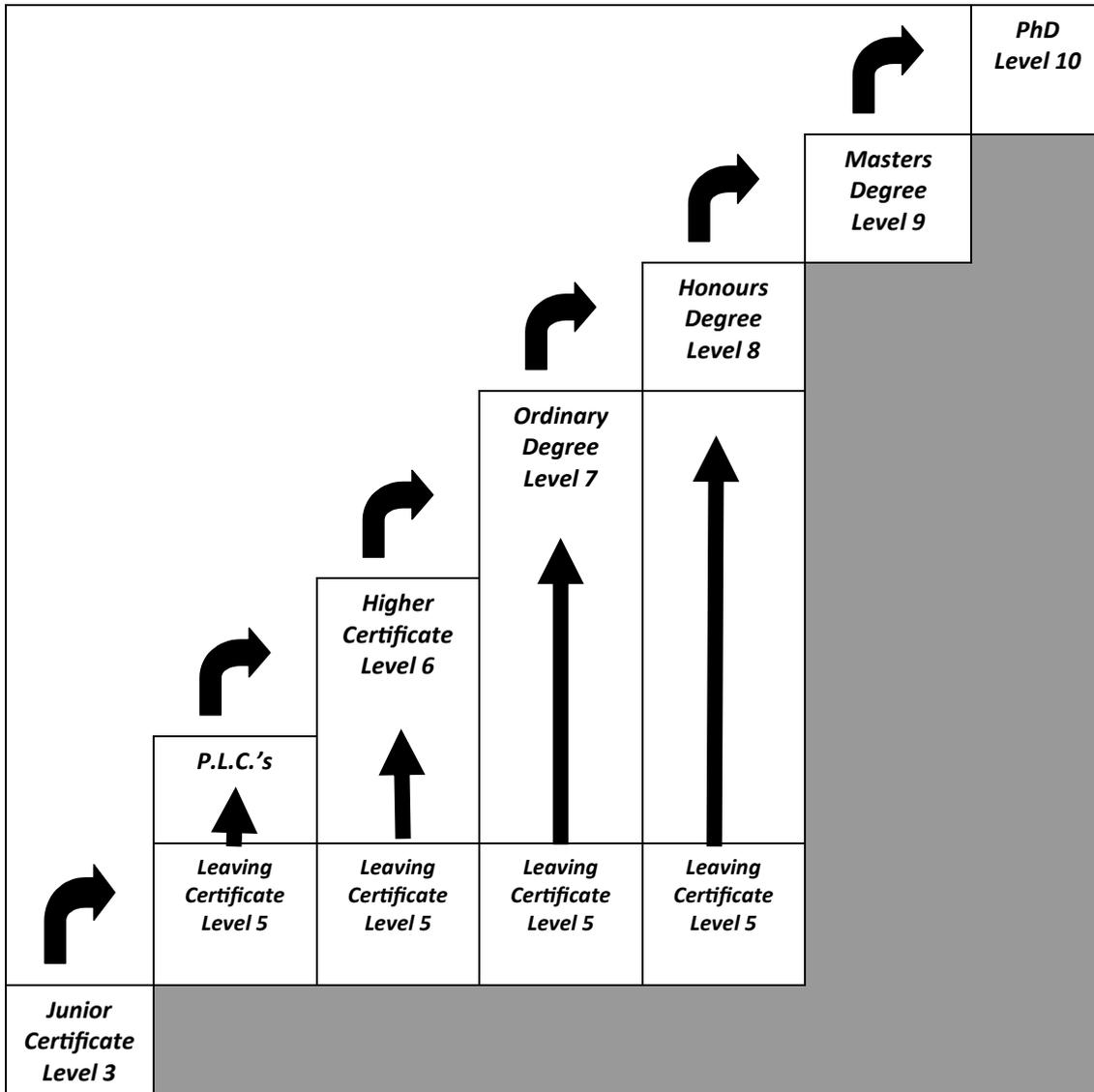
Here is a mock-up of a C.A.O. application form. Applicants can choose up to 10 level 8 Honours Degree courses and 10 level 7 Ordinary degrees and/or 10 level 6 Higher Certificate courses.

	Honours Degree Level 8		Pass Degree/Certificate Level 7/6 (mixed)
1.		1.	
2.		2.	
3.		3.	
4.		4.	
5.		5.	
6.		6.	
7.		7.	
8.		8.	
9.		9.	
10.		10.	

2. The Points System

When sitting the Leaving Certificate, points are awarded on the basis of the results obtained in the best six subjects. These points are as followed.

Leaving Certificate %	Leaving Certificate Grade	Honours	Ordinary
90 % - 100 %	A 1	100	60
85 % - 89 %	A 2	90	50
80 % - 84 %	B 1	85	45
75 % -79 %	B 2	80	40
70 % - 74 %	B 3	75	35
65 % - 69 %	C 1	70	30
60 % - 64 %	C 2	65	25
55 % - 59 %	C 3	60	20
50 % - 59 %	D 1	55	15
45 % - 49 %	D 2	50	10
40 % - 44 %	D 3	45	5
0 % - 39 %	E, F, & N.G.	No Points	No Points

| LCVP Grade	Points	Foundation Maths*	
		Grade	Points
Distinction	70	A1	20
Merit	50	A2	15
Pass	30	B1	10
*Awarded by a limited number of Colleges for a limited number of courses		B2	5

HONOURS MATHS

All students achieving a HD3 or higher will have 25 points added to the total score for honours Maths. The Maths grade itself does not change. This is a standard 25 points regardless of the grade achieved. The same points are awarded for an A1 as a D3. If Maths is not included in the top six subjects counted, the bonus points are not included. This will have a proportional affect over 550 points for Medicine.

| Example 1				Example 2			
Subject	Level	Grade	Points	Subject	Level	Grade	Points
Irish	Higher	C2	**65**	Irish	Higher	B3	**75**
English	Ordinary	A1	**60**	English	Higher	B2	**80**
Maths	Higher	D2	50+25=**75**	Maths	Higher	D3	45+25=70
French	Higher	B2	**80**	French	Higher	B2	**80**
Biology	Higher	C1	**70**	Biology	Higher	A1	**100**
Geography	Ordinary	A1	60	Geography	Higher	A1	**100**
History	Higher	B3	**75**	History	Higher	B3	**75**
Top 6 in bold			**425**	**Top 6 in bold**			510

3. How The C.A.O. Works

Here is an explanation as to how the C.A.O system operates. This candidate has applied for Arts in U.C.C. as his first preference. The candidate is then grouped with all other students who have applied for this course. They are in no particular order until the Leaving Certificate results of these students are published.

Round One

CK101 – Arts (UCC)
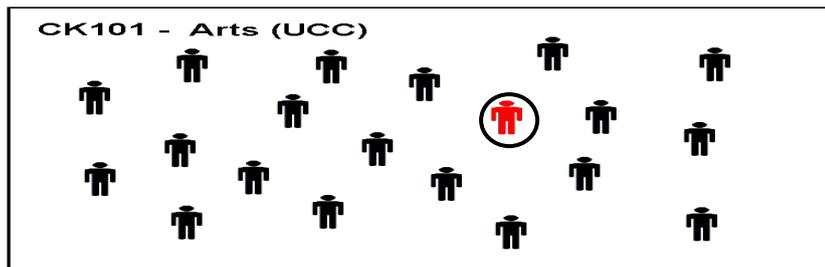
Once the results are published, the students' results are scanned to see who has all the minimum requirements. For example, one student failed English and another failed Irish. These students are now excluded from the rest of the process.

CK101 – Arts (UCC)

*Excluded Minimum Requirements not met*
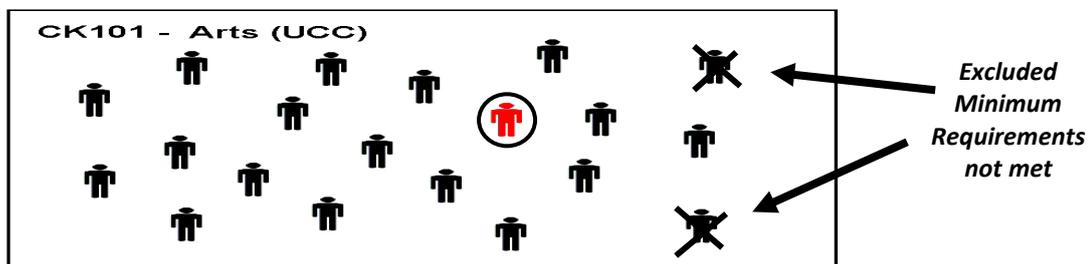
These minimum requirements are very important. Generally, as most students will do Irish, English, Mathematics, and a third language this will cover the general entry requirements for N.U.I colleges. However, there are exceptions. T.C.D. only require English, Maths, and Irish or a third language, Most of the I.T's require Irish or English, and Maths. Some engineering and science courses do not require a third language. However, some courses have additional requirements. For example, all engineering courses (level 8) require HC3 in honours Maths. Honours Irish is a requirement for primary teaching. Chemistry is a requirement for Veterinary in U.C.D., Human Nutrition & Dietetics in D.I.T., Pharmacy in T.C.D., Medicine and Dentistry in U.C.C. Physics is a requirement for Theoretical Physics in U.C.D. and T.C.D. One laboratory science is required for many science courses. Two science subjects are required for Physiotherapy and Human Genetics in T.C.D. Commerce in U.C.D. requires a HD3 or OB3 in Maths. Most courses require 2HC3 and 4OD3 while most T.C.D. courses require 3HC3 and 3OD3. Other courses require a portfolio and/or aptitude test and/or an interview. These examples illustrate how complicated this process is, therefore it is vital to check the complete list in the *Directory Of Leaving Certificate Entry Requirements,* available on www.igc.ie*.* Without these minimum requirements, a candidate is excluded from the selection process regardless of how many points are obtained.

Those students who have all the minimum requirements and who applied for Arts in U.C.C. (CK 101) are then ranked in order of points obtained. The student who obtained the highest number of points is placed at the top of the queue and the students who obtained the second highest number of points is placed second in the queue, and so on. This process is carried out for all the candidates' choices. The candidates position in the queue for each of the courses is indicated above.
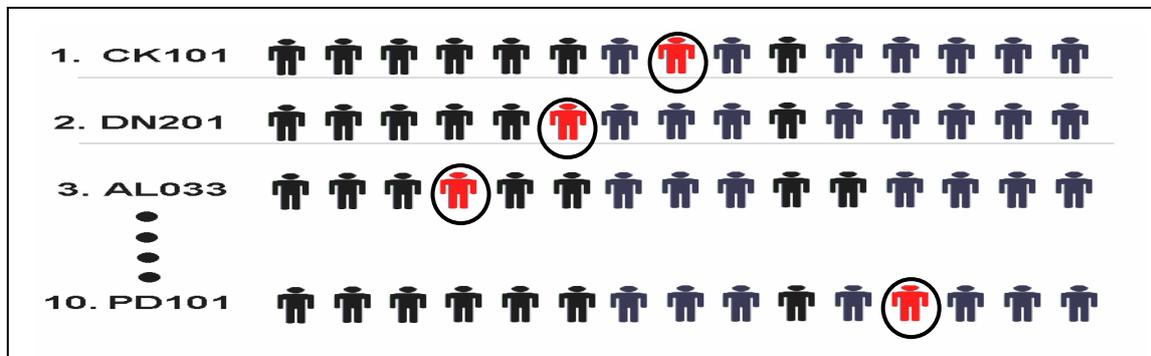
The colleges where each course takes place is then asked how many students will be taken into each course. This is then deemed to be the cut-off point as indicated below. For example, in U.C.C. Arts there are 6 places for 15 students in the queue. The points obtained by the 6th student in the queue are then the points published. Our candidate is 8th in the queue and will not gain admission. For the second choice, the college (DN 201) have indicated they will take the 7th student and above. Our candidate is 6th in the queue. For the third choice, the college has indicated they will take the 5th student and above. Our candidate is 4th in the queue. This process is carried out for all of the courses applied for. For his 10th preference, our candidate is 12th in the queue for PD 101 where there are only 10 places on the course.
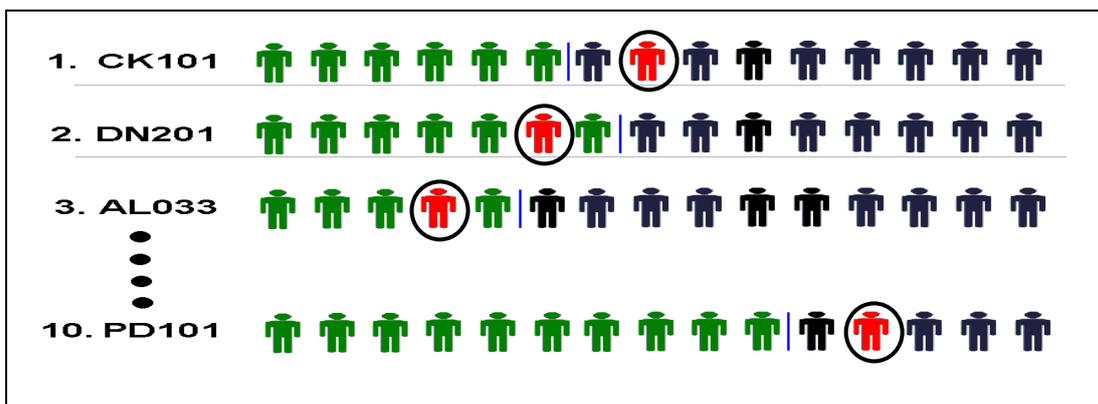

The computer will then scan and select the highest preference course the candidate is eligible for. In this case, it is the second choice, DN 201. Even though the candidate is eligible for the third choice, he/she will not be offered a place as he/she has indicated that they would prefer DN 201 above AL 033 by placing DN201 above AL 033 on the application. Indeed, all preferences from 3rd down are now wiped from the system. These courses from 3rd choice down will never be considered again. The student will now receive an offer of a place on DN 201 in round one. If eligible, the candidate will receive two separate offers, one Level 8 (Honours Degree) and one level 7/6 (ordinary degree/certificate). Both offers are independent of each other but the candidate can only accept one. If the candidate receives, for example, the 3rd preference on level 8 in round one, all preferences below this will be deleted from the system and the candidate will never be offered any course from 4th preference down. If the candidate accepts

this offer they can still be offered thye1st or 2nd preference/s in round two – if the points drop and he/she becomes eligible. If the candidate does do not accept this 3rd preference offer, he/she can still be offered your 1st /2nd preference/s in round two – if the points drop and the become eligible. However, if the points do not drop the candidate cannot change his/her mind and ask for the original round one offer. The candidate will be left with no offer. The same system operates independently for levels 7/6. Accepting an offer on level 8 in round one does not preclude the candidate receiving a higher preference offer on level 7/6 in round two. Similarly, accepting an offer on level 7/6 in round one does not preclude a higher preference offer on level 8 in round two. For example, if a student is offered course C on level 8 and course Y on level 7/6, they will never be offered courses D,E,F,G, nor, courses Z,P,Q,R,S. in future rounds. If course C is accepted in round one an offer of course A or B and X can be made in the second round. If course Y is accepted in round one, an offer of course A or B or X can still be made in the second round.

Level 8		Level 7/6	
1	A	1	X
2	B	2	*Y Offered*
3	*C Offered*	3	Z
4	D	4	P
5	E	5	Q
6	F	6	R

Round Two
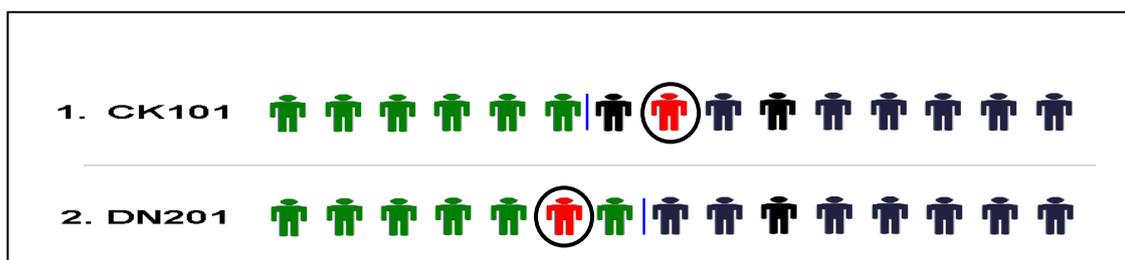
The student's first preference was CK 101 and he/she did not achieve enough points. This candidate is two positions from being offered a place. Six students were offered a place on CK 101 in round one. If two of the students in the queue for CK 101 do not accept their first round offer, two places will become available. These two places will then be offered on Round 2 and our candidate will be offered a place. Therefore, in round one our student was offered DN 201 and in round two, roughly a week later, was offered CK 101. Our candidate can now decide to hold onto the first round offer and decline the second round offered or can accept the second round offer and discard the first round offer. It is worth repeating, that accepting an offer on round one from level 8, does not prevent a higher round 2 offer from either level 8 or indeed level 7/6. Similarly, accepting a round one offer on level 7/6 does not prevent a higher round two offer from level 7/6 or indeed level 8. No candidate will ever be offered a course below the course offered in round one. This reinforces why course should always be placed in order of preference.

This whole process is carried out simultaneously for the level 7/6 courses. It is carried out in an identical manner and is totally independent of the offers received from the Level 8 section.

<u>Restricted Courses</u>

When checking the details of courses it should be noted that some courses are referred to as *restricted*. This means that to enter these courses the student is required to submit a portfolio and/or sit an aptitude test and/or attend an interview. The C.A.O. handbook indicates clearly beside each course whether or not the course is restricted. These additional requirements also explain why some courses require more than 600 points. For example, Animation in the Dun Laoghaire Institute if Art, Design, and Technology requires 699 points. This consists of points from the Leaving Certificate, a portfolio, and possible an interview. In D.I.T. Architecture requires 590 points; 100 can be obtained from an aptitude test, 100 from an interview and the remainder from the Leaving Certificate. Interviews, portfolio assessment, and aptitude testing are normally carried out during March/April. As a result, restricted courses cannot be added to an application after the 1st February. Even during the change of mind period (1st May to 1st July) it is not possible to add any restricted courses to an application.

<u>Change Of Mind System</u>

From the first week in May to 1st July the C.A.O system opens up to allow changes to the original application free of charge. Please note that during this time,

(i)   A restricted course cannot be added.

(ii)   Other courses can be added.

(iii)   Courses can be deleted.

(iv)   The order of courses can be changed.

(v)   The above applies to the level 8 section and the level 7/6 section independently.

(vi)   Candidates should delete restricted courses if they have not passed or submitted a portfolio, or not passed or attended an interview or aptitude test.

(vii)   Candidates should consult the CAO website for *courses changes*. Since originally filling out an application in Febraury, some courses will have been cancelled, some new courses may have become available, others may have changed their title. These changes can be found on ***www.cao.ie***.

(viii) When sitting the Leaving Certificate, some candidates may have taken an ordinary level paper instead of the intended higher level. In this case, if a course requires, for example, honours Maths, is on an application, this course should be deleted.

(ix)   Do not leave the level 7/6 list blank. If there are no level 7/6 available in a student's area of interested, a safety net should be built into the level 8 selections.

(x)   Candidates should never change the order of preference based on second-guessing what results they might achieve.

DARE

- The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a supplementary admissions scheme for school leavers with disabilities which operates on a reduced points basis. DARE has been established by a number of higher education institutions as clear evidence shows that disability can have a negative impact on educational attainment at school and progression to higher education.
- The C.A.O. application system is open from the first week in November.
- It is recommended that students register on line in early November.
- This will generate a C.A.O. application number.
- When the candidate ticks the disability/learning difficult box a series of application forms must be completed.
- Section A needs to complete by the student.
- Section B second needs to be complete by the school.
- Section C needs to be complete by a medical professional/educational psychologist.
- Supporting documentation will need to be provided.
- All parts need the C.A.O. number. Therefore it is recommended that this process should be started in early November.
- It is also important to start this process in early November to give time for all documentation to be completed to source the relevant supporting documentation.
- Copies of all forms should be made and kept safely.
- Blank copies of the forms can be obtained on www.cao.ie. Click on "Downloads" and go to the "Supplemental Information Form" section.
- It is possible to start an application and generate an application number without inserting or selecting any courses. These can be selected and inserted later (before 1st February).
- All supporting documentation must be submitted by the 1st April.
- More information can be found on www.accesscollege.ie and check DARE scheme.

HEAR

The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is a third level admissions scheme for school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. HEAR has been established by a number of higher education institutions as clear evidence shows that socio-economic disadvantage has a negative impact on educational attainment at school and on progression to higher education. Full details on www.accesscollege.ie

<u>NUI Exemptions</u>

The National University of Ireland is an umbrella organisation for the following third level colleges.
University College, Dublin
University College, Cork
National University of Ireland, Galway
National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
National College of Art & Design
Shannon College of Hotel Management
Milltown Institute, Dublin
Institute of Public Administration

These colleges have some courses that require Irish and a third language as part of their matriculation/minimum requirements. If a student has an exemption from studying Irish at secondary school, an application needs to be sent to the NUI for the exemption to be extended to a candidate who is applying to an NUI college course. Details can be found on www.nui.ie.

<u>Other College Exemptions</u>

If a candidate has an Irish/third language exemption, and is applying for a course or courses in a non-NUI college where Irish/third language is an essential requirement, an application for that exemption needs to be made to each college. Contact each college for their individual application process.

<u>Summary</u>

C.A.O. – D.A.R.E. (Read Application Guide available on www.accesscollege.ie))

- ✓ Fill in C.A.O. form in early Nov. to get a CAO #
- ✓ Tick Supplementary Information Box (S.I.F.)
- ✓ Candidates do not have to fill in any course now but must do so by 1st Feb.
- ✓ Student must fill in Section A by 1st March on line.
- ✓ School fills in Section B.
- ✓ Students should send sections B & C and the health professionals report/s to the C.A.O. by 1st April.
- ✓ Health professional report should be no older than 3 years.
- ✓ Keep photocopies of all documentation and obtain certificate of posting.

N.U.I. Irish Exemption and/or Third Language Using Rule 46
- ✓ Download form from www.nui.ie
- ✓ Fill in C.A.O. form in early Nov. to get a CAO #
- ✓ Candidates do not have to fill in any course now but must do so by 1st Feb.
- ✓ Fill in Section A & Section D (Principal signs Section D)
- ✓ Include Rule 46 Certificate of Exemption from School
- ✓ Include copy of educational psychologist report— not necessarily 3 years old.
- ✓ Send to N.U.I. and keep copies of all that is sent and keep copies of replies.

N.U.I. Irish Exception if born outside 26 counties
- ✓ Download form from www.nui.i
- ✓ Fill in C.A.O. form in early Nov. to get a CAO #
- ✓ Candidates do not have to fill in any course now but must do so by 1st Feb.
- ✓ Fill in Section A & Section B.
- ✓ Send to N.U.I. and keep copies of all that is sent and keep copies of replies.

N.U.I. Irish Exemption if part educated outside 26 counties
- ✓ Download form from www.nui.ie
- ✓ Fill in C.A.O. form in early Nov. to get a CAO #
- ✓ Candidates do not have to fill in any course now but must do so by 1st Feb.
- ✓ Fill in Section A & Section C (Principal signs Section C)
- ✓ Send to N.U.I. and keep copies of all that is sent and keep copies of replies.

No Irish & Third Language
- ✓ Check Non – N.U.I. Colleges. Apply for exemptions to the individual colleges, if applicable.

N.U.I. Irish Exemption and/or Third Language Without Exception
- ✓ Download form from www.nui.ie
- ✓ Fill in C.A.O. form in early Nov. to get a CAO #
- ✓ Candidates do not have to fill in any course now but must do so by 1st Feb.
- ✓ Fill in Section A & Section E (Principal signs Section E)
- ✓ Include copy of educational psychologist report.
- ✓ Include copy of NUI Certification form signed by professional psychologist.
- ✓ Send to N.U.I. and keep copies of all that is sent and keep copies of replies.

C.A.O. – H.E.A.R. (Read Application Guide) available on www.accesscollege.ie)
- ✓ Fill in C.A.O. form in early Nov. to get a CAO #
- ✓ Tick Supplementary Information Box (S.I.F.)
- ✓ Candidates do not have to fill in any course now but must do so by 1st Feb.
- ✓ Fill in your H.E.A.R. workbook.
- ✓ Copy the workbook detail onto the on-line application form at www.cao.ie.
- ✓ Gather all supporting documentation as outlined in workbook.
- ✓ Send all supporting documentation to C.A.O. by 1st April.
- ✓ Photocopy all documentation and obtain certificate of posting.

4. Post Leaving Certificate Courses (P.L.C.s)

Colleges of Further Education throughout the country of Dublin provide post Leaving Certificate courses. These courses prepare candidates for employment and/or entry to Higher Education.

These courses do not operate a points system for admission purposes and most courses require passes in five Leaving Certificate subjects. In addition, an interview may also take place along with a portfolio submission in the case of some Art & Design courses. The official closing date in normally late February or March. There are some very popular courses that fill all their places in February/March.

Students undertake these courses
   (i)   For the educational value in themselves,
   (ii)   To enhance employment opportunities,
   (iii)   Gain entry to their original first choice in college for which they did not obtain the necessary points,
   (iv)   To gain entry to colleges in the U.K. which will accept the P.L.C. course in addition to, or instead of, their Leaving Certificate results.

When searching for a suitable course, it might be useful to *work backwards*, i.e. check if the degree/higher certificate course you really want accepts applications from P.L.C. courses. Then check what P.L.C. courses they will accept, and then find where that P.L.C. course is run.

For example, D.I.T. reserves 3 places on their Forensics & Environmental Science course for those who have completed an Applied Science/Lab Technicians P.L.C. course. They also reserves 7 places on their Business & Marketing course for candidates who have complete various types of P.L.C. courses. There are too many examples to list here. U.C.D. reserve 20 places on their General Science degree, 25 on their Arts degree, 7 on their Nursing degrees, and 3 on their Commerce degree for those candidates who have completed and reached a certain standard in certain P.L.C. course. Tallaght I.T. reserve 10% of places on most of their courses for P.L.C. graduates.

Below, is an example of how to search for the correct P.L.C. course.
This example shows how to search for the correct P.L.C. that can gain you entry into Media Studies in N.I.U.M. (MH109).
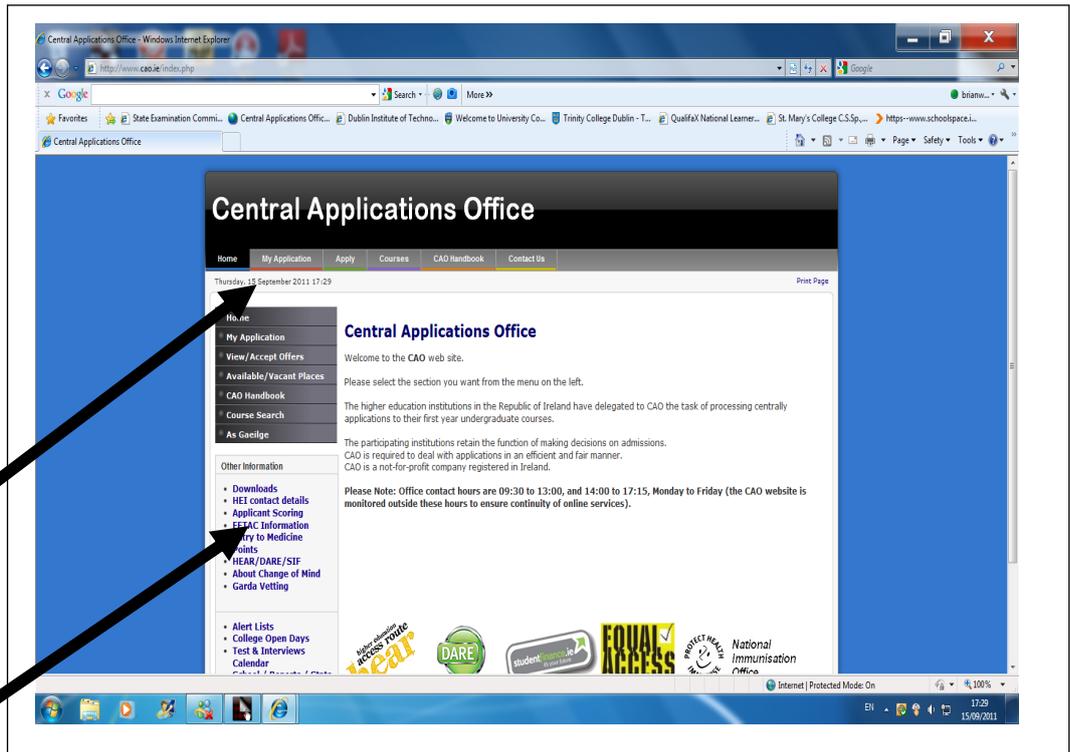
www.cao.ie

Click on

FETAC INFORMATION
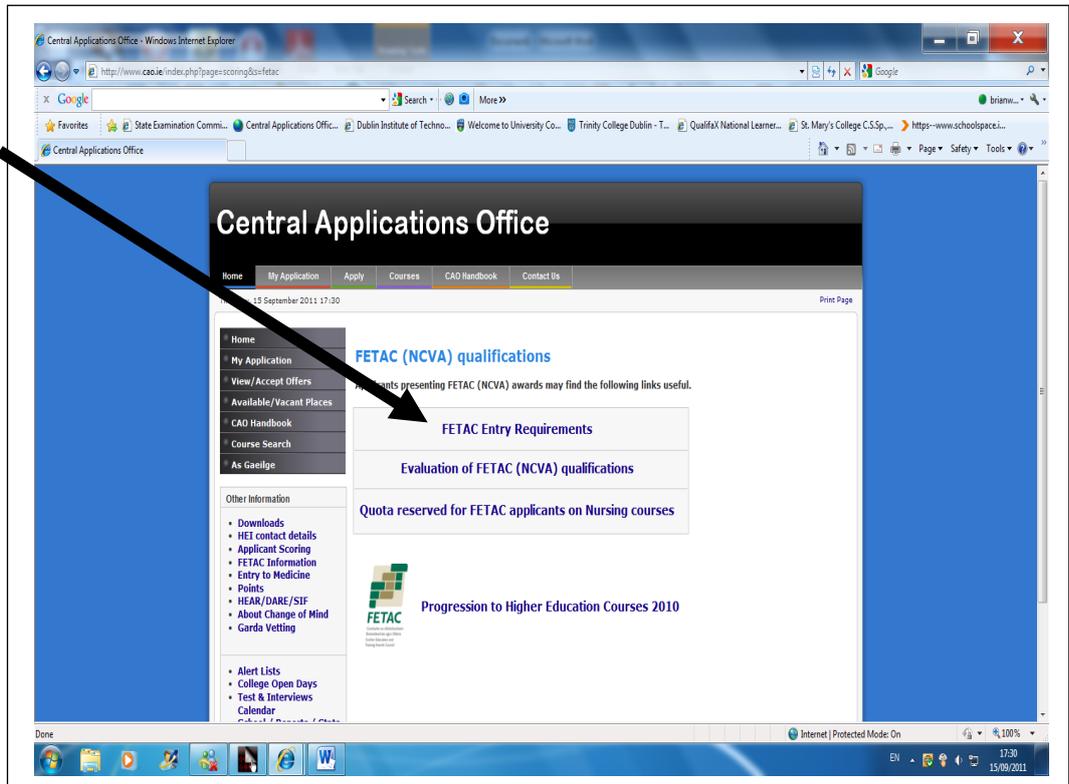
FETAC ENTRY REQUIRMENTS
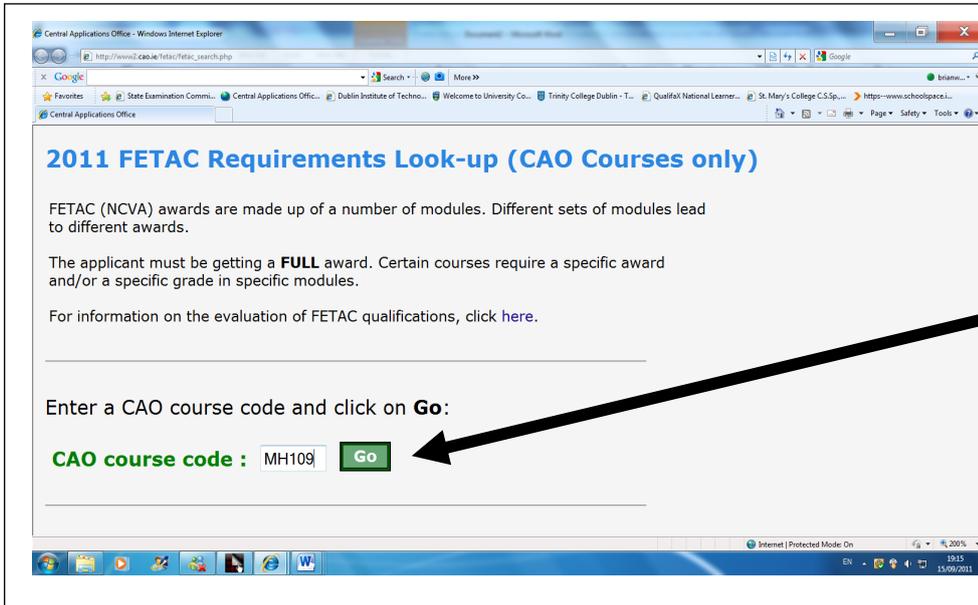
Key in

'MH109'
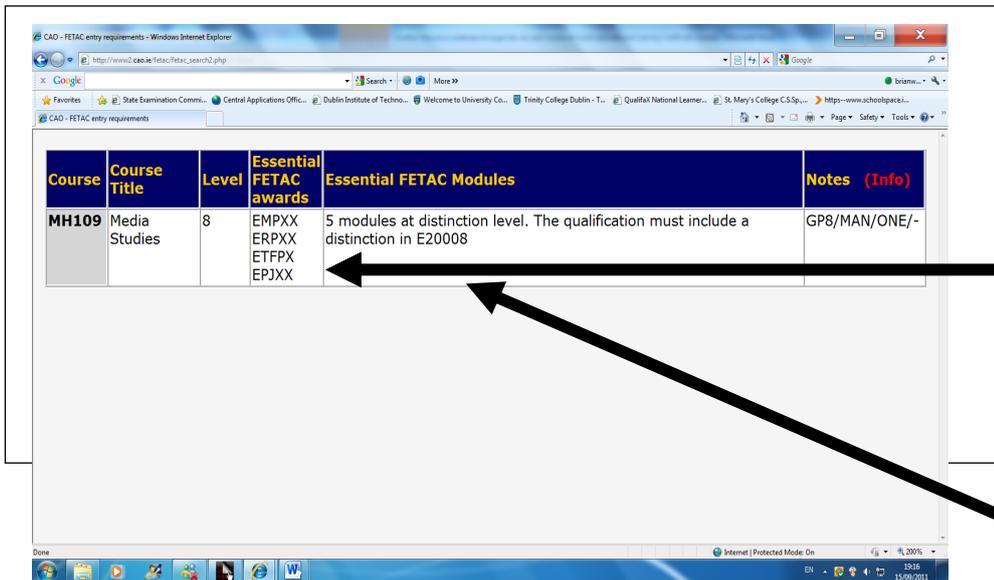
Each of these codes represents a different P.L.C. course

EMPXX
ERPXX
ETFPX
EPJXX

Specific Module Requirement

It is now necessary to find which P.L.C. colleges offer these courses. The example below searches for EMPXX. The same search can be carried out for the other codes/courses.

www.qualifax.ie

Student

Course Finder

PLCs
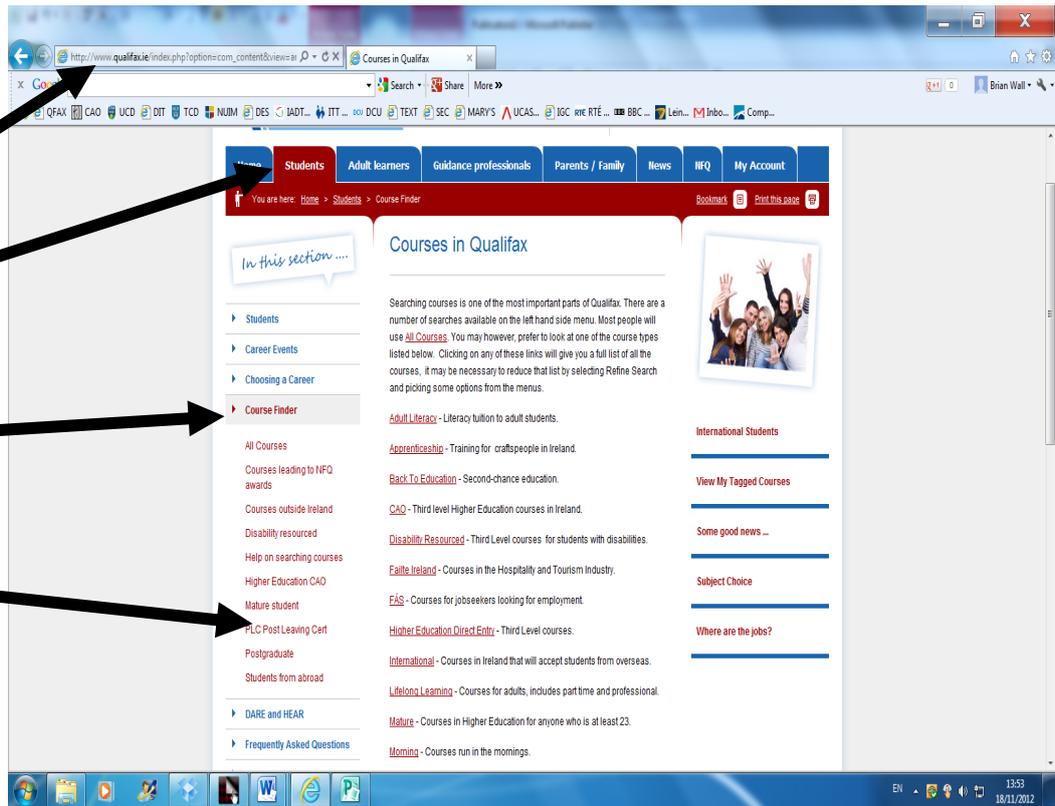
**Code
EMPXX**

**Can be narrowed
to county
e.g. Dublin**

List of all the EMPXX courses and the college offering these

Caution

The type of courses that have the EMPXX code can vary in what subject material they cover.
For example, EMPXX can range from 'Photography' to 'Print Journalism & Radio'.
Be sure to pick the subject material you find the most interesting. Also, there may be other interesting courses found in the other codes, ERPXX, ETFPX, or EPJXX.
Check that the P.L.C. course has the necessary module/s using the web site of the particular P.L.C. college.

Check List

✓Find the C.A.O. code for the 3rd level college course you wish to enter.

✓Search cao.ie to find the necessary P.L.C. code/s and any necessary modules.

✓Search qualifax.ie using the P.L.C. code/s.

✓Find what P.L.C. colleges offer the necessary P.L.C. course/code.

✓Don't just pick a P.L.C. course because it has the correct code, select a course with the correct code that also covers the subject material you find most interesting. Note also, some P.L.C. colleges offer course that allow entry into 2nd year of a third level degree course.

✓Check the web site of the particular P.L.C. college to ensure the course also has the necessary module/s.

✓Apply in February using the P.L.C. college web site.

✓Check the P.L.C. college web site for any additional entry requirements, e.g. portfolio.

✓It might be necessary to apply for more than one P.L.C. course.

✓Note: Completing a P.L.C. course does not guarantee entry into your desired 3rd level college course. You will need to obtain a certain standard in your assessments and exams and compete for places with others who have similar grades.

5. Private Colleges

Some private colleges offer courses within the C.A.O. system. In addition, they also accept direct applications even if a candidate did not include their college/course on the original C.A.O application. Also, there are many other private colleges that operate outside the C.A.O. system.

Here is a list of some of the private colleges listed in the CAO handbook.

- Griffith College, Cork www.gcc.ie
- American College, Dublin www.amcd.ie
- College of Computer Training, Dublin www.cct.ie
- Dublin Business School www.dbs.ie
- Grafton College, Dublin www.graftoncollege.ie
- Griffith College, Dublin www.gcd.ie
- Independent College, Dublin www.independentcollege.ie
- IBAT College, Dublin www.ibat.ie
- ICD Business College, Dublin www.icd.ie
- Portobello Institute, Dublin www.portobelloinstitute.ie
- Irish College of Humanities & Applied Sciences, Limerick www.ichas.ie
- Griffith College, Limerick www.gcl.ie

All these colleges charge fees and are not subsidised by the state. Tax relief and maintanace grants may also be available. Please check their website for further details.

6. Doing Research

Before putting any course on a C.A.O. application, its contents should be fully researched. There are several ways to carry out research. To find out which colleges offer a particular course **www.quaifax.ie** is a very useful web site. This is the national database for all courses in the county. Here are some examples of how this website works.
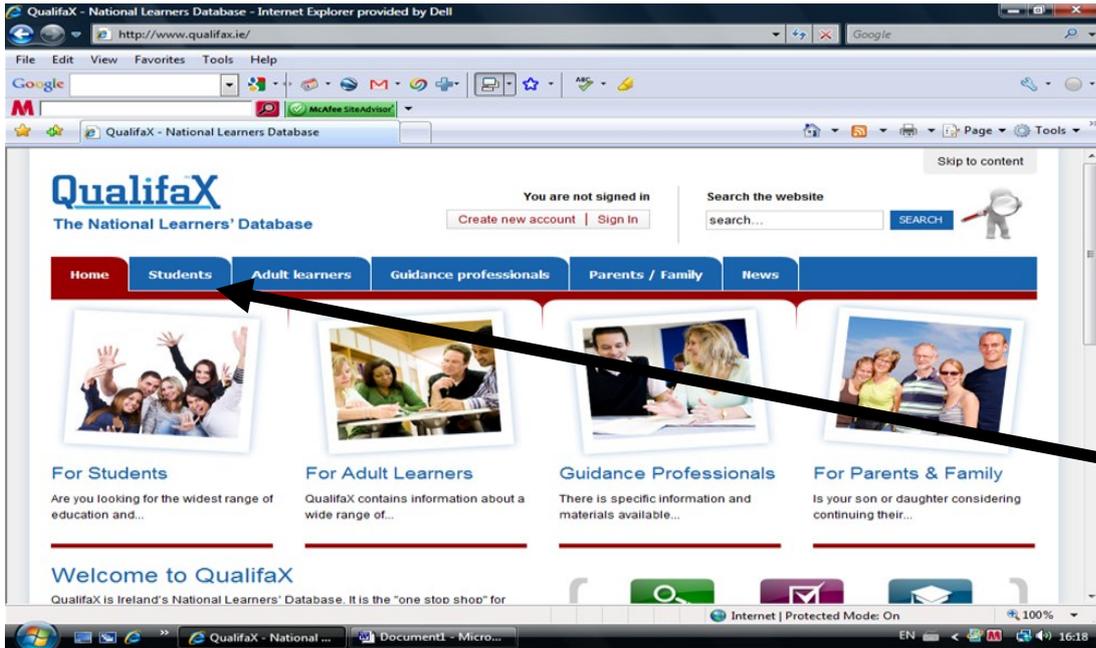
Student Section

Course Finder

C.A.O.

Architecture

Leinster

Click on each for more

The Institute Of Guidance Counsellors
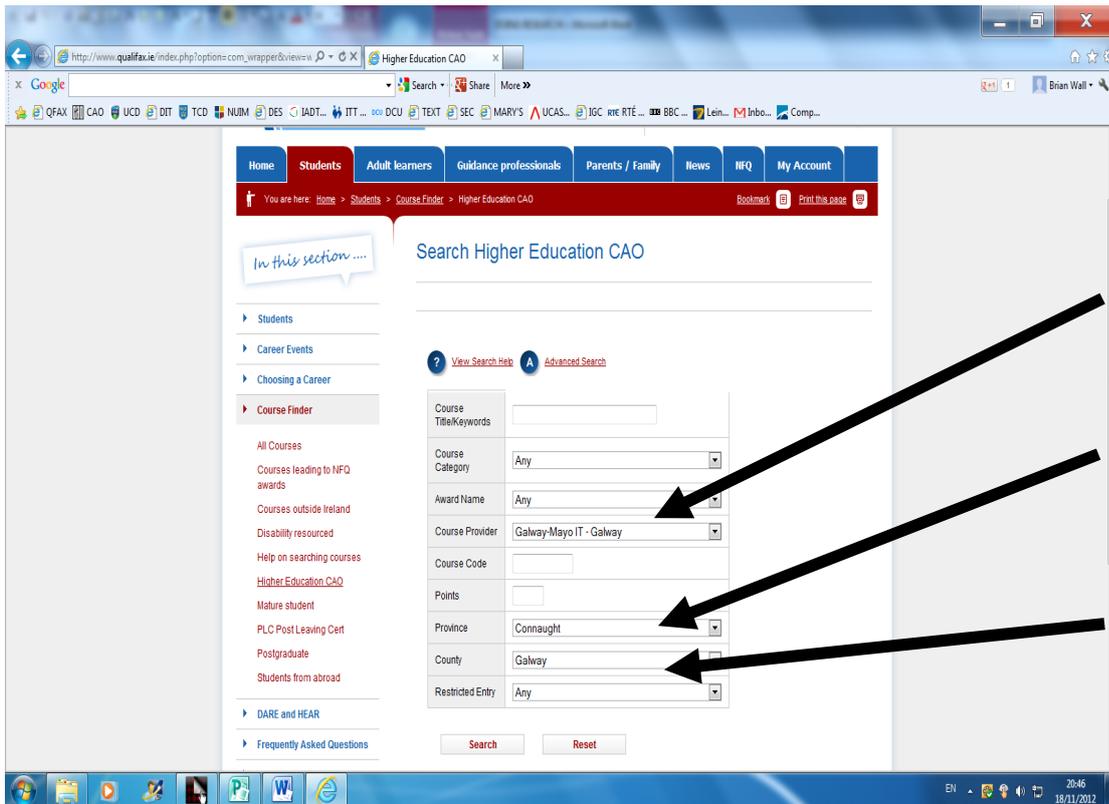
Search By Institute

Or by Province

Or by County

Another useful website is www.careersportal.ie

Other Websites

Other than the specific college websites mentioned above, there are other useful sites that can be sourced. For example, ***www.gradireland.ie*** can be used to research what graduates are doing having finish their degree. Another site that is useful is ***www.careersportal.ie*** which has a useful section about "a day in the life of…a physicist." In addition, professional bodies have useful website that can give a lot of information about careers in their area. e.g. ***www.failteireland.ie***, ***www.garda.ie***, ***www.military.ie***, ***www.steps.ie*** (for engineering), ***www.nire.ie*** (the nursing professional body), ***www.nswqb.ie***, (the social workers professional body), ***www.teagasc.ie*** (careers in horticulture and agriculture), and ***www.lawsociety.ie***, ***www.kingsinn.ie***, and ***www.barcouncil.ie***. In addition ***www.careerdirections.ie*** and ***www.online.onetcenter.org***, can be used to find out what each occupation entails in terms of tasks and duties.

Open Days/Evenings.

Throughout the year colleges hold Open Days/Evenings at various time. A list of dates is available on ***www.qualifax.ie***. To optimise the open day visits students should prepare their questions beforehand. If students go without pre-prepared questions they will come home without answers. It is pointless to ask questions, the answers to which are available on websites, e.g. *"How many students do you take in?" or "What points are needed for the course?".* Asking questions such as these is a wasted opportunity. Here are some useful questions that could be asked at both Open Days and the Higher Options.

When students are researching courses they often ask vague questions about the courses they might be interested in. If you don't get the answers you want, if may be that the right questions were not asked. Here are some relevant questions that you might use when researching courses.

1. *If it is a technical based course, how much Maths is there? Is the Maths difficult?*
2. *If it is a text based course, how many books do I have to read per week/month?*
3. *How many hours of lectures/tutorials/practicals are there each week?*
4. *Is there continuous assessment?*
5. *How many assignments are there?*
6. *Is there project work?*
7. *How much does the end of year exam count in the overall assessment?*
8. *Is there an opportunity to study abroad?*
9. *Is there a work experience component to the course?*
10. *What are the opportunities available when you graduate?*
11. *How does this course differ from the equivalent one in college Y?*
12. *Has the course had a portfolio/aptitude test/ interview as part of the entry procedure?*
13. *What professional organisations recognise the degree?*
14. *Does the degree obtain exemptions e.g. accounting organisation?*
15. *How many extra courses/exams will I have to do to become qualified as, e.g. a solicitor, an accountant, and engineer?*
17. *If I don't get the points, are there alternative entry routes?*

18. *If there a level 6/7 equivalent for this course? Can you progress to the level 8 equivalent?*
19. *What scholarships are available?*
20. *If talking to a student who is doing/has done the course, what topics did they enjoy?*
21. *If talking to a student who is doing/has done the course, what topics did they find difficult?*
22. *If talking to a student who is doing/has done the course, were there any topics that you did not realise would be involved in the course?*
23. *If talking to a student who is doing/has done the course, what are the lectures like?*
24. *If talking to a student who is doing/has done the course, what are the best and worst aspects of the course?*

Are there more questions you could ask…

25.

26.

27.

The list of questions to ask regarding any course could be endless. However, experience show, year in year out, that the main determining factor in a student engaging with and enjoying their degree is that they are stimulated by, and interested in, the material they are studying, and as a result, finish that course. Therefore, the most productive research can be to determine the answer to the following three questions.

What will I study in 1st year?
What will I study in 2nd year?
What will I study in 3rd year?

Therefore, the best method to find the answers to this question is to use the college websites and search the modules of learning that are taught. To finish any year of any degree in any college a student has to clock up 60 credits of learning. This total of 60 is usually composed of individual units of 5 or 10 credits of material. This research is vitally important for all courses but is also essential when students are choosing new subjects that they may not have studied in school, e.g. Sociology, Law, Philosophy, Linguistics, Politics etc. **See example on the next page.**

Non-C.A.O. options include

www.teagasc.ie for course in Agriculture & Food Development that do not require points.

www.bim.ie for courses in fisheries and sea food industries that do not require points.

**www.defenceforces.ie** for the Army, Navy and Air Corp careers.

www.garda.ie for careers in An Garda Síochána.

www.fas.ie for trades and other training.

Searching for 60 credits of learning

www.nuim.ie

Courses
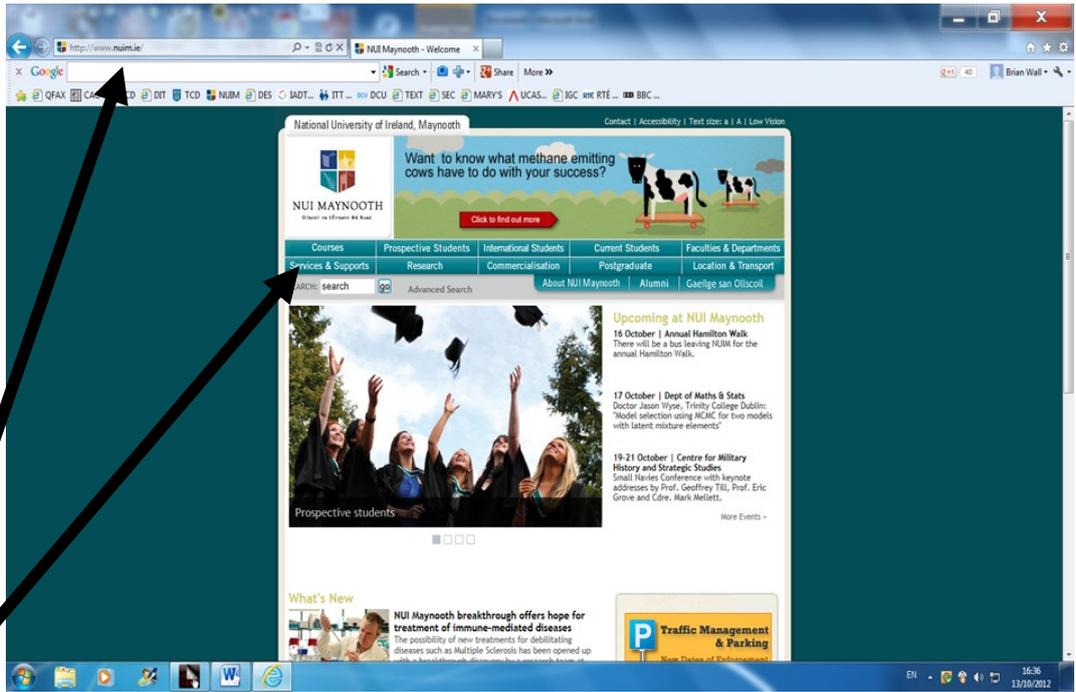
Prospective Students
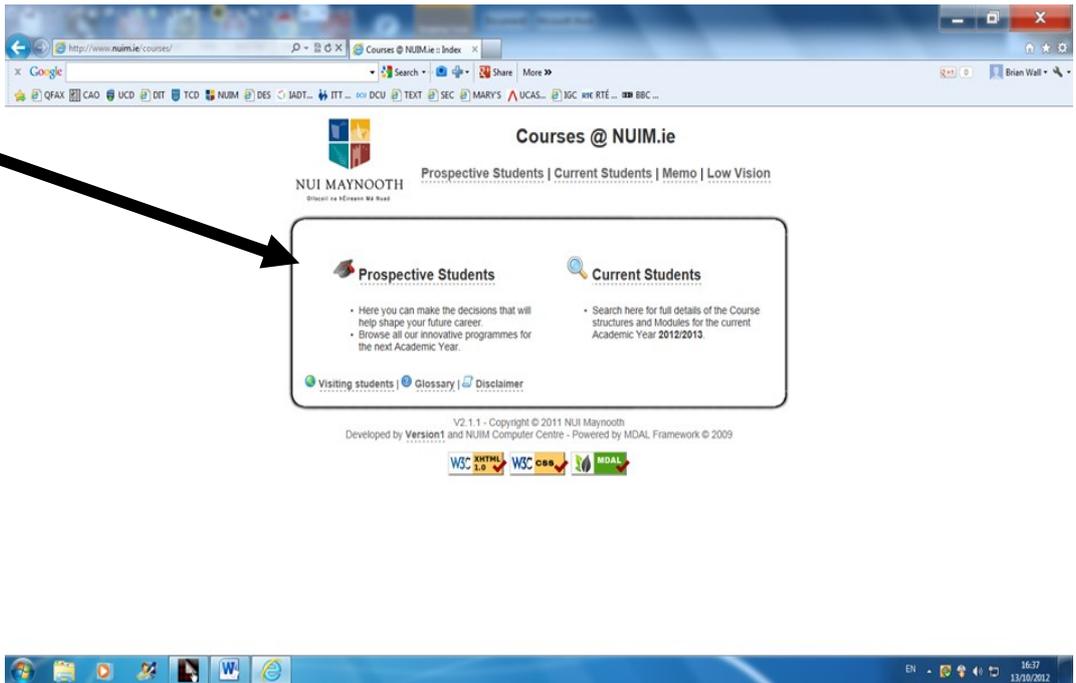
Example Psychology

Course Structure

Modules

7. Studying Abroad

Information regarding studying in other countries can be found on www.qualifax.ie and through the relevant embassies.

Student →

Courses Outside Ireland →

The United Kingdom operates a similar system to the C.A.O. system. This is referred to as U.C.A.S. The following points are worth noting:

• The system allows for a maximum of five courses in any order on an application.

• A candidate can only apply for Oxford *or* Cambridge but not both.

• Oxford and Cambridge operate an interview process and an assessment test procedure.

• Other colleges also operate an interview process for their more popular courses such as Medicine, Veterinary and Dentistry.

• No more than four choices allow in (i) Medicine, (ii) Dentistry, (iii) Veterinary.

• Closing date for Oxford and Cambridge is mid-October.

• Closing date for Medicine, Density, and Veterinary is mid-October.

• Closing date for most other courses is mid-January.

• Closing date for Art & Design courses is mid-March.

• The courses you apply for are described as being "invisible". There is because each college is not aware of the other colleges/courses you have applied for.

• Once the application is sent it cannot be returned or amended if errors are found later. The website for applications is *www.ucas.co.uk*

8. Grants & Scholarships

Details of grants and scholarships can be found on **www.studentfinance.ie**
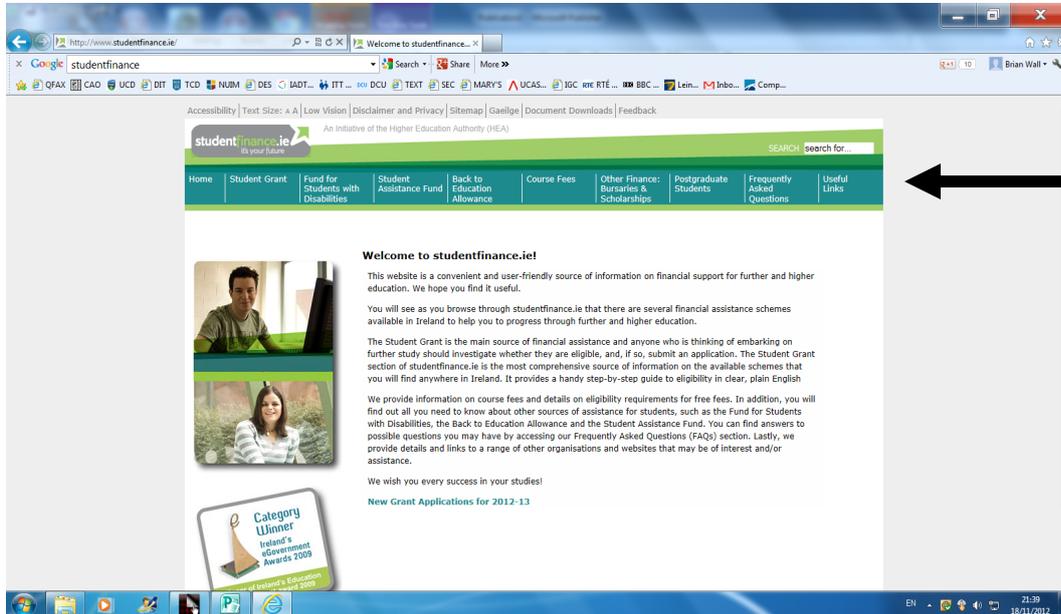
Grants
&
Scholarships

&

Other
Funding

For scholarships offered by individual third level institutions, details can be found on that institution's website.

Useful Websites

Leinster	www.nuim.ie	(National University of Ireland, Maynooth)
	www.maynoothcollege.ie	(Pontifical University, Maynooth)
	www.ucd.ie	(University College, Dublin)
	www.dit.ie	(Dublin Institute of Technology)
	www.tcd.ie	(Trinity College, Dublin)
	www.rcsi.ie	(Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland)
	www.it-tallaght.ie	(Institute of Technology, Tallaght)
	www.iadt.ie	(Inst. of Art Design & Technology, Dun Laoghaire)
	www.ncad.ie	(National College of Art and Design)
	www.dcu.ie	(Dublin City University)
	www.itb.ie	(Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown)
	www.ncirl.ie	(National College of Ireland)
	www.allhallows.ie	(All Hallows College, Drumcondra)
	www.mie.ie	(Marion Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue)
	www.materdei.ie	(Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin)
	www.cice.ie	(Church of Ireland Coll. of Education, Rathmines)
	www.itcarlow.ie	(Institute of Technology, Carlow)
	www.dkit.ie	(Dundalk Institute of Technology)
	www.ait.ie	(Athlone Institute of Technology)
Connaught	www.nuigalway.ie	(National University of Ireland, Galway)
	www.gmit.ie	(Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology)
	www.stangelas.nuigalway.ie	(St. Angela's College Sligo)
	www.itsligo.ie	(Institute of Tehnology, Sligo)
	www.lyit.ie	(Letterkenny Institute of Technology)
Munster	www.ucc.ie	(University College, Cork)
	www.ul.ie	(University of Limerick)
	www.micul.ie	(Mary Immaculate College, Limerick)
	www.lit.ie	(Limerick Institute of Technology)
	www.shannoncollege.com	(Shannon College of Hotel Management)
	www.stpats.ie	(St. Patrick's College, Tipperary)
	www.lit.ie	(Limerick Institute of Technology, Limerick)
	www.ittrallee.ie	(Institute of Technology, Tralee)
	www.wit.ie	(Waterford Institute of Technology)
Ulster	www.lyit.ie	(Letterkenny Institute of Technology)
Others	www.qualifax.ie	(Course search site)
	www.careersportal.ie	(Careers site)
	www.cao.ie	(Central applications office)
	www.education.ie	(Department of Education)
	www.examinations.ie	(State Exams Commission)
	www.accesscollege.ie	(The HEAR & DARE scheme)
	www.studentfinance.ie	(Grants and Scholarships)
	www.fas.ie	(Apprenticeships)
	www.vec.ie	(P.L.C. courses)
	www.gradireland.ie	(Explains job opportunities from various degrees)
	www.garda.ie	(Careers in An Garda Síochána)
	www.military.ie	(Careers in the Army, Navy, Air Corp)
	www.ucas.co.uk	(Third Level Education in the United Kingdom)
	www.studentfinanceni.co.uk	(Third Level Finance in Northern Ireland)
	www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance	(Third Level Finance in the England)
	www.saas.gov.uk	(Third Level Finance in Scotland)
	www.studentfinancewales.co.uk	(Third Level Finance in Wales)
	www.fulbright.ie	(Studying in the United States)

Important Dates August/September 2014

These dates are estimated dates based on last years days and dates. Dates will be confirmed by each organisation/institution and are subject to change.

August 2014		
Wed. 13th	Results Published	Available in your school and on line at www.examinations.ie using P.I.N. number
Thurs. 14th		
Fri. 15th		
Mon. 18th	1st round C.A.O. offers published	Offers published on-line from 6.00 a.m. at www.cao.ie (C.A.O. number required). Also due by post that morning.
Tue 19th	Script review deadline	Return 'card' received with results to the school by this date
Wed. 20th		
Thurs. 21st		
Fri. 22nd		
Mon. 25th		
Tue. 26th	Final acceptance of 1st round offers	Deadline 5.15 p.m.
Wed. 27th		
Thurs. 28th	2nd round C.A.O. offers published	Offers published on-line from 6.00 a.m. at www.cao.ie (C.A.O. number required). Also due by post that morning.
Fri. 29th	Review scripts	Session 1 - 6.00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m. Your school will allocate you one of these sessions.
Sat. 30th	Review scripts	Session 2 - 9.00 a.m. - 12.00 p.m. & Session 3 - 2.00 p.m. - 5.00 p.m.
Sept. 2014		
Mon. 1st		
Tue 2nd	Recheck deadline	The Sate Exams Commission (Athlone) must receive recheck applications THROUGH YOUR SCHOOL.
Wed. 3rd	Final acceptance for 2nd round offers	After the 2nd round offers have been processed there will be a small number of offers by post/phone until mid-Oct.
Thurs. 4th		
Fri. 5th		
Mon. 8th	College registration	Registration may start for some colleges this week.
Mon 15th	College registration	Registration may start for some colleges this week.
Oct. 2014		If a student missed registration they may not be able to select subject/modules they want..
Mid-Oct.	Recheck results published	Sent to the school and C.A.O. The C.A.O. office will contact students if there is any change in offers.
	C.A.O. number:	Produced when making a C.A.O. application
	Examination Number:	From the State Examinations Commission - given to students through the school
	P.I.N. Number:	From the State Examinations Commission - given to students through the school

The Institute of Guidance Counsellors is the professional body for Guidance Counsellors in Ireland. Its members work in the Second, Further, Adult and Higher Education sectors. The main object of the Institute is to discuss, promote and research matters relating to guidance counselling services. The Institute also seeks to promote best practice and the professional development of its members in order to serve and protect the interest of those whom they serve and to maintain, develop, and advance the personal, social, educational and career development of individuals and groups through supporting guidance counselling practice.

This publication is part of the following series of booklets published by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors

**The Transition To Secondary School -
Sharing Ideas & Experiences Of Those Who Have Gone Before You**

**Study - Learning To Learn
A Parents' Guide**

**Sharing Experiences & Suggestions Around Alcohol & Substance Abuse -
A Collaborative Guide For Parents**

**Optimising Choices -
Clues To A Future Career Direction**

**Taking The Next Step -
A Parents & Students Guide To Further & Higher Education**

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