

Mature Student CAO Application

What is CAO?

The Central Applications Office (CAO) processes all students' applications for their first year undergraduate course.

What is a HEI?

The third-level education sector consists of Universities, Institutes of Technology, and Colleges of Education which are collectively known as Higher Education Institutions or HEIs.

What is a Mature Student?

- Persons over the age of 23 years before the 1st of January for admission in the following Autumn.
- In most cases mature applications need not meet entry requirements specified for standard applicants.
- Mature applications are considered on an individual basis taking into account their motivation, academic, work and life experience, their ability to pursue the course and their potential to benefit from the course.

Some HEIs may have different age requirements, different definitions of mature applicants and restrictions may apply therefore all applicants must contact the Admissions Office or Mature Students Officer of the appropriate HEI well in advance of the closing date for applications.

What Dates should you take note of?

CLOSING DATE	FEE (All fees are non-refundable)	
20 Jan 2013 (5.15pm)	€25	Online discounted rate
1 Feb 2013 (5.15pm)	€40	Normal application (online or paper) NB Mature Student
1 May 2013 (5.15pm)	€50	Late online application
1 May 2013 (5.15pm)	€80	Late paper application
1 July 2013 (5.15pm)	Nil	Change of Mind

- Some HEIs will consider applications received after February 1st 2013.
- Restricted courses cannot be applied for after February 1st be they either Late Application or Change of Mind due to early assessment procedures, such as interviews, portfolio assessment etc.
- March/April are usually the months where interviews and portfolio presentations take place but it depends on the HEI.
- Mature applications for nursing/midwifery will not be accepted after February 1st.

Application Procedure

- Mature applicants may be required to apply directly to a HEI rather than or in conjunction with making a CAO application.
- Mature applicants should make enquires regarding the application procedure on Page 6 of the CAO Handbook and the appropriate Admissions Office or Mature Students Officer **BEFORE** submitting an Application, a Late Application or Change of Mind.

Before filling out the CAO form:

- Read information on the HEIs, the courses available, entry requirements, course content, restrictions etc.
- On www.cao.ie if you click on the course code you will be linked to the page for that course on the college website
- Contact the college's Admissions Office if you are not clear on any aspect of the information in the prospectus/online
- Read the CAO Handbook carefully – Mature students should pay particular attention to pages 4, 5,6, 11, 12 and 13
- Check out whether fees are payable for the course – not all colleges come under the "Free Fees Scheme"
- You are responsible for ensuring that you meet the specified entry requirements and conditions for all courses.

CAO Form

If you are applying online, there is an online demo facility you can access. Click on 'apply' and then on the 'interactive demo facility'. If you wish to apply by post you can access the CAO form in the CAO handbook on page 28. The form consists of 2 pages and 2 parts.

Part A

Must be completed by all applicants

Page 1 Your **Personal** and **Course** details

- Courses provided at HEIs are at three different levels
 - Level 8 = Honours Bachelor Degree
 - Level 7 = Ordinary Bachelor Degree (formerly a diploma)
 - Level 6 = Higher Certificate

Section 2

- On the CAO form you can apply for up to 10 level 8 courses & up to 10 level 7 and/or Level 6 courses
- You can find course codes at the:
 - CAO Handbook
 - www.cao.ie
 - www.qualifax.ie

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	

- Take special care to put your course choices in the correct list
- Place your course choices according to your preference
 - Preference 1 is the one you would most like to be offered
 - Preference 2 your next preference etc....

At the offer stage you will receive one offer from each list. However you can only have one current acceptance in the entire CAO system.

IMPORTANT

When you have been offered a place in one of your course preferences, you are excluded from further consideration of any other course which is lower in your order of preferences.

This means that while you may subsequently move upwards in your order of preference (if places become available through withdrawal) you will not be considered for a place in a course which is lower in preference than that already offered.

Part B

Page 2

If you are applying as a mature student please **tick F**.

As mature students are evaluated on an individual basis taking into account their motivation, academic, abilities, work and life experience, HEIs request that you complete a personal statement/essay covering headings such as:

1. Relevance of your life/education experience to your application and state your educational goals and objectives
2. Final secondary level qualification awarded
3. Post-secondary level qualifications
4. Current studies
5. Non-certificate courses
6. Employment
7. Voluntary (Unpaid) Work
8. Hobbies or Interests

You can use additional pages to expand on each of the topics above. This information and all supplementary documents that you feel could benefit your application such as FETAC results must be sent to CAO within seven days of submitting your application.

Further information on these topics is available on page 13 of the CAO handbook.

When you submit your application, CAO will issue you with a CAO application number which will appear on your Receipt. If you do not get a receipt please contact CAO directly through the "Contact Us" facility on the CAO website www.cao.ie.

You should then contact the Mature Student Officer in the relevant HEI to ensure they are aware of your application. This guarantees that you will be enlisted for interviews, portfolio assessments etc.