



CAO - HEAR & DARE Admissions Schemes

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In recent days Leaving Certificate students have been made aware that they can access and download the **CAO Handbook 2022**, required for application to third level/higher education institutions in the ROI **online** at www.cao.ie. The CAO website also contains additional key information, video guides and resources, which students and parents/guardians are encouraged to utilise. Please ensure that **both you and your daughter/ward read the CAO Handbook carefully and comply with all applicant rules and responsibilities.**

If you have a daughter/ward who intends to apply to third level education, the following information may also be of interest to you.

Equity of Access to Higher Education

Irish Higher Education and Government are committed to the objective of promoting 'equality of access to higher education, irrespective of social class, age or disability'. To widen access to third level, participating colleges have developed a range of initiatives including the HEAR & DARE supplementary admission routes.

What is the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)?

The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is a college and university scheme which offers places on **reduced points** and **extra college support** to school leavers from **socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds** who are resident in the Republic of Ireland. HEAR has been set up by a number of colleges and universities as evidence shows that long-term poverty can have a negative effect on how well a student does at school and whether they go on to college. HEAR applicants **must meet a range of financial, social and cultural indicators to be considered** for a reduced points place and extra college support.

What HEAR is Not!

HEAR is **NOT your maintenance GRANT** (SUSI grant). The maintenance grant is the main source of financial assistance from the Irish State for students in full-time Post Leaving Certificate (PLCs) and full-time higher education undergraduate courses. HEAR is an admissions scheme to **help students who may not traditionally go on to third level.** Students applying to HEAR are also encouraged to find out more information on the maintenance grant. For detailed information on financial support and student grants when going to third level see www.susi.ie and www.studentfinance.ie.

Who is HEAR for?

HEAR is for school leavers under the age of 23 as of 1 January 2022 who are resident in the Republic of Ireland. Applications to HEAR can only be made **online through the CAO** at www.cao.ie (N.B. **CLOSING DATES APPLY.**)

What is the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)?

The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school-leavers whose **disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education**. DARE offers **reduced points** places to school leavers, who as a result of having a disability, have **experienced additional educational challenges** in second level education. DARE has been set up by a number of colleges and universities as evidence shows that disability can have a negative impact on how well a student does at school and whether they go on to college.

Who Should Apply to DARE?

DARE is for school leavers under the age of 23 as of 1 January 2022 with a **disability**, who have been **educationally impacted as a result of that disability**. Applicants to DARE can present with an Irish Leaving Certificate, A-Levels and/ or other EU qualifications.

Please note **DARE applications are co-ordinated by the Learning Support Teacher** in Coláiste Bríde. It is crucial students inform and speak to the learning support teacher as soon as possible, about their intention to apply to DARE and give adequate notice and time for the **Educational Impact Statement (EIS)** to be completed in consultation with them. It is the responsibility of **you**, the applicant, to ensure the Educational Impact Statement is **forwarded to CAO to arrive in time** before the closing deadline.

What Disabilities are Eligible for Consideration for DARE?

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (including Asperger's Syndrome)
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Blind / Vision Impaired
- Deaf / Hard of Hearing
- Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD) - Dyspraxia
- Mental Health Condition
- Neurological Condition (including Brain Injury and Epilepsy)
- Speech and Language Communication Disorder
- Significant Ongoing Illness
- Physical Disability
- Specific Learning Difficulty (including Dyslexia and Dyscalculia)

[Please see www.accesscollege.ie for further/most up to date details]

HEAR & DARE Application Information Days

Application Information Days will take place **online** for 2022, on **Saturday 8th January 2022** from **10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.** Further information on HEAR & DARE Application Information Days will be published on www.accesscollege.ie.

Further Information on HEAR & DARE

For further information on HEAR & DARE parents/guardians and students should refer to the **CAO Handbook** and **CAO website** at www.cao.ie.

N.B. Essential HEAR & DARE information can also be found at www.accesscollege.ie (where there are **essential documents which should be consulted**, such as the **HEAR HANDBOOK 2022** and **DARE HANDBOOK 2022**). The appropriate handbook(s) should be consulted before attempting to complete any application.

All participating colleges have a staff member who can advise on how to apply to HEAR & /DARE. If you wish to speak to someone about an application, you are advised to **contact any member of the HEAR & /DARE team as listed under the “Contact” link at www.accesscollege.ie**

For **questions about completing the online HEAR & /DARE application contact the CAO Helpdesk** by phoning **(091) 509800** or by using the “Contact Us” facility at www.cao.ie

Other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) Operating Entry Routes into Higher Education

For information on **other HEIs** operating separate entry routes into Higher Education (e.g. **non-HEAR and non-DARE Institutions**), refer to the **CAO Handbook** and contact the **Access Office** of these HEIs. An example of a **non-HEAR college** is Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT); while the NCAD is an example of a **non-DARE college**.

Useful Information and Websites for Parents/Guardians and Students

A **6th Year Guidance Group** has been set up for Leaving Certificate students via the Coláiste Bríde **TEAMS app**, where students have access to important information covering a wide range of relevant topics (e.g., CAO, PLCs, UCAS, National Framework of Qualification (NFQ), etc.), which you may also find helpful.

The following websites will also support both you and your daughter in planning for her future.

- www.cao.ie – Key website for CAO information with multiple useful links (e.g., ‘**Student Resources**’, and ‘**Information for Parents**’).
- www.accesscollege.ie – HEAR and DARE information, handbooks, supporting documentation forms, video guides, list of participating colleges, etc.
- www.qualifax.ie - Provides information in relation to e.g., Open Days, Interest/Career tests, Minimum entry requirements, Third Level and Further Education courses (i.e., PLCs), Accommodation, etc.)

- www.careersportal.ie – Provides a vast amount of useful information in relation to e.g. Third Level and Further Education courses, Interest/Career/Personality tests, Careers, Jobs in demand, Grants, Scholarships, etc.)
- www.nfq.ie – National Framework of Qualification in Ireland. Explains various levels of education (e.g., Level 8 {Honours Bachelor Degree – approx. duration of 3/4+ years}, Level 7 {Ordinary Bachelor Degree – approx. duration of 3 years}, Level 6 {Higher Certificate – approx. duration of 2 years}, etc.)
- www.careersnews.ie – free daily careers and educational news.
- www.nui.ie – Provides important information for CAO applicants, who for **various reasons, may be required to seek exemption(s) from minimum entry requirements (e.g., exemptions from Irish and/or a third/modern language requirement(s) (as advised per CAO Handbook and website)**.
- **Individual College Websites and Admission Offices** – Provide information in relation to each specific institution's rules, regulations and application procedures, etc. (e.g., how to apply for **exemption(s) from Irish and/or a third/modern language requirement(s) in a Non-NUI College (as advised per CAO Handbook and website)**, **EU and International (Non-EU) Fees**, scholarships, etc.
- www.susi.ie – Provides information relating to student grants and application.
- www.studentfinance.ie – Provides information on topics such as grants, bursaries, scholarships, etc.
- www.ucas.com – Information relating to application to higher educational institutions in the UK.

Applicant Responsibilities

N.B. Strict rules, regulations and deadlines operate in relation to CAO, and HEAR and DARE application. It is the applicant's responsibility to be aware of and correctly comply with all rules, regulations and deadlines.

Always consult the various websites for the most up to date information available.

I hope you find this information to be of help and I wish both you, and your daughter/ward all the best in the months ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Aisling Mc Donald

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(Guidance Counsellor)