



Institiúid na gComhairleoirí Treorach
INSTITUTE OF GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS

***The Leaving Certificate
Results
Are Out
What Now?***

***A Guide For
Parents & Students***

***The Institute
Of Guidance
Counsellors***

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The Leaving Certificate Results Are Out—What Now?

A Guide For Parents & Students

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Disclaimer

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided, parents and students should always verify the information with the relevant organisation/s.

1. How Do I Get My Results?

Your results can be collected from your school the day they are published. You can also get your result on-line from 12.00 p.m. on the day of the results at www.examinations.ie using your exam number and PIN number provided by the school.

2. How Do I Calculate My Points?

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

L. Cert. Percentage	L. Cert. Grade	Honours Level	Ordinary Level
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 % - 54 %	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*	
Distinction	70	Grade	Points
Merit	50	A1	20
Pass	30	A2	15
*Awarded by a limited number of Colleges for a limited number of courses.		B1	10
		B2	5

HONOURS MATHS

All students achieving a HD3 or higher will have 25 points added to their total score for honours Maths. The Maths grade itself does not change. Ordinary level Maths remains unchanged. 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.**

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

When counting the Leaving Certificate point for medicine, points above 550 are adjusted to a maximum of 565 points. Therefore for every 5 points above 550 add 1 point.

3. How Will I React?

For most students it has been a long and nervous wait. For those that obtain the points *well above* what they need, the long wait will be over. If you are one of these students – well done.

However, for a lot of students, this anxious time will, unfortunately, not conclude with the publishing of the results. These students will be either, short points for the course they want, or have achieved the exact points based on last year's requirements or may have obtained a few points above what was required last year. These students will have to wait until the C.A.O. office send out offers and publish this year's college admission points. Therefore, for these students the results day can be an anti-climax and the waiting game will continue until the offers are published.

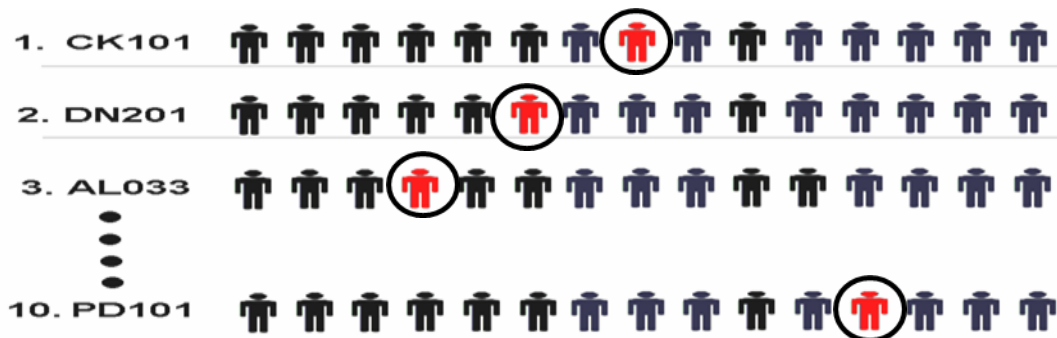
Having received your results, you need to allow yourself a day or so to digest what has happened. You may be shocked, upset and very disappointed and you need time to absorb your new circumstances. There is nothing that can be done – or should be done - in the day or two after you receive your results. Indeed, there is no point in trying to plan ahead when you are in such an emotional state. It is preferable to wait until the college offers are published. There is no way to predict if the points you require will go up or down until offers are made.

4. How Are The Offers & Points Decided?

Here is an explanation as to how the points for each course are calculated. This candidate has applied for Arts in U.C.C. as their 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.

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.

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 position in the queue for this candidate for each of their courses is indicated below.



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. **These are the points that are deemed to be the cut-off point and this is where the points that are published originate.** 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.



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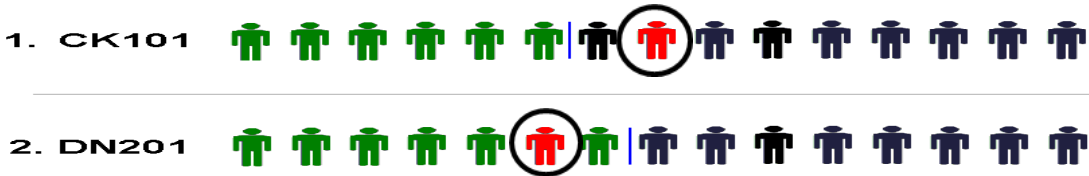
The computer will then scan and select the highest preference course the candidate is eligible for. In this case, it is the second choice, DN 201. Even though the candidate is eligible for the third choice, they will not be offered a place as the candidate has indicated that they would prefer DN 201 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, i.e. courses C, D, E, F, G, and courses P, Q, R, S are deleted from the system.** The student will now receive an offer of a place on DN 201 in round one. The same system operated independently for level 7/6.

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

If eligible, you 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 you can only accept one. If you receive, for example, your 2nd preference on level 8 in round one, all preferences below this will be deleted from the system and you will never be offered any course from 3rd preference down. If you accept this offer you can still be offered your 1st preference in round two – if the points drop and you become eligible. If you do not accept this 2nd preference offer, you can still be offered your 1st preference in round two – if the points drop and you become eligible. **However, if the points do not drop you cannot change your mind and ask for the original round one offer. You will be left with no offer.** The same system operates independently for levels 7/6.

5. What Is Round 2?

The student’s first preference was course CK101 and they 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 his first round offer and decline the second round offer 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. In our example, the student can accept course B and still be offered course A, and X, or Y in round 2. If the student accepts course Z, they can still be offered course A, and X, or Y in round 2.



6. How Do I Receive And Accept An Offer?

You can log into your C.A.O application from 6.00 a.m. on the morning of the offers. Your account will show what offer/s you have received. You will also receive a postal version of any offer.

An offer can be accepted on-line through your C.A.O. account. If you have two offers, one from level 8 and one from level 7/6, accepting one offer automatically declines the other offer. Your offer must be accepted by the relevant acceptance date. If an offer is not accepted by this date it is automatically withdrawn. Remember, it is sometimes preferable to accept a level 7/6 offer over a level 8 offer. If the level 7/6 course is a course that has content that is of greater interest than the level 8 course and has the option of being converted or transferred to a level 8 equivalent, it might be preferable to accept the level 7/6 offer. If you receive a 2nd round offer and do not wish to accept it, do nothing, it will automatically lapse on the closing date and the CAO will view this as you preferring your 1st round offer. If you wish to accept your second round offer, doing so automatically removes the 1st round offer.

7. I Have The Points But Did Not Receive An Offer?

Check that you have the minimum requirements. You will not be offered a course if you do not have the minimum requirement even if you have the necessary points. If you have an exemption, e.g. Irish and/or a third language check that the C.A.O. office has been informed. If you have the points and did not receive an offer, it may have been that random selection was used.

8. What Is Random Selection?

When the cut of points are determined (as indicated above) it sometimes happens that more than one student has the same number of points as the cut off points. In this case all the students on these points are given a randomly electronically generated number. If, for example, there are 10 students on the same points and there are four available places, the four students with the highest random numbers are selected for the course. This effectively is an electronically based lottery. When the points are published, the courses that used this random selection have an asterisk (*) beside the points.

9. How Do I Apply For A Review?

- A review is the process whereby you look at your script to check if the marking scheme has been applied correctly. There is no charge for this service. A recheck is the process whereby you request that your exam to be remarked. There is a charge per subject for this service but a refund is given if there is an upgrade. It is possible to apply for a recheck without carrying out a review. However, it is highly recommended that a script is reviewed before a recheck is requested.
- When you receive your Leaving Certificate results you will have also reviewed a personalised application form to apply to review scripts. This form should be filled in ticking which subjects you wish to review. This form should be returned to your school/organised superintendent (normally a teacher in your school) by the date indicated on the form. The organising superintendent will get back to you and allocate one of the time slots indicated on the application form. Scripts cannot be reviewed outside these times.
- You cannot send in another person on your behalf. You must attend yourself, but you can however bring another person with you to help you review.

9.1 How do I prepare for the review session?

- Writing instrument, pens, pencils, or any electronic devices include phones, cameras or recording devices are not permitted in the reviewing centre.
- A sample number of scripts returned to schools for reviewing are photocopied by the Exams Commission to check if material has been added in the review sessions.
- The marking schemes will be supplied in the review centre. Sometimes it is useful to study these beforehand. They will be available on www.examinations.ie a few days before the review sessions.
- The exam papers are not supplied in the review centre. It is sometimes difficult to figure out the marking scheme without reference to the questions being asked. Copies can be obtained from www.examinations.ie.
- Please make sure to check the time line of dates for reviewing and rechecking exams scripts—see last page of this document.

9.2 What should I do when in the review centre?

Step 1

This grid on the right will be on the cover of your exam paper. Some exam scripts will have a second set of marks (usually in green pen) in the far right hand column. This means your exam was marked twice, once by an original marker and then by his/her supervisor. The two sets of marks may be the same or different. **Your final mark will be the one given by the supervisor** . This is the case even if it is lower than the marks awarded by the original marker. If your exam has been marked twice it is extremely unlikely that any recheck will result in any change.

	Mark	Mark
Q. 1	20	
Q. 2	10	
Q. 3	40	
Q. 4	30	
Q. 5		
Q. 6	50	
Q. 7	50	
Q. 8	50	
Q. 9		
Q.10	[5]	
Total	250	

Check that the marks on the grid are added up correctly. If you were required to answer 7 questions in your exam and you answered an extra 8th question, all questions will be corrected and the lowest marked one will be deducted from your total. This deducted question will be marked in a square bracket [X].

Step 2

- The percentage will not be written on your exam.
- If the exam you are reviewing has one paper only, check the total number of marks available. This can be seen on the front of the exam paper.
- Convert your total mark to percentage. Do not write this on your script.
- Check that this percentage is within the grade you received.
- If the exam you are reviewing has 2 papers you can only convert to percentage when you have checked both papers.
- If the exam you are reviewing has a practical or aural or oral component the percentage from your paper/s will not equate to your overall grade. If this is the case, proceed with the remaining steps.
- If your complete mark does not correspond to the grade you received on your provisional Leaving Certificate there is a fast track process to correct this error. If this is the case, you should speak to the exam superintendent in charge of the review process.
- You may find that your overall mark equates to a percentage 2% or less below 40%. If this is the case, you will have been awarded a D3. This does not apply to any other grade boundary.

Your Answer	
_____	3
_____	6

_____	9
_____	3

_____	3

Margin on each page of your script with your marks	
	10
	2
	3
	5
	TOTAL = 20

Step 3

Check that the TOTAL mark (i.e. 20) has been transferred correctly to the front page.

Repeat this step for all questions.

Step 4

Check that the individual marks have been added correctly i.e. $10 + 2 + 3 + 5 = 20$

Repeat this for all questions

Step 5

Check that all parts of your answer have been corrected.

There should be no large sections of work without a red mark.

Repeat this for all questions.

Most upgrades arise out of mistakes discovered in Steps 1 to 5.

Step 6

Now you should check the marking scheme provided against your answers.

This involves checking the *correct answers* and the marks allocated to each against *your answers* and the marks you received. If this is done correctly it should take you the bulk of the time you spend reviewing your script. Remember, the marking scheme should be used to determine if the marks have been applied correctly. It is a fruitless exercise to attempt to determine if the marking scheme used is fair or not. There is no point in trying to obtain extra marks if you feel the marking scheme is unfair. Extra marks will only be awarded if the marking scheme has been incorrectly applied.

Some marking schemes are very “black and white”. It is very easy to figure out why marks were awarded or not. This is normally the case for subjects like, Maths, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Applied Maths, and to a lesser extent, Business and Economics. Other marking schemes are not as clear-cut. For example, an English essay may only have the total mark at the end of the essay and it is very difficult to work out the breakdown of why marks were awarded or not. This may also be the case for other subjects such as Classical Studies, History of Art and the languages.

9.3 What can I do if I find an error?

An AP1 form is available from the review superintendent that can be filled in to make reference to any errors you have found. It is not necessary to fill in this sheet in order to request a review of your script but it is recommended that you do so. A separate sheet must be used for each subject.

9.4 Should I get a recheck?

The following points are worth considering.

- The marking scheme will not change and the same scheme will be applied when your script is remarked. All component, written, oral, aural, practical will be remarked. The marking will be carried out by a different examiner. The examiner will not be looking for marks to bring you up to the next grade. The remarking process is designed to ensure that the original marking scheme was applied correctly to your answers.
- Your grade can go up as well as down. If it is discovered that marks were awarded where they should not have been they will be deducted from your overall mark.
- If you received a D 1 grade (50%-54%) and your percentage was around 53%-54% it is very unlikely (but not impossible) for you to lose a sufficient number of marks to drop your grade below 50% to a D2. *If there is an error in the marking in your favour* there is a greater chance that your grade will increase up to the next grade rather than decrease to the grade below.
- If you received a D 1 grade (50%-54%) and your percentage was around 50%-52% it is very unlikely (but not impossible) for you to gain a sufficient number of marks to increase your percentage to 55% i.e. the next grade up.
- Remember 1 marks is not the same as 1%. This varies from subject to subject. For example, Maths is marked out of a total of 600 marks therefore 1 mark = $\frac{1}{600}$ of % or, to increase your grade by 1% you need to be upgraded by 6 marks.
- Feeling you should have scored a higher mark, or that you were hard done by, or that the exam was too difficult, or that the subject was your best one, or that you were getting higher grades throughout 5th/6th year, or that the marking scheme was unfair or too harsh, or that you are only a few points short of the course you want, are all irrelevant in terms of gaining extra marks in the remarking process. The only thing that is relevant is *has the marking scheme been applied correct to your exam*.

9.5 How do I apply for a recheck?

The organising superintendent can supply you with the relevant form that needs to be filled in.

A fee per subject must be paid, not to the school, but to the State Exams Commission. This fee will be refunded if you are upgraded. The fee can be paid by bank giro attached to the form which should be stamped by the bank and returned to the school by the date stated on the form. The fee can also be paid electronically on www.examinations.ie. You must print out the relevant receipt and return it to the school by the relevant date. Your school cannot process your recheck without the relevant paperwork being returned to the school. These forms must be returned through the school, not directly to the State Exams Commission.

9.6 When and how will I know if I get an up-grade?

The results of any recheck are normally available in mid-October. It is not possible to determine an exact date as it very much depends on the total number of scripts to be reviewed nationwide. The State Exams Commission will electronically inform the C.A.O. of any upgrade. The C.A.O. will immediately send –that morning - a new offer to you if you are eligible. The results of the rechecks will also be sent to your school that morning. A press announce will also be made that morning.

9.7 If I am upgraded, will I get a course offer?

If you are upgraded to a number of points that is higher than the points required for your course you will be offered a place on your chosen course. However, the college concerned may wish you to defer the offer until the following year.

If you are upgraded to the exact points required for your course you will be offered a place if random selection of students on exactly the number of points required was not applied to your chosen course. However, the college concerned may wish you to defer the offer until the following year.

If you are upgraded to exactly the points required for your course you may be offered a place if random selection of students on the exactly the number of points required was used. However, the college concerned may wish you to defer the offer until the following year.

9.8 Can I take up the late offer of a course?

If, as a result of an upgrade, you are entitled to a place on a course you will be offered this course. However, if the course is one where the numbers are strictly controlled (like Medicine and Dentistry) the third level institute will encourage you to defer your place until next year. If however, the course is one such as Arts, they may let you take up your offer this year. One other factor that is also taken into consideration is if the course has already started. You may have missed some lectures. The rules determining the uptake of a late offer due to an upgrade depends very much on the third level institute concerned and the individual facility within the institution.

9.9 What can I do if I don't get an up-grade?

If you do not receive an upgrade that you still think you deserve there is a further step you can take. You can apply to an Independent Appeals Scrutineer. This is done by contacting the State Exams Commission directly. However, it should be noted that the scrutineer does not mark the exam script again. He/she simply checks if the exam commission has followed correct procedure. You cannot avail of this process if you have not availed of the initial remarking process. If an expected upgrade does not occur it may be that you were given the marks in the area you thought was incorrectly marked, but you may have been deducted marks elsewhere on your paper. If you are still unhappy with the outcome of the scrutineer's decision you can take a final step of contacting the Office of the Ombudsman or if a candidate is under 18 years old, the Ombudsman for Children.

Leaving Certificate Appeal Statistics				
Year	Total Grades*	Appeals	Upgrades	Downgrades
2013	370,491	9,098	1,647 (18.1% of 9,098)	3
2012	367,681	8,779	1,684 (19.1% of 8,779)	3
2011	371,842	10,142	1,931 (19% of 10,142)	4
2010	363,583	10,333	2,089 (20.2% of 10,333)	7
2009	372,611	10,398	2,103 (20.2% of 10,398)	6
2008	360,856	11,284	2,207 (19.5% of 11,587)	5
2007	353,323	9,913	2,026 (20.4% of 9,913)	3
2006	352,408	9,492	2,060 (20.7% of 9,492)	1
2005	374,171	11,582	2,651 (22.8 % of 11,582)	9
2004	380,013	10,136	2,064 (20% of 10,136)	7
2003	387,749	10,299	2,192 (21% of 10,299)	5
*Number of students multiplied by the number of exams taken. Source: S.E.C. Annual Reports				

10. I Have Accepted My CAO Offer, What Happens Now?

When you accept an offer, the C.A.O. office notifies the particular third level institution. It is always good practice to print out a copy – from the C.A.O. website - of the page showing your acceptance. The third level institution will then send you, by post, details of how and when to register. Please pay particular attention to the dates/times mentioned. Over the last number of years a considerable number of courses offer a very large number of modules from which you can select what to study. These modules are very much based on demand and can fill up very quickly. It is recommended that you log on to the college web site in advance and find out as much detail as possible about the module choice available. You need to research these options well in advance of the registration time/date. Once this registration time/date arrives (it is usually an online registration system) you should log on as soon as possible so that the selections of modules you want are still available. Very popular modules can fill up with an hour or so. It might also be a good idea to select a plan B of modules and have this plan ready. You will not have time to carry out new research once registration has opened.

11. What Happens If I Drop Out Of My Course?

With any course within the third level system there are two bills to be paid. Registration fees are paid by the student and tuitions fees are paid by the state. Every student is entitled to the tuitions fees being paid by the state for a 1st year once, a 2nd year once and so on. Therefore if you have to repeat a year, including restarting 1st year in another course/college, you will have to pay both registration fees and tuition fees for that repeat year only. There is a sliding scale of fee payment. If you complete the whole of a year you will have to pay full tuition fees when doing that year again. If you leave before 1st February (approximately – it varies from college to college) you will have to pay half tuition fees. If you drop out early (e.g. October) and, depending on the date you stop attending, you may not have to pay tuition fees when repeating. In all case you must inform the college of your decision.

12. If I Start A Course Can I Transfer?

There are also a few limited avenues whereby you can transfer from a course in one college to another similar course in another college having completed the first or more years on your original course. The content of these courses *must* overlap. These options are NOT guaranteed, very limited, and depend on both results obtained at the end of 1st year (subsequent years) and availability of places. Similarly, there are transfer options between courses within the same college provided you obtained the original points required for the course you want to enter when you sat your Leaving Certificate.

13. I Want To Defer My Offer?

If a candidate wishes to defer a college place, they must first have received an offer of that place from the C.A.O. Once the offer has been received, it should not be accepted, instead, the admissions office of the college (not the C.A.O.) needs to be contacted immediately, and their instructions followed. Each college operates different procedures.

A candidate is guarantee to be offered a place the following year (even if the points increase) provided (i) a C.A.O. application is completed by 1st February the following year, (ii) the first and only preference placed on that C.A.O. application is that course which was deferred. If you wish to defer your college offer for one year you must do the following.

- Do NOT accept your offer one the CAO system.
- Check with the relevant college's admission office and following their procedures.
- The following year you MUST fill out a new CAO application form.
- Place the deferred course only as your 1st preference choice.

14. What Are My Options If I Have No Offer?

14.1 Vacant Places

The day after the first round offers are published, the C.A.O. will publish on-line a list of *vacant places*. This is a list of courses that did not have enough applications to fill all available places. However, a word of caution so as not to build up your hopes. These courses, by their very nature, were not in high demand in the first place, and mainly consist of offers from private colleges. However, there may be some attractive courses from the state run colleges. To be eligible for these places you do not have to have the points but you must have the minimum requirements. While you will not need the total points that was originally required, if you apply for one of these places you will be placed in a queue determined by the points of all applicants you have applied under the vacant places facility. Accepting your first round offer does not prevent you applying for one of these vacant places. While this is a long shot, it is still worth checking this list if only to leave no stone unturned. In order to apply for a vacant place you will need to insert the course code into your C.A.O. application. You should insert the code **above** the offer you have already received but **below** any course that may be more attractive than the course with vacant places. This allows the possibility of still being offered another course on the second round. The vacant places will then be offered when the second round offers are published. The vacant places list on the C.A.O. website should be checked regularly as it is updated daily.

14.2 Private Colleges

Although some of the private colleges operate within the C.A.O. system, they may also accept applications even if a candidate did not include their college/course on the original C.A.O application. In addition 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
- Dorset College, Dublin www.dorset-college.ie
- Grafton College, Dublin www.graftoncollege.ie
- Griffith College, Dublin www.gcd.ie
- IBAT College, Dublin www.ibat.ie
- ICD Business College, Dublin www.icd.ie
- Portobello Institute, Dublin www.portobelloinstitute.ie
- Respond College, Dublin www.respond.ie
- Irish College of Humanities & Applied Sciences, Limerick www.ichas.ie
- Griffith College, Limerick www.gcl.ie

All these colleges charge full fees and are not subsidised by the state. Please check their website for further details.

14.3 Studying in the U.K.

U.C.A.S. is the U.K. equivalent of the C.A.O. system. Check www.ucas.com for the their Clearing System. This is the U.K. equivalent of vacant places. See section 15.

14.4 Trades/Apprenticeship

Solas is the government organisation charge with training for trades. Please check their website for further details www.solas.ie.

14.5 Teagasc

Teagasc is the Agriculture and Food Authority that provides training in the agricultural and foods services. As well as providing course within the C.A.O. system, they also provide course outside this system that do not require points. Please check their website for further details www.teagasc.ie.

14.6 BIM

Irish Sea Fisheries Board is the state agencies with the responsibility for developing the Irish Sea Fishing and Aquaculture industries. They provide training and course outside the C.A.O points system that do not require points. Please check their website for further details www.bim.ie.

14.7 The Defence Forces

The defence forces provide training for the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Entry to their training programme does not require points. Check www.defenceforces.ie for recruitment guidelines.

14.8 An Garda Síochána

The government sanction recruitment to An Garda Síochána from time to time. Check national press or www.publicjobs.ie. It should be remembered that a candidates chances of being recruited are greatly increased by the number of qualifications and courses completed even if these courses are not to degree level, e.g. PLC courses, first aid courses etc.

14.9 Post Leaving Certificate Courses P.L.Cs

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

While the closing date for application will have passed, it might be worth checking your local provider (www.etb.ie) to see if there are unfilled places or places that have been cancelled by those who have received another college offer. These courses do not operate a points system for admission purposes and most courses require passes in five Leaving Certificate subjects. This P.L.C.s is worth considering for the following reasons.

- (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 that can provide entry into your original C.A.O. choice, 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 available.

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. 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.

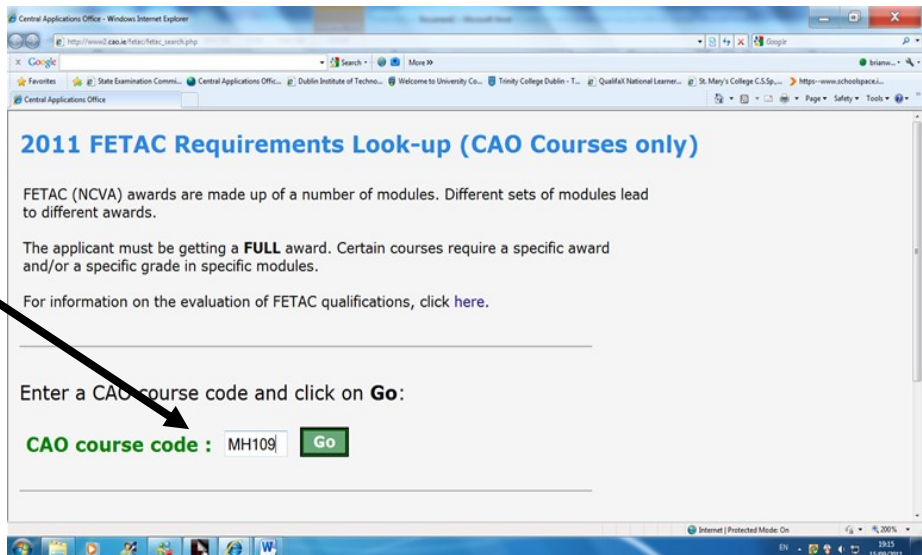
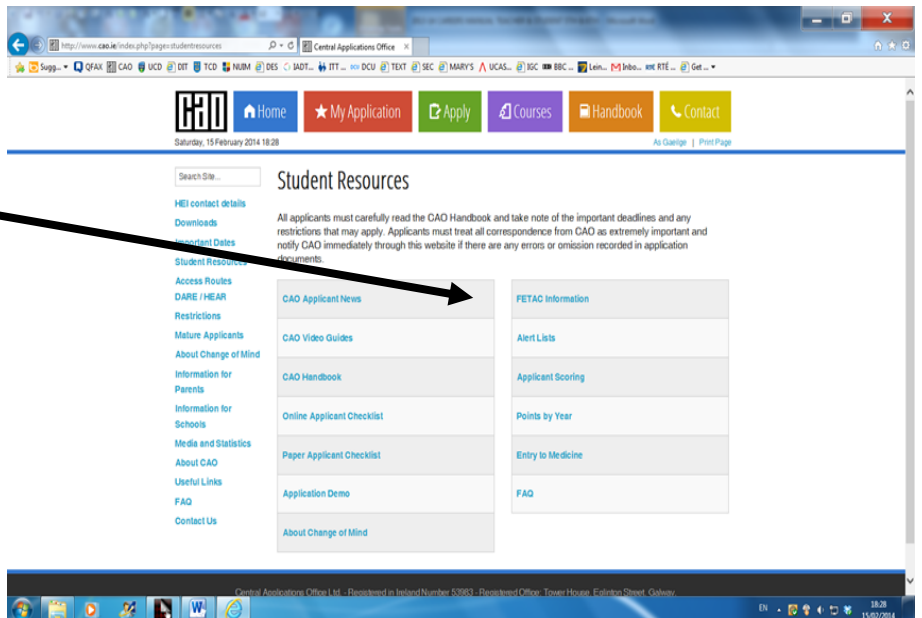
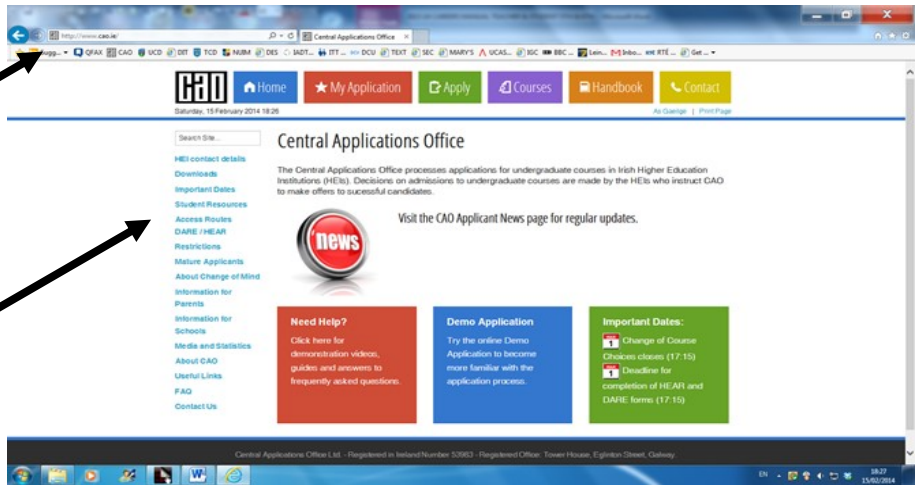
This example shows how to search for the correct P.L.C. that can gain you entry into Media Studies in N.I.U.M. (MH109).

www.cao.ie

Click on
Student Resources

Click on
FETAC Information
Then FETAC Requirements

Key in
'MH109'



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Course	Course Title	Level	Essential FETAC awards	Essential FETAC Modules	Notes (Info)
MH109	Media Studies	8	EMPXX ERPXX ETFPX EPJXX	5 modules at distinction level. The qualification must include a distinction in E20008	GP8/MAN/ONE/-

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.

The screenshot shows the Qualifax website with a navigation menu including Home, Students, Adult learners, Guidance professionals, Parents / Family, News, and NFO. The 'Course Finder' section is highlighted in the left-hand menu. The main content area displays 'Courses in Qualifax' with a search bar and various filters. Arrows point from the text labels to the website elements.

www.qualifax.ie

Student

Course Finder

PLC

**Code
EMPXX**

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

**List of all the EMPXX
courses in Dublin and
which colleges offer the
relevant courses.**

Compete	Tag All	Code	Course	Course Provider	NFQ Level	NFQ Classification
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	EMPXX	Audio Visual Media Production	Dun Laoghaire College of Further Education	Level 5 NFQ	Major
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	EMPXX	Cinematography	Ballyfermot College of Further Education	Level 5 NFQ	Major
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	EMPXX	Commercial Photography	Kilbarrack College of Further Education	Level 5 NFQ	Major
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	EMPXX	Communication Media Production	Colliste Ethelagh College of Further Education	Level 5 NFQ	Major
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	EMPXX	Creative Writing & Cultural Studies	Inchicore CFE	Level 5 NFQ	Major
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	EMPXX	English EFL & Media Studies	Ballsbridge College of Further Education	Level 5 NFQ	Major

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, ETPFX, or EPJXX.

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 has the necessary module/s.
- 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.

14.10 Repeating the Leaving Certificate

Repeating the Leaving Certificate is always an option. There are several forms repeating can take.

- (i) A candidate can repeat all their existing subjects from scratch.
- (ii) A candidate can decide not to repeat the minimum requirements. For example, Maths or Irish or English or a third language can be carried over to the following year- not the points however. Candidates can then take up new subject/s and obtain their total points from these subjects the following year. Minimum requirements- but not combine the points – can be combined from more than one year. Care needs to be taken when selecting any new subject/s as the curriculum can change or, in the case of English and History, vary from year to year. This option is not available to those wishing to do Medicine.
- (iii) A candidate may have obtained enough points in the first sitting of the Leaving Certificate but was not offered a place because they did not meet minimum requirements, for example they may have failed Maths. If this is the case, it is possible to repeat Maths as a single subject and add this to his Leaving Certificate. It is not possible to add the points together. However, if the points for a particular course go up the following year above the number of points obtained the previous year, the course will not be offered to a candidate even if the Maths requirement is met.

When deciding whether to repeat the Leaving Certificate several points to be addressed in calm, balanced and, above all, honest manner.

- Will another year make any difference?
- Did I waste 5th year and not push myself in 6th year and, if so, will I repeat this if I were to sit the Leaving Certificate again.
- Are the results I achieved the best I will manage no matter what happens?
- Am I just no academic and learn by doing rather than through books?
- Would a P.L.C. course or another type of training course or going straight to work, suit who I am?
- Are the points I want simply beyond my reach?
- Was there an issue that was preoccupying me that distracted me from studying?
- Is this issue still there and will I repeat the same mistake/s?
- Was I distracted by an extracurricular activity to the point where I neglected my studies?
- Will this extra-curricular activity still be there if I repeat and distract me in the same way?
- I am that bit older, more mature, and independent and therefore in a position it make a go at repeating?
- Where will I repeat? In the local Education & Training Board College (check www.etb.ie), or in a standard secondary school, which have a repeat Leaving Certificate class, or in a private college?

To address these points you need to be completely honest with yourself. There are levels or degrees of honesty. There is the honesty we show to others that is designed to protect ourselves, to allow others hear what they want to hear, and to prevent ourselves admitting something we don't want to admit. However, there is a truer and more realistic level of honesty. This level of honesty is only reached when we are completely and sincerely honest in our own minds when we know nobody else is listening. Our conscience never lets us pretend to ourselves.

14.11 Going straight into the world of work

Sometimes some people are simply not ready, emotional, psychologically, or cognitively for college life or further study. It may be that what best meets their needs at this stage can be found by going directly into to world of work. The life skills learn can be invaluable and can, at some later stage, result in some becoming ready for further study at some later stage in life.

There are some individuals who are simple not academically able for college. For these students it is the right decision not to go to college. Sometimes these individuals excel in their chosen job/s and use other non-academic attributes to become very successful adults, both personally and professionally.

15. Studying In The U.K. & Europe

With over 38,000 courses in 300 plus institutions, the UK offers the widest possible choice to prospective students. However, applications that are received after 30 June will go directly into Clearing. Clearing is a service available between July and September and is similar to the Vacant Places facility in the CAO system. Universities in the UK typically make offers based on the number of UCAS Tariff points students have gained or in many cases a combination of the tariff points and the achievement of certain grades in subjects in the Leaving Certificate.

What Support is Available?

Irish students get the same treatment as UK students regarding fees. For a typical undergraduate degree, institutions in England can charge up to £9,000 per year in fees. Irish students do not have to pay fees in Scotland. While tuition fees are lower than the rest of the UK, it is important to remember that courses in Scotland typically run for an extra year, meaning additional living costs. Fees in Northern Ireland and Wales for Irish students are in the region of £4,500 due to various grants and assistance available to them. However students can apply for a Tuition Fee Loan to cover their fees. Interest on this loan is linked to the rate of inflation and students do not start repayments until they earn more than £21,000 per year. Students applying through UCAS will automatically receive an application form when they are offered a place. Irish students studying in the UK can apply for the same support from the Irish Government as if they were remaining in Ireland to study and bring it with them to the UK. Finally, most UK universities offer some scholarships and bursaries. More information is available at www.ucas.com/students/studentfinance/

How to Apply?

All applications to universities in the UK should be completed and submitted through UCAS using 'Apply' at www.ucas.com. CUKAS is the online admissions service for music programmes at UK conservatoires but auditions take place in the individual colleges.

EUNiCAS is the European Universities Central Application Support Service. It enables Irish students to apply to up to eight degree programmes, in universities across Europe. At undergraduate level, there are now close to 1000 programmes taught exclusively through English including, Medicine, Dentistry, Vet Medicine, Physiotherapy, Nursing, Psychology, Law, Fine Art, Game Design, Business, International Relations, Engineering, and a wide range of Natural Science programmes. These qualifications are recognised by our own professional bodies, and those in the UK. Invariably, entry requirements are much lower than equivalent programmes here. However, Irish students are reporting that, though the programmes might be easy to get into, you have to work really hard when you get there.

What Support is Available?

There are no tuition fees in the Scandinavian countries, or Germany. In the Netherlands, fees are €1900 but all EU students can avail of a Tuition Fee Loan repayable over 35 years. In Italy, annual fees for the programmes in medicine are between €650 and €3800, fixed with reference to parental income. If students are entitled to a SUSI Maintenance Grant, they can usually take it with them. In some countries there are loans or grants towards living expenses, though these usually depend on students getting part-time jobs.

How to Apply?

Information on new programmes and developments, assistance in organising university visits and alerts on extended deadlines and late vacancies are available on www.eunicas.ie

16. Orientation Day

It is very important that you do not miss your college orientation day. The dates and times will be sent to you by your college. Missing your particular orientation day could mean you missing out on some or all of the following.

- Meeting your lecturers and tutors, and mentors
- Instructions on how to use the library
- Obtain your student card
- Directions to where your lecture and tutorials take place
- Details about sport clubs
- Details on clubs and societies
- Advice about picking subjects or modules
- Details about students union activities
- How to access and use the college I.T. system
- Details on your college's student Charter
- Details on your college's student Code
- Details on your college's I.T. usage policy
- Details on your college's academic regulations
- Details on your college's exam regulations
- Details on what supports services are available if you find yourself in difficulties coping with the demands of college life.
- Details on what supports services are available if you qualified for leaning support and/or need disability support.

17. What Will College Life Be Like?

You are now about to embark on the next adventure in your life – being a college student. However, with the freedom that college has to offer it will also have its challenges and temptations. The first thing you will notice is that college life is very different from being as secondary school student.

- In school you were corrected for being late to school or class. In college nobody will know and there are no disciplinary repercussions.
- In school you had to have an explanation if you were absent. In college, if you miss a day nobody will notice— or will they?
- In school you had to attend all classes, in college you have the power to skip lectures and spend the day in bed, or in the canteen, or in the students' union.
- In school you had the comfort of being in a small class and knowing everybody there. In college, you may be in a lecture hall with 100+ students, only a fraction of whom you know.
- In school your time was structured from the start of the day until the end, in college you will have gaps in your timetable and the freedom to come and go as you please.
- In school you were reminded to do the work needed and if you did not produce the work, this was followed up. In college you will be told once what to do and then it will be left up to you to decide if you will do it or not.
- In school you felt comfortable asking a teacher to redo something you did not understand, in college you may feel you are on your own.

You are now an adult. One of the great things about being an adult is that you have the freedom to make your own choices. Indeed, being an adult also means that you have the maturity to know – without being told – what are the right choices and what are the wrong choices. In addition, adults have to accept and live with the consequences of the wrong choice. Therefore, if you make the wrong (easy) choices, and do not engage academically in college life there are consequences

- If you do not engage academically you may have to repeat your end of year exams during the summer months. While this is bad enough, it may also result in you not being able to do as much part time work during the summer and therefore, earn less cash. Also, you may not be able to go on the summer trip with your mates. In addition, some Colleges operate a system whereby if you repeat an exam and achieve a good grade such as 80%, this will be recorded as a simple pass mark as, given that you had to repeat, it is not considered to a true reflection of your record.
- If you do not engage academically you may have to repeat the whole year and accept that you will be left behind by your mates.
- If you do not engage academically you may have to repeat the whole year and you will have to accept that you will have to pay tuition fees as well as registration fees.
- If you do not engage academically your grades may not be high enough to qualify for any work experience programme organised by your college. They may take into account the fact you have had to repeat an exam.
- If you do not engage academically your grades are not high enough you may not qualify for the study abroad option organised by your college. . They may take into account the fact you have had to repeat an exam.
- If you do not engage academically in your first set of exams and obtain the equivalent of a D's or C's. This is may not good enough. To progress from 1st to 2nd year you have to (i) cover 60 credits of learning **and** (ii) obtain a GPA of 2.0. If you are only getting D's or C's your overall average at the end of the year may fall to 1.92. This may result in you not being able to progress to 2nd year and have to repeat modules or repeat the full year.

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- If you do not engage academically you may not achieve a 2.1 or above in your degree. This may prevent you qualifying for a Masters at some stage in the future. Is your final degree mark dependent on some of your 1st and 2nd year results? Do they award 1st or 2.1's to those who have had to repeat an exam? Also, some employers have a cut of point of a 2.1 for those call for a job interview.
- If you do not engage academically and if you are doing a level 7/6 course, and your grades are not high enough you may not qualify for entry into a level 8 degree. Remember, in the labour market you will be competing with others who have a level 8 degree or above.
- Some colleges operate modules that have marks going for attendance. Also, in other cases lectures and/or tutorials may be in small groups where your non-attendance will be notice.
- If you do not engage academically you may simply drop out! Will you be one of these?

Non- Progression Rates 2010-11			
	Level 8	Level 7	Level 6
Dublin City University	9%	-----	-----
University College Dublin	7%	-----	-----
University College Cork	8%	-----	-----
NUI Galway	9%	-----	-----
University of Limerick	11%	-----	-----
Maynooth University	10%	-----	-----
Trinity College Dublin	8%	-----	-----
N.C.A.D.	7%	-----	-----
Mater Die Institute of Education	6%	-----	-----
Mary Immaculate College	5%	-----	-----
St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra	2%	-----	-----
Athlone I.T.	18%	24%	24%
I.T. Blanchardstown	20%	32%	29%
Cork I.T.	15%	22%	22%
I.T. Carlow	13%	23%	28%
Dundalk I.T.	17%	33%	21%
I.A.D.T. Dun Laoghaire	14%	32%	19%
D.I.T.	19%	32%	15%
Galway-Mayo I.T.	24%	31%	34%
Limerick I.T.	18%	28%	28%
Letterkenny I.T.	22%	33%	19%
I.T. Sligo	20%	28%	38%
I.T. Tallaght	19%	24%	31%
I.T. Tralee	17%	22%	21%
Waterford I.T.	15%	24%	26%
<i>Source: A Study of Progression in Irish Higher Education Institutes, A Report by the Higher Education Authority</i>			

When looking at these figures don't console yourself with the fact that your college has a lower drop-out rate than others and that you therefore have less of a chance of dropping out. The number of students that have dropped out will not determine if you do so. The only thing that can influence if you don't finish your degree is you and your work or lack of it.

One of the other issues you have to cope with is independent learning. In school you had one textbook that contained all you needed to know. Also, the teacher told you what to learn and what you needed to know for your exams. In college, what you are told in lectures is only a tiny fraction of what you will be expected to learn. The majority of your learning will have to take place outside the lecture hall. Coping with that freedom, independence, and organising yourself will be a challenge. This independent learning will be an integral and essential part of this challenge and indeed, will determine your success or otherwise in college.

How much time do you have to give to independent learning? Some courses will have about 10 hours of class contact time while others may have 28 hours. If you are one of those with less contact hours it is a very big mistake to think you have less work to do than others. If you are in a course with a larger number of contact hours you should aim to do 1 hour of work on your own for every 1 hour of class contact time. If you are in a course with a lesser number of contact hours you have to bring the amount of work you do on your own up to the same level. This may mean you have to put in 2 hours of your own work for every one hour of class contact time. Your lectures will have given you more detailed information about this. No matter what course you are in, this will have to increase closer to exam times.

Relying on the lecture notes you have taken will not be sufficient for you to pass your exams and eventually graduate. After you have taken lecture notes, a considerable amount of extra reading is now necessary. This extra reading must bring you outside the comfort zone of lecture notes and expand and deepen your knowledge of your subject area. Once you have used your reading to add and build upon what was covered in lectures you will then be faced with another challenge. The next step involves you tackling the assignments given to you. These assignments require you to show and demonstrate that you have expanded, through your reading, the areas discussed in lectures. In addition, you will have to demonstrate an ability to assimilate, analyse, and evaluate the material. You will then be required to illustrate all of these skills obtained by writing your assignments. For those of you in a more technical or scientific-based course the same applies with a slight difference in how you are asked to show the skills you have learned.

There is no one correct way to master these skills. This will be a new experience for you and it will take time to master this new way of learning. You will have to *learn how to learn* or more precisely, learn the optimum way for you to learn. The starting point might be to see what did not work in the past and examine why it did not work. In addition you should also look at what has worked in the past and analyse why it worked. However, you will then have to go to the next level and expand and add to your learning skills.

To summarise, you have to (i) find your own way to take lecture notes, (ii) find your own way to deepen your knowledge through reading extra material, (iii) find your own way to assimilate, analyse and evaluate the material, and (iv) find your own way to show all of this learning and skills through writing your assignments. You may sometimes struggle with this new way of learning, but college is meant to be a challenge, otherwise you will not gain from it. There is no person that can tell you how to get this right. If you wait for another person to teach you how to do this you may not survive. This solution is always internal, never external.

Eventually you will discover that at the start of the course you were in a position of not even knowing what you did not know. This will move onto you being aware of what you do not know. You will then learn some of what you did not know. Eventually, you will come to the realisation that the process of learning will never end. You might want to read that bit again!

Make sure to engage with the lecturers and tutors. If they know you and are familiar with your work commitment and ethic then they will speak up for you in an exam board meeting when they are discussing your results. The corollary is also true; if they don't know you then they will stay silent when your case is being discussed.

You can enjoy college life and get that college qualification

Important Dates August/September 2015

Aug. 2015		
Wed. 12 th	Results published	Available in your school or on-line at www.examinations.ie
Thurs. 13 th		
Fri. 14 th		
Mon. 17 th	1 st round CAO offers published	Published on-line from 6.00 a.m. at www.cao.ie . Also due by post that morning.
Tue. 18 th	Script review deadline	Return form received with results to the school by this date.
Wed. 19 th		
Thurs. 20 th		
Fri. 21 st		
Mon. 24 th	Final acceptance of 1 st round offers	Deadline 5.15 p.m.
Tue. 25 th		
Wed. 26 th		
Thurs. 27 th	2 nd round CAO offers published	Published on-line from 6.00 a.m. at www.cao.ie . Also due by post that morning
Fri. 28 th	Script review	Session 1 – 6.00 p.m. – 9.00 p.m.
Sat. 29 th	Script review	Session 2 – 9.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m. & Session 3 – 2.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.
Sept. 2015		The school will allocate you one of these sessions
Mon. 31 st		
Tue. 1 st	Recheck deadline	State Exams Commission (Athlone) must receive recheck applications THROUGH YOUR SCHOOL
Wed. 2 nd	Final acceptance for 2 nd round offers	After the 2 nd round offers have been processed there will be a small number of offers by post/phone until mid-Oct.
Thurs. 3 rd		
Fri. 4 th		
Mon 7 th	College registration	Registration may start for some college this week.
Mon 14 th	College registration	Registration may start for some college this week.
		If a student misses registration they may not be able to select subject/modules they want.
Mid-Oct.	Recheck results published	Sent to school and CAO. The CAO office will contact students if there are any changes in offers.
	CAO Number →	
	CAO account number generated when application was made.	
	Examination Number →	
	From State Exams Commission used when sitting exams.	



Institiúid na gComhairleoirí Treorach
INSTITUTE OF GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS

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**

**Study - Learning To Learn
A Parents' Guide for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th & 6th Year**

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

**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**

**The Results Are Out – What Now
A Guide For Parents & Students**

**Allowing Young People Grieve
When Your Child Loses A Friend - A Guide For A Parents**

**Allowing Yourself To Grieve
When You Lose A Friend - A Guide For Young People**