

Points of Information May 2012

CAO

Sixth years have this week received a letter from CAO containing a statement of application record and change of mind forms. Please do not assume that everything on the application record is correct. If there are any errors or omissions, contact CAO immediately.

OFFER OF PLACES

Offers may be viewed and an acceptance of an offer may be made online at www.cao.ie
Round One offers will be available on the CAO website from 6.00am on Monday 20th August.
The Reply Date for acceptance will be 5.15pm on Monday 27th August.

CONTACTING CAO AT THE OFFER STAGE

As usual, it will be very difficult to contact CAO by telephone at the offer stage. Enquiries should be made by email using the Contact Us facility on the CAO website. All sixth years have been provided with an Enquiry Form which they should use if they wish to submit an enquiry by post.

FIFTH YEARS-UCAS

A number of fifth years have started the process of applying to colleges in the UK. A lot of work is required, in particular on the Personal Statement and Work Experience. Please see Ms. Fallon for details on research to be completed.

Student Grant Applications 2012/13

The student grant is the main source of financial help available from the Irish State for students in full-time Post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLCs) and full-time higher education undergraduate courses. Support is available to eligible students in most colleges in Ireland as well as eligible Irish students in many colleges in Northern Ireland, the UK and other EU States. For eligible students, the grant is there to help with the various costs of participating in further or higher education. Students on part-time courses, access or foundation courses (in higher education institutions) and short courses are not eligible to apply for a student grant. Family and/or personal income is a key factor that will be assessed when you apply for a student grant but there are also some other conditions. ***Studentfinance.ie*** can help you to assess whether you are eligible and guide you in starting the process. In all cases, the official decision on eligibility is of course made by the grant-awarding bodies.

If you think you are eligible for the student grant, you should apply for it as soon as possible **(the application process for 2012-13 is not yet open)**. You do not have to wait until you receive an offer of a place or enrol in college. Only when your application has been completed in full and submitted to the grant-awarding authority can your eligibility be determined.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO STUDENT GRANT AS A RESULT OF BUDGET 2012

Three measures were announced in Budget 2012 relating to the student grant schemes:

A: Reduction in overall rates of grant

- A reduction of 3% was applied to the rates of all student grants effective from 1 January 2012

This reduction applies to all existing grant holders and to new grant holders alike.

C: Student Contribution

- The student contribution is being increased by €250 to €2,250 from the 2012-13 academic year. All undergraduate students covered by the Free Fees scheme who are eligible for means-tested student support will continue to have the student contribution paid on their behalf in addition to receiving any maintenance grant and tuition fee grant to which they are entitled.

How to Apply?

A new **ONLINE ONLY** grant applications system is being introduced for 2012/13. All new applications will be made online to a single awarding authority, Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) through www.studentfinance.ie.

When can I make my grant application?

The details of the 2012 Student Grant Scheme are due to be announced in May and the SUSI online application system will be available from that date. You can continue to check www.studentfinance.ie for information and updates in the meantime.

How do I make my grant application?

As soon as the online application system opens for the 2012/13 academic year, you will be able to register online with SUSI and then complete the online application form. The online application facility will be available through www.studentfinance.ie. **Remember, it will NOT be necessary to have received an offer of a college place or to be enrolled in college in order to apply online.**

How will I submit my supporting documentation?

Following initial assessment of your application, if eligible, you will receive by post a provisional grant approval and a personalised list of the supporting documents you will need to return to complete your application. Completed documentary evidence packs (photocopies of the documents, not originals) should be returned as soon as possible in the envelope provided to you.

When you return all the necessary supporting documents SUSI will process your application to

award stage, subject to confirmation of your acceptance on an approved course.

When will I receive a final decision from SUSI?

When you confirm acceptance of a place on an approved course (usually late August/early September), your grant is awarded and payment will be made on a monthly basis (subject to confirmation of attendance) directly into your designated Irish bank account.

POINTS OF INFORMATION MARCH 2012

» PLC Interviews

Best of luck to sixth years involved in PLC interviews over the next few weeks.

» UCD Summer School

Reminder to fifth years intending to apply for the UCD Unilife Summer School to send in applications.

Seize the opportunity to experience university life with UCD's UniLife Summer School for secondary school students entering 6th Year in September 2012. Attend real lectures and tutorials, given by some of UCD's top academic staff. Learn about further study and career opportunities after your undergraduate degree. Find out how UCD graduates succeeded in the real world, and make use of UCD's world-class teaching and learning facilities.

UCD UniLife Summer School is aimed at students nearing the end of their second-level education, who know what discipline they want to pursue at university but don't yet know what path to take through their degree. For example, your heart may be set on Science, but you may be caught between Botany or Physics, Biochemistry or Zoology. UCD UniLife will help you finalise your decision by giving you hands-on experience with your discipline of choice.

For further information on available academic disciplines and details on how to apply please visit www.ucd.ie/myucd/unilife.

» Easter Revision Programme-Wexford Campus

Five places have been made available to sixth year students. This programme is designed to offer extra support in English, Maths and Irish for the Leaving Cert. Priority has been given to students who have applied for the IT Carlow Access Programme and students who fit the socio-economic profile for the Access Programme and who may be considering courses at the Wexford Campus.

» UCAS

UCAS Extra is available for applicants who have used all five choices on their application but are holding no offers. Extra gives those applicants the chance to add additional choices, one at a time before Clearing. Last year over 7,000 applicants obtained a place in higher education through Extra.

Courses that have places available are indicated on Course Search by the annotation 'x' after a course title. More information for applicants is available at www.ucas.com/students/offers/extra where they can watch the UCAStv video 'How to use Extra'.

» Sports Scholarships

Application forms available in my office or can be downloaded.

» **ACCESS Programme – Wexford Campus**

Two places have been filled for the Wexford Campus Access Programme.

This scheme is aimed at students who have academic potential for a third level course but who for reasons of socio-economic disadvantage, may not achieve the adequate CAO points for admission to the Wexford Campus.

The criteria for eligibility under the scheme will include the following:

1. parental income
2. a high level of motivation on the part of the applicant
3. The minimum entry requirements for the course applied for.

Students who are successful under this scheme will be offered a place and the benefit of ongoing financial, social and academic support from the Access office.

A thought for March..

“Use what talents you possess. The woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those who sang best.”

Ms. M. Fallon,

Guidance Counsellor.

POINTS OF INFORMATION JANUARY 2012

» **UCD Ad Astra Academy**

UCD has announced details of their Ad Astra Academy scholarships. The Academy offers unique opportunities to help motivate exceptionally talented students to meet and exceed their expectations. The UCD Ad Astra Academy Scholars are recognised by the University as an exceptional group of high-achieving and highly talented students.

1. Ad Astra Academic Scholars-have demonstrated exceptional ability in their studies
2. Ad Astra Elite Athletes-in their sporting endeavours, many performing at national or international level
3. Ad Astra Performing Arts Scholars-in their demonstration of real talent and commitment to their performance

The UCD Ad Astra Academy’s scholarships provide students with academic and other supports to ensure that they can achieve their full potential in their talent, in their studies and in their personal development.

Information is available at adastraacademy@ucd or from Ms Fallon.

» **College Campus Accommodation**

Here is a quick guide:

- » Online Applications for Campus Accommodation has opened for NUI Maynooth. Sixth years wishing to live on campus are advised to register as soon as possible.
- » DCU will be accepting applications from March 5th.
- » NUI Galway advises students wishing to book a place in any of its 10 student residences to do so as early as possible.
- » TCD takes applications for its residences in August, after the CAO offers are made.
- » UCC opens for online applications about the middle of February.
- » UCD opens applications at the beginning of May and accommodation is allocated on a first come, first served basis, after offers are made.
- » UL will be accepting bookings from February and places are allocated on a first come, first served basis.
- » WIT accepts online applications and accommodation is allocated on a first come, first served basis.

» **CAO Applications**

A reminder to Sixth Years that the early closing date deadline of January 20th is fast approaching. A particular reminder to students wishing to apply under the HEAR/DARE programmes that they must indicate on their forms that they wish to do so.

» **Speakers**

UCD- 18th January

Pontifical University, Maynooth-25th January

Gainford Academy, Wexford-26th January

Exemptions

A reminder to Sixth years with exemptions in Irish/Foreign language to contact the admissions offices of the Colleges they are applying to. In the case of NUI Colleges, contact the NUI at www.nui.ie

Points of Information November & December 2011

Speakers

- » WIT-29TH Nov
- » NUI Galway-30th Nov

Open Days

- » Trinity-2nd and 3rd Dec

» WIT-13th Dec

DATS

DATS testing will take place for all Fourth Years on Wednesday 7th and Thursday 8th December. Results will be posted home in 3/4 weeks.

CAO-EXEMPTIONS

If a sixth year student is seeking exemptions from minimum entry requirements then she should contact the admissions offices of the colleges she is applying to (or, in the case of NUI colleges contact the NUI, see www.nui.ie for details).

CAO-REGISTRATION

Reminder to any sixth years still to register for the CAO to do so over the Christmas!

Happy holidays from the Guidance and Counselling Department!

Points of Information October 2011

» 2012 Application literature

The 2012 application literature has been distributed to 6th years. CAO Applications may be made online from 3rd November at 12 noon.

Students submitting an online application before 5.15pm on 20th January 2012 may avail of the discounted application fee of €30.

» Supplementary Information Form-disability or specific learning difficulty

Students with a disability or specific learning difficulty will be able to complete their own section of the form when they apply online. Students who wish to be considered for the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) scheme must complete this form and indicate on the form that they wish to be considered for DARE. They will then print the sections to be completed by the school and by a consultant and return these to CAO. Please consult the CAO Handbook for details. A guide and instructions will be available on the CAO website in November.

» Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)

Students who are socio-economically disadvantaged may complete a special section of the online application form and submit certain documentation to be considered for supplementary entry and post-entry supports. Supplementary entry means entering a course on lower points than was required in the usual competition for places. Please consult the CAO Handbook for details.

A guide and instructions will be available on the CAO website in November. The website www.accesscollege.ie is also a good source of information.

» Upcoming Open Days

NUI Maynooth-25th and 26th Nov

University of Limerick-14th and 15th Oct

WIT-13th Dec

UCD-12th Nov

» Upcoming Speakers

NUI Maynooth-5th Oct

Mary Immaculate College, Limerick-20th Oct

» HPAT-25TH February 2012.

See www.medentry-hpat.ie for more information.

» Rotary Ireland

It is that time of year again for the Rotary Youth Leadership Development competition. Any fifth years interested, please see Ms Fallon.

POINTS OF INFORMATION SEPTEMBER 2011

OPEN DAYS

- » UCC- Saturday, 8th October. A timetable for the day can be downloaded at www.ucc.ie/opensdays. There is no need to register to attend.
- » NUIG- Friday, 30th September & Saturday, 1st October. Information available at www.nuigalway.ie/opensdays.
- » Shannon College of Hotel Management- Friday, 14th October.

SPEAKERS

- » NUI Maynooth-5th October
- » DCU- 15th November
- » UCC- 23rd November

HIGHER OPTIONS

- » The Higher Options Careers Exhibition is taking place on 14th, 15th and 16th September in the RDS. Students attending will need a letter from the school. The letter is available at Reception.

UCAS

- » Ms. Fallon is meeting sixth years interested in applying to colleges in the UK. Please drop your name into the appointment box if you have not already done so.

NEW WEBSITES

- » www.Courses4u.ie
- » www.learnabroad.ie