



The Results Are Out, What Now?

A Guide For Parents & Students

**The Institute of Guidance
Counsellors**



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Contents

1. Account Numbers & Passwords	2
2. How Do I Get My Results?	2
3. How Will I React?	3
4. How Do I Calculate My Points?	3
5. How Are the Offers & Points Decided?	5
6. Round Two	8
7. How Do I Receive and Accept an Offer?	8
8. I Have the Points But Did Not Get An Offer	9
9. What Is Random Selection?	9
10. Viewing & Rechecking Scripts	9
10.1 Viewing A Script	9
10.2 How Do I View A Script	10
10.3 What Can I Do If I Find An Error?	12
10.4 How Do I Apply For A Recheck?	12
10.5 Should I Get A Recheck?	13
10.6 When and How Do I Know If I Get an Up-grade?	14
10.7 What Can I Do If I Don't Get an Up-Grade?	14
11. I Have Accepted My CAO Offer, What Happens Now?	15
12. What Happens If I Drop Out of College?	15
13. If I Start A Course, Can I Transfer?	15
14. I Want to Defer My Offer	16
15. What Are My Options If I Have No Offer?	16
15.1 Available/Vacant Places	16
15.2 Private Colleges	17
15.3 Trade/Apprenticeships	17
15.4 Teagasc	17
15.5 The Defence Forces	18
15.6 An Garda Síochána & Emergency Services	18
15.7 Post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLCs)	18
15.8 Repeating the Leaving Certificate	21
15.9 Going Straight into The World of Work	22
16. Studying in the U.K. & Europe	23
17. College Orientation Day	24
 List of Subject Marked on Computer	 25
Award of marks for answering through Irish	26
Frequently Asked Questions	27
Important Dates	28

1. Account Numbers & Passwords

You will need the following numbers and passwords.

1.	Examination Number ¹	
2.	Candidate Self-Service Portal Password (CSSP) ²	
3.	CAO Account Number ³	
4.	CAO Password ⁴	

Candidate Self-Service Portal (CSSP) allows

- Access to exam results.
- Access to component marks in subjects e.g. oral/practical mark.
- Apply to view scripts in school.
- Apply to view scripts on-line.
- Apply for a recheck.
- Access appeal results.

2. How Do I Get My Results?

Your results are available on-line from 10.00 a.m. on examinations.ie using Candidate Self-service portal (CSSP) using your exam number and self-service Portal Password.

Results will state the level and the grade received.

Level will be listed as follow

Higher/Ard Level will be listed as: **H/A.**
Ordinary/Gnáth Level will be listed as: **O/G.**
Foundation/Bonn Level will be listed as: **F/B.**

Grades will be listed as follows.

Percentage	Grade
90% - 100%	1
80% - 89%	2
70% - 79%	3
60% - 69%	4
50% - 59%	5
40% - 49%	6
30% - 39%	7
0% - 29%	8

¹ Given to student by school.

² Created by student when a Candidate Self-Service Portal (CSSP) account is opened in examinations.ie

³ Created by student when CAO account is opened.

⁴ Created by student when CAO account is opened.

Schools do not have access to 2,3, 4. If lost, students should contact CAO/SEC.

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 CAO 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 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.

Percentage	Honours Level Grade	Honours Level Points	Ordinary Level Grade	Ordinary Level Points
90% - 100%	H1	100	O1	56
80% - 89%	H2	88	O2	46
70% - 79%	H3	77	O3	37
60% - 69%	H4	66	O4	28
50% - 59%	H5	56	O5	20
40% - 49%	H6	46	O6	12
30% - 39%	H7	37	O7	0
0% - 29%	H8	0	O8	0
LCVP	Points			
Distinction	66			
Merit	46			
Pass	28			

HONOURS MATHS

All students achieving a H6 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 i.e. the same points are awarded for a H1 as a H6. There are no bonus points for a H7. **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	Honours	H4	66		Irish	Honours	H3	77
English	Ordinary	O1	56		English	Honours	H2	88
Mathematics	Honours	H5	56+25= 81		Mathematics	Honours	H6	46+25=71
French	Honours	H3	77		French	Honours	H2	88
Biology	Honours	H4	66		Biology	Honours	H1	100
Geography	Ordinary	O2	46		Geography	Honours	H1	100
History	Honours	H3	77		History	Honours	H3	77
Top 6 in bold			= 423		Top 6 in bold			= 530
Maths included					Maths NOT included			

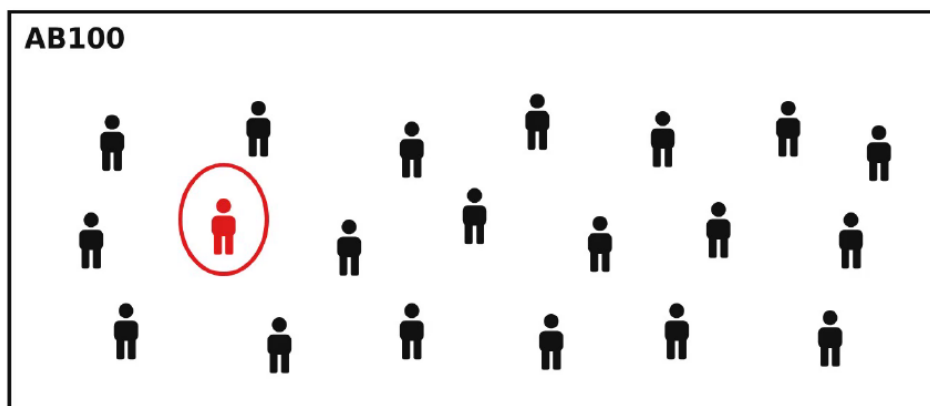
When counting the Leaving Certificate point for medicine, points above 550 are adjusted to a maximum of 565 points. Therefore, for every 5 points above 550 add 1 point.

5. How Are the Offers & Points Decided?

The CAO, the Central Applications Office – based in Galway – administers admissions to Higher Education Institutes throughout the country for entry into Level 8 and Level 7 and Level 6 courses. A CAO application consists of two separate sections. How the CAO system works is best understood in a series of steps.

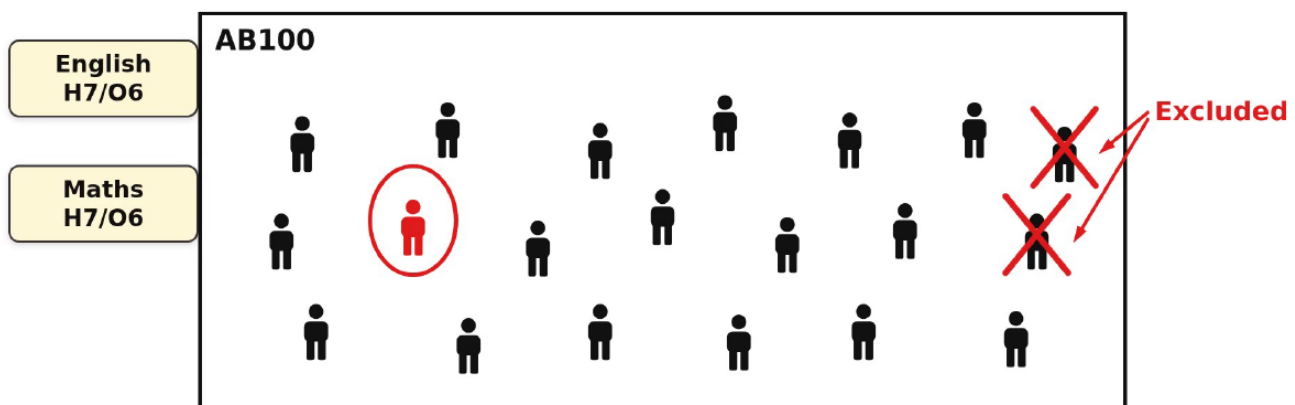
Step 0: Prior to the Results Being Published

This diagram represents all the students who have applied for course AB100. Prior to the Leaving Certificate results being published, all applicants are placed randomly in a file with no particular order. Our student is circled.



Step 1: Results Are Published

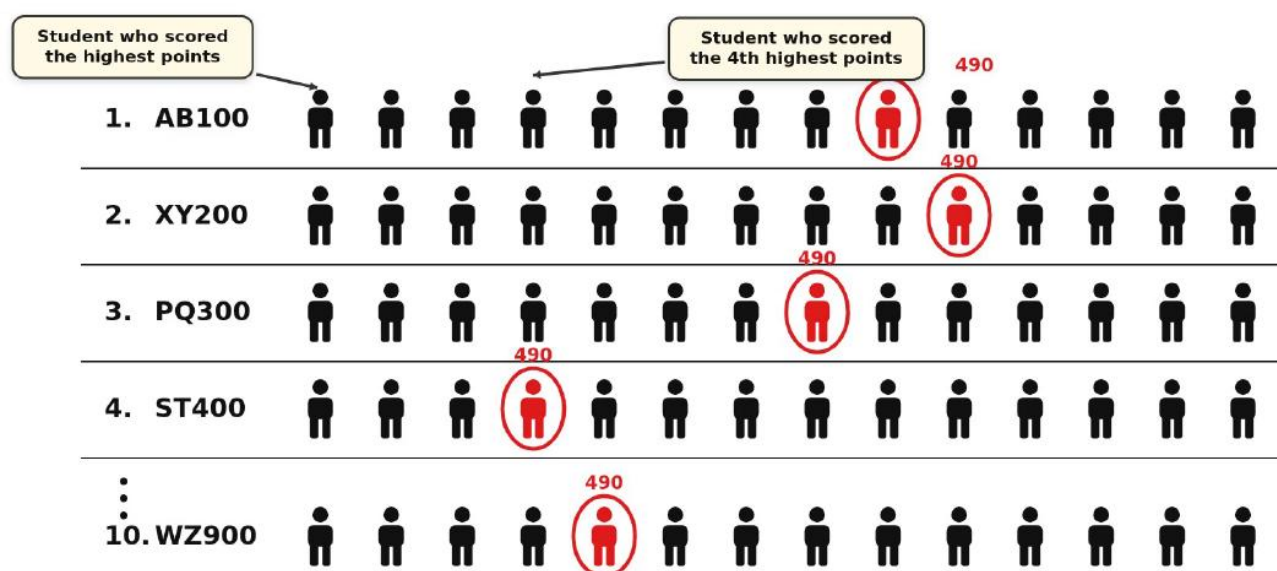
The day the results are published by the State Examinations Commission (SEC), the results are made available to students through their Candidate Self Service Portal, which is set up by the student on the SEC website in December or January of sixth year. The results are also sent to the CAO office in Galway. The results are not yet scanned for points. Instead, in Step 1, each student's results are scanned to ensure that they meet the minimum subject and grade requirements for the courses on their CAO application.



For example, course AB100 requires students to have a minimum of H7 or O6 in English and a H7 or O6 in Mathematics. In this example, one student failed English and one student failed Mathematics. Therefore, both are excluded from being offered a place on this course, regardless of the points they have achieved in their Leaving Certificate.

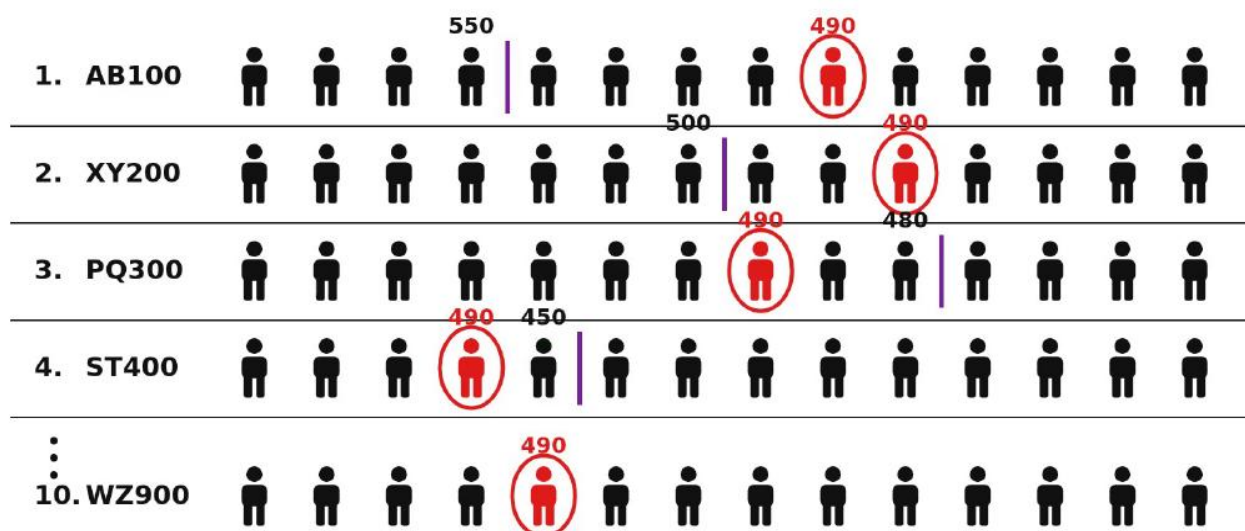
Step 2: Queuing Students in Order of Points

The total Leaving Certificate points of the remaining students are then calculated and these students are then ranked. The student who obtained the highest number of points is placed at the top of the queue and the student who obtained the 4th highest number of points is placed fourth in the queue, and so on. This process is carried out for all the candidate's course choices. Our student has applied for AB100 as their 1st preference, XY200 as their second preference, PQ300 as their 3rd preference, and ST400 as their 4th preference. As our student scored 490 points in their Leaving Certificate, their position in each queue is circled in red in this diagram.



Step 3: Cut-off Points

The next step is to establish a cut-off point, determined by the number of places available on each course. In the first preference course, AB100, there are four places available. In the second preference course, XY200, there are seven places available. In the third preference course, PQ300, there are ten places available. In the fourth preference course, ST400, there are five places available. This diagram shows that our student is outside the cut-off point for their 1st preference AB100, and for their 2nd preference XY200, but is within the cut-off point for their 3rd preference PQ300, and their 4th preference ST400.



The points obtained by the last student offered a place on the course is where the points that are published originate.

Course AB100 required 550 points, the points obtained by the last student to be offered a place on this course.

Course XY200 has a cut-off point of 500, the points obtained by the last student to be offered a place on this course.

Course PQ300 has a cut-off point of 480, the points obtained by the last student to be offered a place on this course.

Course ST400 has a cut-off point of 450, the points obtained by the last student to be offered a place on this course.

Our student obtained 490 points.

It is worth noting that Steps 1 to 3 take place over a three to four-day period after the Leaving Certificate results are published. The day the Round 1 offers are made, the cut-off points for each course are published on the CAO website that afternoon. It is important to understand that the cut-off points are published on the day the CAO offers are made, that is, three to four days after the Leaving Certificate results are published. So, when someone says 'that course is 500 points' they should actually say, 'that course was 500 points last year. This point emphasises the need to fill in the CAO application form in order of preference, regardless of the points required for a course.

Step 4: An Offer Is Made

The CAO system will now offer the student a place on their third preference course, PQ300.

Honours Degree: Level 8	
1.	AB100
2.	XY200
3.	PQ300 Offered
4.	ST400
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Even though the student has enough points for their fourth preference course, ST400, they will not be offered a place on this course, and the student cannot request a place on this fourth preference course, even though they have the points required. This is because, when the student placed PQ300 as their third preference and ST400 as their fourth preference, they indicated that they prefer PQ300 to ST400. This point further emphasises that courses should be listed in order of preference and not in order of points. To emphasise this point even further, all courses from the fourth preference down are deleted from their application.

Honours Degree: Level 8	
1.	AB100
2.	XY200
3.	PQ300 Offered
4.	Deleted
5.	Deleted
6.	Deleted
7.	Deleted
8.	Deleted
9.	Deleted
10.	Deleted

Steps 1 to 3 were applied to the Level 8 section of a student's CAO application, and our student was offered their third preference, PQ300. At the same time, the same steps were applied separately and independently to the Level 7/6 section of the student's CAO application. Our student was deemed eligible for their second preference, AB600, in their Level 7/6 section. Therefore, on the day of the Round 1 CAO offers, if eligible, our student will receive two offers: PQ300 and AB600. Our student can only accept one offer and has several days to inform the CAO which offer they wish to accept.

Honours Degree: Level 8	Ordinary Degree/Higher Certificate: Level 7/Level 6 (Mixed)
1. AB100	1. FQ700
2. XY200	2. AB600 Offered
3. PQ300 Offered	3. Deleted
4. Deleted	4. Deleted
5. Deleted	5. Deleted
6. Deleted	6. Deleted
7. Deleted	7. Deleted
8. Deleted	8. Deleted
9. Deleted	9. Deleted
10. Deleted	10. Deleted

It is worth emphasising again that preferences four to ten on Level 8 and preferences three to ten on Level 7/6 are deleted from the student's CAO account and will never be offered. This again emphasises the need to place courses in order of preference.

Step 4: An Offer Is Made

This diagram now shows the information that remains in our student's CAO account.

Honours Degree: Level 8	Ordinary Degree/Higher Certificate: Level 7/Level 6 (Mixed)
1. AB100	1. FQ700
2. XY200	2. AB600 Offered
3. PQ300 Offered	3.

The student now has to decide which offer to accept, PQ300 or AB600.

Just because PQ300 is a Level 8 does not automatically mean it is a better course than the Level 6 AB600. For example, AB100 might be a General Business course and XY200 might be a General Business course, and PQ300 might be a Marketing course while AB600 might be a General Business course.

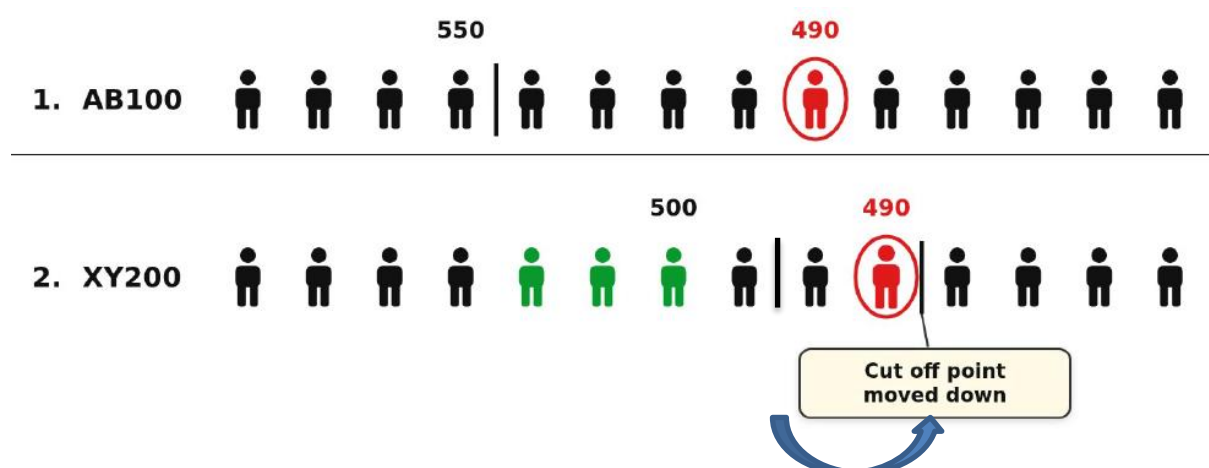
Honours Degree: Level 8	Ordinary Degree/Higher Certificate: Level 7/Level 6 (Mixed)
1. AB100 - Business	1. FQ700 - Business
2. XY200 - Business	2. AB600 - Business
3. PQ300 - Marketing	3.

This Level 6 Business course is a two-year Higher Certificate Business course which, on completion, allows the student to transfer to 3rd year of AB100 and convert their Level 6 into a full Level 8 qualification. This may be a preferable option than doing PQ300 - Marketing.

Our student has several days to inform the CAO which Round 1 course offer they are accepting, PQ300 or AB600. Once the closing date for Round 1 offers has passed, Round 2 offers commence a few days later.

Step 5: Round 2 Offers

After the closing date for acceptance of Round 1 offers has passed, the CAO starts what is known as Round 2 offers. This consists of offered places not accepted in Round 1. For example, in Round 1, four students were offered a place on AB100. Seven students were offered a place on XY200.



If three students decline their offer of a place on XY200, the cut-off point from Round 1 is moved down three places, making our student eligible for a Round 2 offer of a place on this course. Our student will now receive a Round 2 offer of a place on XY200. At this point our

student can either accept the new Round 2 offer, or keep the original Round 1 offer they accepted.

Therefore, if a student accepts PQ300 in Round 1, they are still eligible to be considered for AB100, XY200, and FQ700 in Round 2. In addition, if a student accepts AB600 in Round 1, they are still eligible to be considered for AB100, XY200, and FQ700 in Round 2. So, students can only move up their preference list but never down it. This is another reason to fill in courses in order of preference.

Honours Degree: Level 8	Ordinary Degree/Higher Certificate: Level 7/Level 6 (Mixed)
1. AB100	1. FQ700
2. XY200	2. AB600 Offered
3. PQ300 Offered	3.

It is important to note that a student should not decline a Round 1 offer in the hope that they will get a higher preference offer in Round 2. If a student declines both Round 1 offers and does not receive a Round 2 offer, they cannot ask for their original Round 1 offer once the acceptance date for Round 1 has passed. There is also a 3rd, 4th, and 5th Round of offers until the end of September for a very small number of courses and to a very small number of students.

7. How Do I Receive and Accept an Offer?

You can log into your C.A.O account and view the offer/s and accept one offer only using the details in the 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,

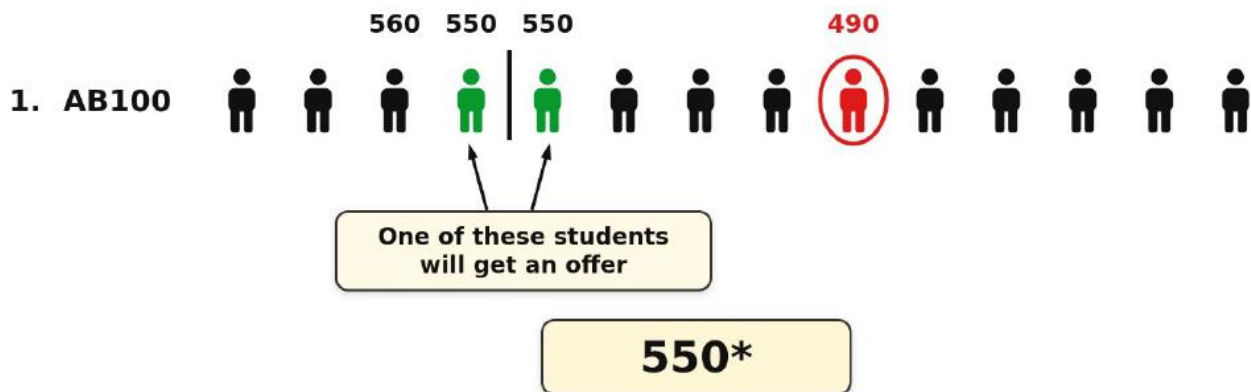
8. I Have the Points But Did Not Receive An Offer

- Check that you have the minimum requirements. You will not be offered a course if you do not have the minimum requirements even if you have the necessary points.
- If you have an exemption, e.g. Irish and/or a third language check that the CAO office has been informed.
- If you have the points and did not receive an offer, it may have been that random selection was used.
- If you have the points and did not receive an offer, it may be that there is an omission or error in the details the CAO have e.g. Leaving Certificate exam number.

9. What Is Random Selection?

Random Selection

If a course has 4 places to offer and the 4th and 5th students all have the same number of points, random selection is applied. This is where one of these two students is randomly selected electronically and offered a place on the course.



When the points required for each course are published, a * symbol beside the points indicates that random selection has been applied.

However, the fact that random selection was applied last year, or in a previous year, to a particular course has no bearing on whether random selection will be applied to that course next year.

10. A Viewing & Rechecking Scripts

10.1 Viewing A Script

Viewing a script 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. 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.

- You can order the scripts you want to **view** using the Candidate Self-Service Portal on examination.ie.
- Scripts corrected by hand can be viewed in the school.
- Scripts corrected on computer can be viewed on-line.
- The times and dates are listed on the 'Important Dates' section at the back of this booklet.
- You will be allocated on of the sessions to visit the school to view scripts not marked on computer.
- You cannot send in another person into the school on your behalf. You must attend yourself, but you can however bring another person with you to help you review.
- Candidates can make copies of their scripts during the viewing session in school using their own digital devices, mobile phone, tablet or digital cameras. Schools have been instructed by the State Exams Commission not to allow any photocopies or scans of the scripts to be made by the school or in the school using school facilities.
- The scripts viewed on-line will be in pdf format and can be saved and/or printed.
- Photographs of the school-based scripts and pdfs of the on-line scripts can be e-mailed to a third party to assist in the viewing.
- It is sometimes difficult to figure out the marking scheme without reference to the questions being asked. Copies of the exam papers are available on examinations.ie. and can be printed out before viewing in school or viewing on-line.
- The marking schemes will be supplied in the viewing centre in the school. Sometimes it is useful to study these beforehand. They will be available on examinations.ie a few days before the viewing sessions. If viewing on-line, it might be useful to print the marking scheme beforehand also.
- No pens or writing instrument are allowed in the viewing session in the school.
- If viewing in school note that 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.

10.2 How Do I View A Script?

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]. **If the script was corrected on computer, these totals were added by computer and therefore unlikely to contain an error.**

Step 2

1. The percentage will not be written on your exam.
2. 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.
3. Convert your total mark to percentage. Do not write this on your script.
4. Check that this percentage is within the grade you received.
5. If the exam you are reviewing has 2 papers you can only convert to percentage when you have checked both papers.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. **If the script was corrected on computer, the adding of these marks will have been done by computer and therefore highly unlikely to have an error.**

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.

10.3 What can I do if I find an error?

If viewing in school, a ‘Candidate Observation form’ AP1, is available from the superintendent that can be filled in to refer 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. This form is also available on-line for those scripts reviewed on-line. When requesting on-line to re-check a script, the on-line AP1 form will appear during the request process.

10.4 How do I apply for a recheck?

You can apply for script/s to be rechecked/remarked using the Candidate Self-service portal on examinations.ie. Please note the dates on the ‘Important Dates’ section at the back of this booklet.

10.5 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 components, 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 H6 grade (40%-49%) and your percentage was around 47%-49% it is very unlikely (but not impossible) for you to lose a sufficient number of marks to drop your grade below 40% to a H7. *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 H6 grade (40%-49%) and your percentage was around 40%-42% it is very unlikely (but not impossible) for you to gain a sufficient number of marks to

increase your percentage to 50% i.e. the next grade up.

- Remember 1 mark 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 = 1/600 of % or, to increase your grade by 1% you need to be upgraded by 6 marks.
- Some students tend to think that the subject they should review with the potential of getting a recheck is the subject/s numerically closest to the next higher grade. This may be a correct assumption. However, the following also needs to be considered. There may be a subject that is at the lower end of a grade band, e.g. 61%. Some students may opt not to view this script as it is unlikely to jump to the next higher grade. However, it may be possible that a mistake was made in the correcting of this subject. A mistake big enough to bring the grade up. It is not possible to know this without reviewing that script. After all, if a student needs their overall points to go up by one grade, it does not matter what subject increases the overall points level. Given that most scripts are corrected on a computer, and available free of charge once ordered in advance, maybe all scripts should be reviewed - saving any H1s or subjects not included on the top six – before requesting any remarking.
- 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 correctly to your exam*.

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

The results of any recheck will be 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 CAO of any upgrade. The CAO will immediately send –that morning - a new offer to you if you are eligible. A press announce will also be made that morning.

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

If you do not receive an upgrade that you 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.

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

Leaving Certificate Appeal Statistics				
Year	Total Grades*	Appeals	Upgrades	Downgrades
2023	409,632	11,647	2,752 (23% of 11,647)	Not available
2022	410,193	18,762	3,805 (20.2% of 18,762)	Not available
2021 ^b	411,876	10,651	410 (3.8% of 10,651)	1
2020 ^a	-----	468	50 (9.36% of 468)	0
2019	391,336	16,966	2,963 (17.4% of 16,966)	2
2018	367,100	9,094	1,485 (16.3% of 9,094)	5
2017	376,276	9,810	1,446 (14.7% of 9,810)	4
2016	381,357	9,499	1,724 (18.1% of 9,499)	1
2015	387,096	9,810	1,836 (18.7% of 9,810)	6
2014	380,050	9,268	1,686 (18.1% of 9,268)	2
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
* Number of students multiplied by the number of exams taken. a. No Leaving Certificate exams. Calculated/estimated grades used. b. Students received the higher grade from a calculated grade or the grade obtained from sitting the exam. Source: S.E.C. Annual Reports				

When you accept an offer, the CAO office notifies the particular third level institution. It is always good practice to print out a copy – from the CAO website - of the page showing your acceptance. The third level institution will then send you 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. This is particularly important if you find, when registering, that some modules are not available due to timetabling clashes. This may not become apparent until registration. You may not have time to carry out new research once registration has opened.

12. What Happens If I Drop Out of My Course?

With any course within the third level system there are two sets of fees to be paid. **Registration fees** are paid by the student and **tuitions fees** are paid by the state. Every eligible 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 immediately.

13. If I Start A Course, Can I Transfer?

There are 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.

14. 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 CAO
- Once the offer has been received, it should not be accepted on the CAO account.
- Instead, the admissions office of the college (not the CAO) needs to be contacted immediately, and their instructions followed. Each college operates different procedures and each request is dealt with on an individual basis.

A candidate will be offered a place the following year (even if the points increase) provided,

- 1) A CAO application is completed by 1st February the following year,
- 2) The first and only preference placed on the CAO application is that course which was deferred. If another course is placed above the deferred course, the deferred offer from the previous year is automatically withdrawn.

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

15.1 Available/Vacant Places

A day or so after the first-round offers are published, the CAO will publish on-line a list of available/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. In order to apply for a vacant place, you will need to insert the course code into your CAO 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 CAO website should be checked regularly as it is updated daily.

15.2 Private Colleges

Although some of the private colleges operate within the CAO 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 CAO 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
- 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.

15.3 Trades/Apprenticeship

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

15.4 Teagasc

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

15.5 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 CAO points system that do not require points. Please check their website for further details bim.ie..

15.6 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 defenceforces.ie for recruitment guidelines.

15.7 An Garda Síochána & Emergency Services

The government sanction recruitment to these organisations from time to time. Check national press or publicjobs.ie. It should be remembered that a candidate's 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.

15.8 Post Leaving Certificate Courses PLCs

Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses are full-time, one-year courses at Level 5 or, sometimes, full-time, two-year courses at Level 6. They are further education programmes in Ireland. The courses are run by local City or County Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and are offered in their colleges of further education.

PLC Entry Requirements

These courses do not operate on a points system, and most courses require passes in five Leaving Certificate subjects. Some PLC courses have specific requirements; for example, Art and Design courses may require a portfolio.

The Benefits of PLC Courses

The benefits of PLC courses are:

1. They have significant educational value.
2. They can enhance students' employment opportunities.
3. They can help students gain entry to their original first-choice college course if they did not obtain the necessary Leaving Certificate points. This is sometimes referred to as "back-door entry". For example, a student could complete a Business PLC course and use their PLC examination and assessment results, rather than their Leaving Certificate points, to gain entry to a Level 6, Level 7 or Level 8 Business course in a university. The vast majority of college degree courses, although not all, reserve places specifically for PLC students. These students do not have to compete with applicants seeking entry to the degree course using their Leaving Certificate points.
4. Some colleges of further education offer students the option of remaining for another year after completing a one-year Level 5 PLC course and converting it into a Level 6 qualification. This qualification can then be used to gain entry to the second year of a degree course.

Other Points to Note

- When you use your PLC results to enter the first year of a college degree, you are competing for a limited number of places with other PLC students trying to progress in a similar manner. If 10 PLC students apply for entry to a degree course that has six places reserved for PLC students, the six PLC students with the highest results will be offered places.
- If you enrol in a college of further education that offers a two-year Level 6 PLC course, you can apply at the end of the first year for entry to a degree course. If your application is unsuccessful, you can remain for the second year of the PLC course and, at the end of that year, apply for entry to the second year of your chosen degree course.
- There are also specific PLC courses known as pre-apprenticeship PLC courses, which can prepare students for specific apprenticeships.

- Applications for PLC courses are not made through the CAO system; instead, they are made through Fetchcourses.ie, where you can apply for more than one PLC course.
- The official closing date for some PLC courses is in late February or March. However, a large number of courses will accept applications in September, after the Leaving Certificate results have been published. However, some very popular courses fill all their places in February or March, including art, media and music courses.

Finding the Most Suitable PLC Course

When searching for a suitable course, it might be useful to work backwards. First, check whether the degree course you really want accepts applications from PLC students. Then, check which PLC courses are accepted and where those courses are offered. Most third-level colleges reserve places in most of their undergraduate degree programmes specifically for students who hold a PLC qualification.

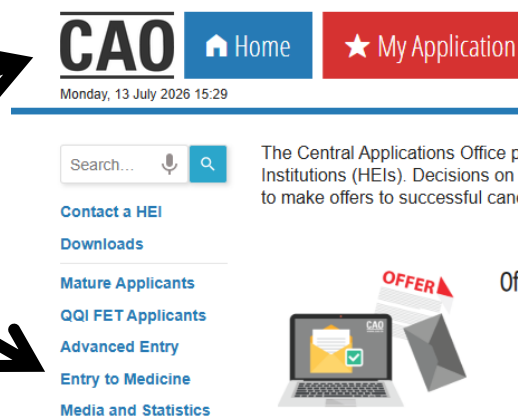
Below is an example of how to search for the most appropriate PLC course. This example shows how to find a PLC course that can provide a pathway into Media Studies at Maynooth University (MH109).

www.cao.ie

Click on

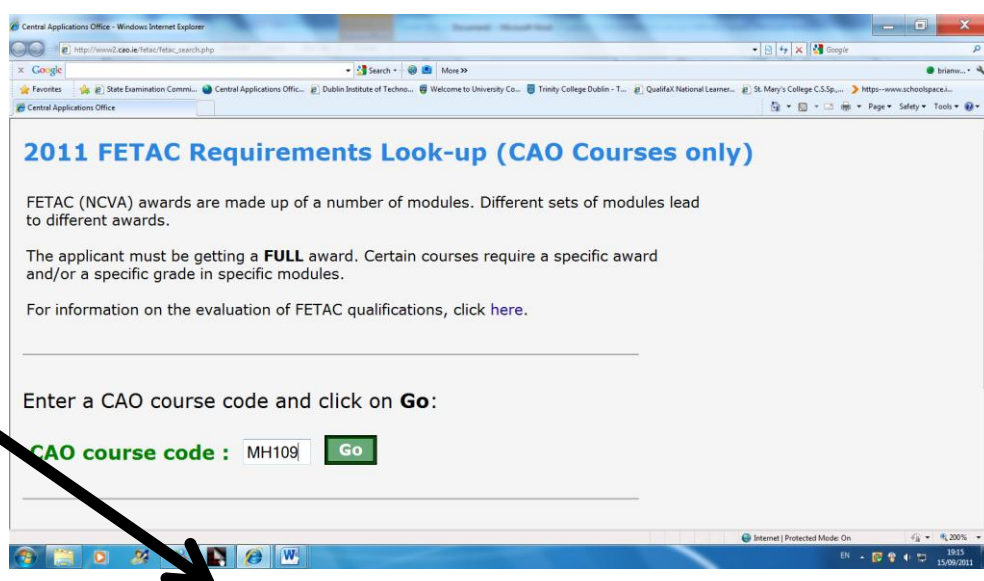
QQI FET Applicants

FETAC Information



Key in

'MH109'



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

5M0528

Course	Course Title	Level	Essential major awards
MH109	Media Studies	8	5M0528 5M0529 5M0536 5M0828 5M1761 5M18294 5M18518 5M18519 5M1995 5M1997 5M2009 5M2011 5M20599

It is now necessary to find out which PLC colleges offer these courses by searching Qualifax, CareersPortal.ie or Fetchcourses.ie.

Caution

The type of course represented by the various codes can vary in content and in the subjects taught.

Be sure to pick the subject material you find most interesting. Also, check the website of the particular PLC college to ensure that the PLC course has the necessary module or modules.

Checklist

- ✓ Find the CAO code for the third-level college course you wish to enter.
- ✓ Search CAO.ie to find the necessary PLC code or codes and any required modules.
- ✓ Search Qualifax, CareersPortal.ie or Fetchcourses.ie using the PLC code or codes.
- ✓ Find out which PLC colleges offer the necessary PLC code.
- ✓ Don't just pick a PLC 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 that some PLC colleges offer courses that allow entry to the second year of a third-level degree course.
- ✓ Check the website of the particular PLC college to ensure that the course also has the necessary module or modules.
- ✓ Apply in February using the Fetchcourses.ie website.
- ✓ Check the PLC college's website for any additional entry requirements, such as a portfolio.
- ✓ It might be necessary to apply for more than one PLC course.

Note: Completing a PLC course does not guarantee entry to your desired third-level college course. You will need to obtain a certain standard in your assessments and examinations. See the section on Tertiary Courses below.

15.9 Repeating the Leaving Certificate

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

- 1) A candidate can repeat all their existing subjects from scratch.
- 2) 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. Candidates can then take up new subject/s and obtain their total points from these subjects the following year. Minimum requirements can be combined from more than one year. Points from more than one year cannot be combined. 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.
- 3) 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 the 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 not academic and learn by doing rather than through books?
- Would a PLC 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 and 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.

15.10 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 learned can be invaluable. Indeed, at some later stage, this can result in the individual 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.

16. Studying in the U.K. & Europe

With over 38,000 courses in 300 plus institutions, the UK offers the a wide 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. All applications to universities in the UK should be completed and submitted through UCAS using 'Apply' at ucas.com. CUKAS is the online admissions service for music programmes at UK conservatoires and auditions take place in the individual colleges.

EUNiCAS is the European Universities Central Application Support Service. 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. Information available on eunicas.ie.

17. College 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.

Subjects Marked on Computer

The following Leaving Certificate subjects were marked *on* a computer screen by an examiner (not *by* computer). Subjects not listed here are marked manually.

Leaving Certificate
Irish
English
Mathematics
History
Geography
Classical Studies
French
German
Spanish
Art, Visual Studies
Applied Mathematics
Physics
Chemistry
Agricultural Science
Biology
Engineering
Accounting
Business
Economics
Technology
Music
Home Economics
Religious Education
Physical Education
Link Modules (LCVP)
Polish <i>(New for 2026)</i>
Politics and Society

Bulgarian	Croatian	Czech	Danish
Dutch	Estonian	Finnish	Hungarian
Latvian	Maltese	Modern Greek	Romanian
Slovakian	Slovenian	Swedish	Ukrainian

Appendix 1b – Leaving Certificate Applied subjects to be marked online for the first time in 2026

Leaving Certificate Applied <i>(New for 2026)</i>
English and Communication
Mathematical Applications
Personal Reflection Task
Hotel Catering and Tourism
Graphics and Construction Studies
Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Award of bonus marks for answering through Irish

A candidate who answers in Irish at the written examination in the various subjects as set out below may be given bonus marks in addition to the marks gained in the subject.

Bonus marks at the rate of 10 per cent of the marks obtained will be given to a candidate who obtains less than 75 per cent of the total marks in the case of the following subjects: - Latin, Ancient Greek, Classical Studies, Hebrew Studies, History, Geography, Physics, Chemistry, Physics and Chemistry, Biology, Business, Economics, Agricultural Science, Home Economics, Music, History and Appreciation of Art, Religious Education, Arabic, Links Modules -Written Component only and Physical Education.

Bonus marks at the rate of 5 per cent will be given to a candidate who obtains less than 75 per cent of the total marks in the case of the following subjects: French, German, Italian, Spanish, Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Accounting, Engineering, Construction Studies, Materials Technology (Wood), Metalwork, Technology, Russian, Japanese, Computer Science, Mandarin Chinese, Lithuanian, Portuguese and Polish.

Above 75 per cent the bonus will be subjected to a uniform reduction until the candidate who scores 100 per cent gets no bonus. No bonus will be given in the case of the following subjects: - Technical Graphics, Design and Communication Graphics, Leaving Certificate Art (other than History and Appreciation of Art).

For the purpose of the award of bonus marks, Mathematics, Paper I and Paper II, will be treated as separate subjects.

Candidates who answer partly in Irish and partly in English will receive no bonus marks.

A Summary of some frequently asked questions

Is there any way of knowing if the points will go up or down before the 1st round CAO offers?

No. After the results are published, there is a wait of a few days until the CAO offers are released. Just after students receive their offers, the points are then published. There is no way of knowing the points required in advance. Patience is required. See pages 5 to 7 for full explanation.

When one and/or two offers are received (Level 8 and/or Level 7/6) can a course which was a lower preference than the offer/s received be requested?

No, see full explanation on pages 5 to 7.

If a 1st round offer is accepted, can I still be offered a higher preference course in the second round?

Yes. Accepting a 1st round offer does not preclude a student from being offered a higher preference in the second round if they are eligible. See full explanation on pages 5 to 7.

Is there any way of knowing before the 2nd round offers if the points will drop in the second round?

No, see full explanation on pages 5 to 8.

If a 1st round offer is accepted and I receive a 2nd round offer, what do I do?

The 1st round offer can be kept, and the 2nd round offer can be declined (by ignoring the offer), or the 1st round offer can be returned and the 2nd round offer accepted. See page 8.

What are the chances of getting an upgrade in one or more of my exams?

There is no way to predict this. Students should view their scripts and consult their subject teacher. Even then, there is no guarantee of an upgrade, and students have to wait until mid-October for the results of the remaking to be published.

If I ask for a subject/s to be remarked, is it possible I might be downgraded?

Yes, see points to consider on page 14.

If I am downgraded, might I lose the college place I have already accepted?

This is theoretically possible, e.g. if the downgrade is in a subject that is a minimum requirement. This makes it particularly important to view script/s before requesting a remark and to consider the points on page 14.

If I get an upgrade/s in my results and achieve the points needed for a higher preference, will I be offered that course?

Yes, and in most cases, students can then transfer to that new course for the course they have already started. There are a few courses where the college may ask you to defer for a year, e.g. where the course has limited places and is already full, e.g. dentistry.

Important Dates August & September 2026

Fri. 21 st Aug.	Results published at 10.00 a.m.	Available on-line from 10.00 a.m. at examinations.ie using Candidate Self-Service Portal (CSSP)	
Tue. 25 th Aug.	Component results available at 12.00 p.m.	The breakdown of results of oral/aural/practical components available at examinations.ie using CSSP	
	Applications to review scripts opens at 5.00 p.m.	Students can apply to review written exam scripts free of charge at examinations.ie using CSSP.	
Wed. 26 th Aug.	Round 1 Offers available 2.00 p.m.	Available at 2.00 p.m. on-line at cao.ie and via e-mail/text alert. Points required for courses will be available on cao.ie during the afternoon, and published in the newspaper the following day.	
	Applications to review scripts closes 8.00 p.m.		
Thur. 27 th Aug.	Available college places open on CAO 12 p.m.	These are places that have not been filled in certain course, students can now apply for these places.	
Sat. 29 th Aug.	Written Script Viewing Sessions in school/on-line	Written scripts marked on paper can be viewed in the school. School will allocate a session to students. Session 1: 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Session 2: 2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.	Written scripts marked on computer can be accessed (and downloaded) on-line through the CSSP for 24 hours from 9.00 a.m. Sat. 29 th to 9.00 a.m. Sun. 30 th .
Sun. 30 th Aug.	Applications to appeal results opens 10.00 a.m.	Students can appeal subject/s results on-line through CSSP from 10.00 a.m. Sun. 30 th August. (€40 /L.C. subject and €15.50 per LCA subject, refunded if appeal is successful, pay online via CSSP).	
Mon. 31 st Aug.	Applications to appeal results closed 5.00 p.m.	Appeal results released by S.E.C. to students on CSSP & to CAO who update offers if eligible via CAO account. Provisional date, depending on number of appeals nationally, is 25 th Sept.	
Tue. 1 st Sept.	Acceptance of Round 1 offer by 3.00 p.m.	Accept on-line via CAO account at cao.ie	
Mon. 7 th Sept.	Round 2 Offers available from 2.00 p.m.	Available at 10.00 a.m. on-line at cao.ie and via e-mail/text alert.	
	Registration for some colleges this week.	CAO inform the college student has accepted an offer. The college contacts student (using the email address given to CAO by student) with registration details. Missing registration can result in not getting some subjects/modules.	
Wed. 9 th Sept.	Acceptance of Round 2 offer by 3.00 p.m.	Accept on-line via CAO account at cao.ie	
Tue. 15 th Sept.	Round 3 offers available from 10.00 a.m.	Available at 10.00 a.m. on-line at cao.ie and via e-mail/text alert.	
Thur. 17 th Sept.	Acceptance of Round 3 offer by 3.00 p.m.	Accept on-line via CAO account at cao.ie	
Tue. 22 nd Sept.	Round 4 offers available from 10.00 a.m.	Available at 10.00 a.m. on-line at cao.ie and via e-mail/text alert.	
Thur. 24 th Sept.	Acceptance of Round 4 offer by 3.00 p.m.	Accept on-line via CAO account at cao.ie	
Fri. 25 th Sept.*	Release of Appeal Results	Released by S.E.C. to students on CSSP & to CAO who update offers if eligible via CAO account.	
Tue. 29 th Sept.	Round 5 offers available from 10.00 a.m.	Available at 10.00 a.m. on-line at cao.ie and via e-mail/text alert.	
Thur. 1 st Oct.	Acceptance of Round 5 offer by 3.00 p.m.	Accept on-line via CAO account at cao.ie	
Examination Number =		Given to student by the school.	CAO = Central Applications Office
CSSP Password ¹ =		Created by student in examinations.ie	CSSP = Candidate Self-Service Portal
CAO Account Number ² =		Created when CAO account was opened.	SEC = State Exams Commission
CAO Password ³ =		Created by student when CAO account was opened.	
Note: Schools do not have access to these numbers/passwords 1,2 & 3. If lost, student should contact SEC ¹ & CAO ^{2&3} . *Provisional date, depending on number of appeals nationally.			
All times/dates deadlines are strictly adhered to and no exceptions are made under any circumstances.			

