



County Carlow Adult Educational Guidance & Information Service



www.carlowadultguidance.ie

MATURE STUDENT CAO APPLICATION

(“Mature” students are adults who are 23 years of age or over by the 1st of January of the year of entry to a Higher Education Institution (HEI’s))

Before filling out the form you need to:

A. (If you know what course you want to do...)

- + Consider why you want to do the course
 - o Is it because you are interested in the subject?
 - o Is it because you want to work in a particular career and this course will give you the necessary qualification?
 - Read careers information on that career in our library or online at www.careersportal.ie (Occupations A-Z)
- + Read the college brochure carefully
- + If you have any questions about the course check them out now with the Admissions Office of the relevant HEI.

B. (If you are not sure which course you want to do.....)

- + Explore the career you want to get into and find out what qualifications you need to get into that career and what courses will give you those qualifications e.g. online at www.careersportal.ie
- + Then follow the steps at point A above.

C. The application

- + Read the white pages/ instructions in the CAO handbook on the application procedure.
- + A lot of applicants have questions about the **non-standard application** section of the form or the “Mature section” online. Detailed instructions on how to complete this are on pages 7, 8, 13, and 20 of the CAO handbook. Further pointers are provided at point E. below.
- + You can try the online demo application to become more familiar with the application process prior to making a real application - www.cao.ie/?page=demo

D. Applying online or on paper

- + You may choose to complete the application online at www.cao.ie. The box for the Statement of Interest question - “**Explain the relevance of your life / educational experience to your application and state your educational goals and objectives**” only fits 1500 characters online. If you would like to supply additional information you have ten days from registering the application online to post on this information to CAO. The information/ documentation must arrive in CAO within this timeframe.
- + If there is any loss or delay of an item in the post, CAO will require proof of postage. There are four Certificates of Posting at the back of the CAO handbook. Each time you post something to CAO you should have one of the Certificates stamped at a Post Office.
- + If you apply online before 20th January 2019, there is a reduced fee of €30. The fee increases to €45 for applications before 1st February 2019.

E. Part B Special Category Applicants including mature applicants

- ✚ Detailed instructions on how to complete this section is on page 8 of the CAO handbook. Here are some extra pointers to help you.

HEIs wish to carefully evaluate applications from mature applicants and, therefore, need certain information under the following eleven headings:-

Highest Qualification to Date	Provide details of the highest qualifications that you have achieved to date. If you have not received any formal qualification you can enter 'Not Applicable'
Current Studies	If you are currently studying other courses, please outline details in a separate document and include with the supporting documentation being sent to CAO
Post-secondary Education	Provide details of all further or higher education that you have undertaken since leaving school
Second Level Education	Provide information and results for any exams that you have taken e.g. Junior Certificate; Leaving Certificate (pre-1985 only). If you are sitting the Leaving Cert this year please indicate the subjects you are taking
Non-certificate Courses	Some examples of non-certificate courses include personal interest courses e.g. art appreciation, film studies etc.
Employment or Voluntary Work	Start with your most recent positions and provide details of all employment/ voluntary work including contact details of employer, position held, period of employment and description of duties
English Language Proficiency (if applicable)	If English is not your first language you must provide evidence of English language competence and details of the English Language Qualification(s) that you hold
References	You will be expected to provide the names of two referees who can be contacted by the Admission Officer(s) to verify the information provided in your application.
Statement of Interest	In no more than 1500 characters, you will be asked to explain the relevance of your life/ educational experience to your application and state your educational goals and objectives
Hobbies/ Interests	In no more than 500 characters, indicate any hobbies/ interests that relate to your proposed study at third level.
Additional Information	In this section please indicate if there is any additional information that you wish to advise CAO of that would necessitate special arrangements during the application or assessment process.

- You might not fit all the necessary information in the space provided online. See pages 12 & 13 of the handbook on how to send the extra pages if they are additional to an online application. If you are making a paper application, staple them to your paper form. Put the page number and your name and address on the top of each additional page.
- Think carefully over your life (if you have a CV, it will help you remember) and try to include information under as many headings, as possible.
- Keep in mind your knowledge of the course(s) and the career(s) you hope it will help you to enter - when filling out the form - you might find ways of matching your knowledge of the course(s) and career(s) to your own experiences/ interests.
- Answering the Statement of Interest question - **“Explain the relevance of your life / educational experience to your application and state your educational goals and objectives”** is essential. However, if you do not have information under some of the

other headings do not worry - just leave them out. Every mature student brings a different set of experiences and interests to the application.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://www.cao.ie/index.php?page=demo&d=qual&qe=1&l=8&c=8&md=8&hf=8&tf=>. The browser title is "Central Applications Office". The page content includes three sections:

- 9. Statement of Interest**
Explain the relevance of your life/educational experience to your application and state your educational goals and objectives.
Characters left: 1500 (You may enter up to 1500 characters.)
- 10. Hobbies/Interests**
Indicate any hobbies/interests that relate to your proposed study at third level.
Characters left: 500 (You may enter up to 500 characters.)
- 11. Additional Information**
Please indicate if there is any additional information that you wish to advise us of that would need special arrangements during the application or assessment process.
Characters left: 300 (You may enter up to 300 characters.)

- Pointers on filling in information under heading 9 “ Explain the relevance of your life/educational experience to your application and state your educational goals and objectives”
 - Put yourself in the position of the college staff who would like to know why you are interested in the course (for example - your career goal, your interest in the subject) and what life experiences, interests, work or course experiences have led you to this decision/ course choice.
 - Answer the following questions -
 - Why am I considering doing this course (interest in the subject/ career goal)?
 - What experiences/ interests in my life have led me to this choice (e.g. courses you have done, relevant work/ voluntary work experiences, life experiences, hobbies and interests, your skills)
 - What do I hope to learn/ look forward to learning/ experience on the course?
 - What might you expect to find challenging about studying at third level?
 - **If** you have any other points to make about your suitability for/ interest in/ ability to do the course you can add these here also.

NB

- + **KEEP A PHOTOCOPY OF YOUR CAO FORM BEFORE YOU POST IT** - if you have made a paper application. *If you are invited to interview at the HEI you will want to check the information they have about you. (If you apply online, you can use the “My application” facility to view your application anytime)*
- + You will receive correspondence from CAO over the next months after you apply. Read carefully and respond, as appropriate and in time or you could put your course offer at risk.
- + Regularly check your email for updates from CAO. Be careful that your email programme does not put CAO email in your junk/ spam folder.
- + Some HEIs require you to also submit a separate application form directly to them. Check with the HEIs you are applying to.
- + It is also important that you research the financial supports which you can apply for.
 - o www.studentfinance.ie - information on financial supports for Higher Education
 - o www.susi.ie - Student Maintenance Grant
 - o www.welfare.ie - Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection - Back to Education Allowance

Application Dates and Fees:

Online application	Fee	Closing date
Online discounted rate	€30	20 th Jan 2019 (5.15pm)
Normal online application	€45	1 st Feb 2019 (5.15pm)
Late online application	€60	1 st May 2019 (5.15pm)
Paper application	Fee	Closing date
Normal application	€45	1 st Feb 2019 (5.15pm)
Late online application	€90	1 st May 2019 (5.15pm)
Change of mind	Nil	1 st July 2019 (5.15pm)

Although every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this information sheet is accurate it is essential that readers should check with the appropriate organisation for the latest information. Co. Carlow AEGIS accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information contained in this document or for any actions arising from its use.