



## County Carlow Adult Educational Guidance & Information Service

[www.carlowadultguidance.ie](http://www.carlowadultguidance.ie)



# MATURE STUDENT CAO APPLICATION

*(“Mature” students are adults who are 23 years of age or over by the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 <https://careersportal.ie/sectors/index.php> (Career Sector)
- + 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](http://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, 12, 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](http://www.cao.ie/?page=demo)

### D. Applying online

- + You can make an application online at [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie) from 12pm on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020.
- + **The Mature Applicant section of the CAO application form must be completed by 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at 5.15pm**
- + If there is any loss or delay of an item in the post, CAO will require proof of postage. With the agreement of An Post, CAO have printed a Certificate of Posting on the back page of the CAO handbook. Further certificates are available (free of charge) at post offices. Every time you post something to CAO you should have a Certificate of Posting verified at a Post Office. *Please do not register your post.*
- + If you apply online before 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021, there is a reduced fee of €30. The fee increases to €45 for applications before 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021.
- + If you wish to make a paper application you should contact the CAO from mid-November. Please note there might be delays in receiving and posting paper applications. Deadlines still apply.

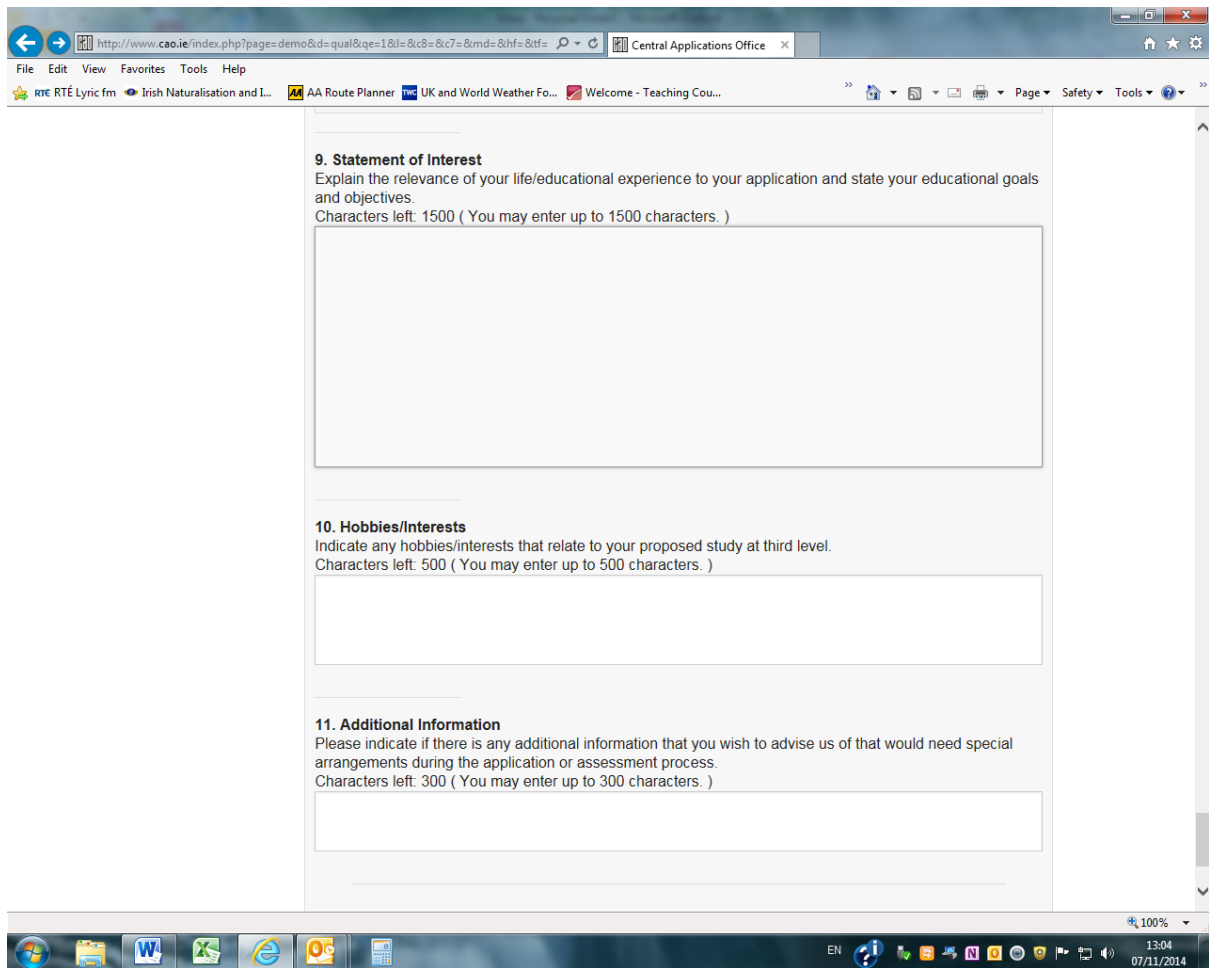
**E. Part B Special Category Applicants including mature applicants**

✚ 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:-

<b>Highest Qualification to Date</b>	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'
<b>Current Studies</b>	If you are currently studying other courses, please outline details in a separate document and include with the supporting documentation being sent to CAO
<b>Post-secondary Education</b>	Provide details of all further or higher education that you have undertaken since leaving school
<b>Second Level Education</b>	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
<b>Non-certificate Courses</b>	Some examples of non-certificate courses include personal interest courses e.g. art appreciation, film studies etc.
<b>Employment or Voluntary Work</b>	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
<b>English Language Proficiency (if applicable)</b>	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
<b>References</b>	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.
<b>Statement of Interest</b>	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
<b>Hobbies/ Interests</b>	In no more than 500 characters, indicate any hobbies/ interests that relate to your proposed study at third level.
<b>Additional Information</b>	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.



- Pointers on filling in information under Statement of Interest (Heading 9)
  - In no more than 1,500 characters (not words) you will be asked to 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.
  - [www.studentfinance.ie](http://www.studentfinance.ie) - information on financial supports for Higher Education
  - [www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie) - Student Maintenance Grant
  - [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) - Department of Social Protection - Back to Education Allowance
  - [www.uversity.org](http://www.uversity.org) – Higher Education Scholarship Scheme for Adult Learners
  - [www.itcarlow.ie](http://www.itcarlow.ie) - IT Carlow Access Programme - Mature Applicants
  - [www.carlowcollege.ie](http://www.carlowcollege.ie) - Carlow College Mature Student Entrance Scholarship

### Application Dates and Fees:

Online application	Fee	Closing date
Online discounted rate	€30	20 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2021 (5.15pm)
Normal online application	€45	1 <sup>st</sup> Feb 2021 (5.15pm)
Late online application	€60	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2021 (5.15pm)
Paper application	Fee	Closing date
Normal application	€45	1 <sup>st</sup> Feb 2021 (5.15pm)
Late online application	€90	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2021 (5.15pm)
Change of mind	Nil	1 <sup>st</sup> July 2021 (5.15pm)

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