



# 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
  - Is it because you are interested in the subject?
  - Is it because you want to work in a particular career and this course will give you the necessary qualification?
    - Read careers information online at [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie) (Careers tab)
- + Read the college information carefully
- + If you have any questions about the course check them out now with the Admissions Office of the relevant Higher Education Institution

### 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 application procedures in the CAO handbook - <https://www2.cao.ie/handbook/handbook2025/hb.pdf>
- + A lot of applicants have questions about the **mature application** section. Detailed instructions on how to complete this are on pages 17 and 18 of the CAO Handbook. Further pointers are provided at point E.
- + 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. *Supporting Documents*

- + Applicants should post relevant documentation within 10 days of applying to CAO: -
  - Evidence of any qualifications that have been mentioned in the application
  - Supplementary information that you were not able to include in the space provided
  - Any documentation required by each of the institutions to which you are applying
  - If English is not your first language you must provide evidence of competency in the English language
- + On the top of each page put your CAO application number and date.
- + Certificates/ transcripts should be supplied in their original language and should show dates, subjects and results
- + The qualifications should not be originals - they should be A4 photocopies, certified typically by a school stamp, a HEI Admissions Office stamp, or by a notary.
- + If there is any loss or delay of an item in the post, CAO will require proof of postage. Each time you post something to CAO you should have ask for a certificate of postage.

## E. Information required in the Mature Applicant Form

<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 3000 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.

### ✚ Pointers on filling in information under heading “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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Every mature student brings a different set of experiences and interests to the application.

## NB

- ✚ 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

*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.*