

A blurred background image showing a group of students in a classroom setting. A young woman with glasses is in the foreground, looking down, while other students are visible behind her.

Applying to CAO

your next step

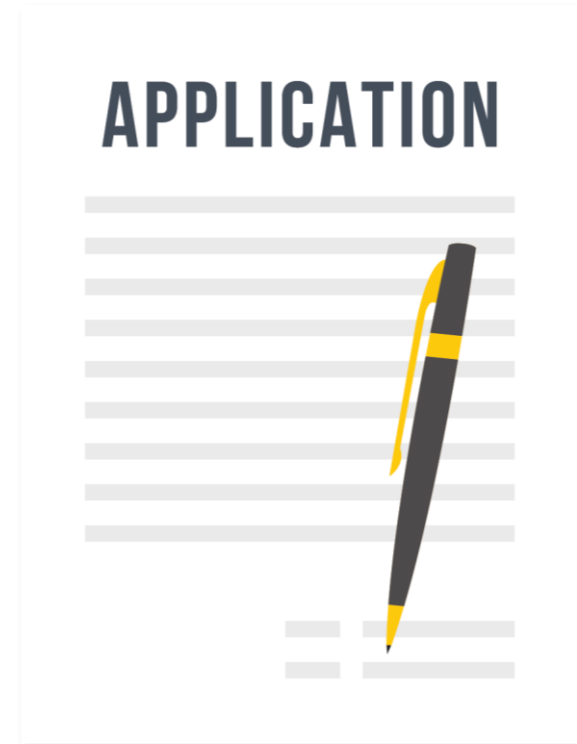
CAO
www.cao.ie

Purpose of the CAO

- **CAO processes applications to undergraduate courses in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).**
- **Offers are issued and acceptances are recorded by CAO.**
- **Assessment of applications and decisions on admissions are made by HEIs Admissions Officers.**



Application Process



CAO Handbook

CAO distributes to schools and individuals a handbook containing instructions and information about the application process.



Every applicant should be familiar with the contents of the CAO Handbook.

HEI Prospectuses

Information on courses is available from each HEI and prospectuses should be consulted before making an application.



Timely Action

**DO NOT LEAVE
EVERTHING TO
THE LAST
MINUTE!**



FEBRUARY

1st

DEADLINE

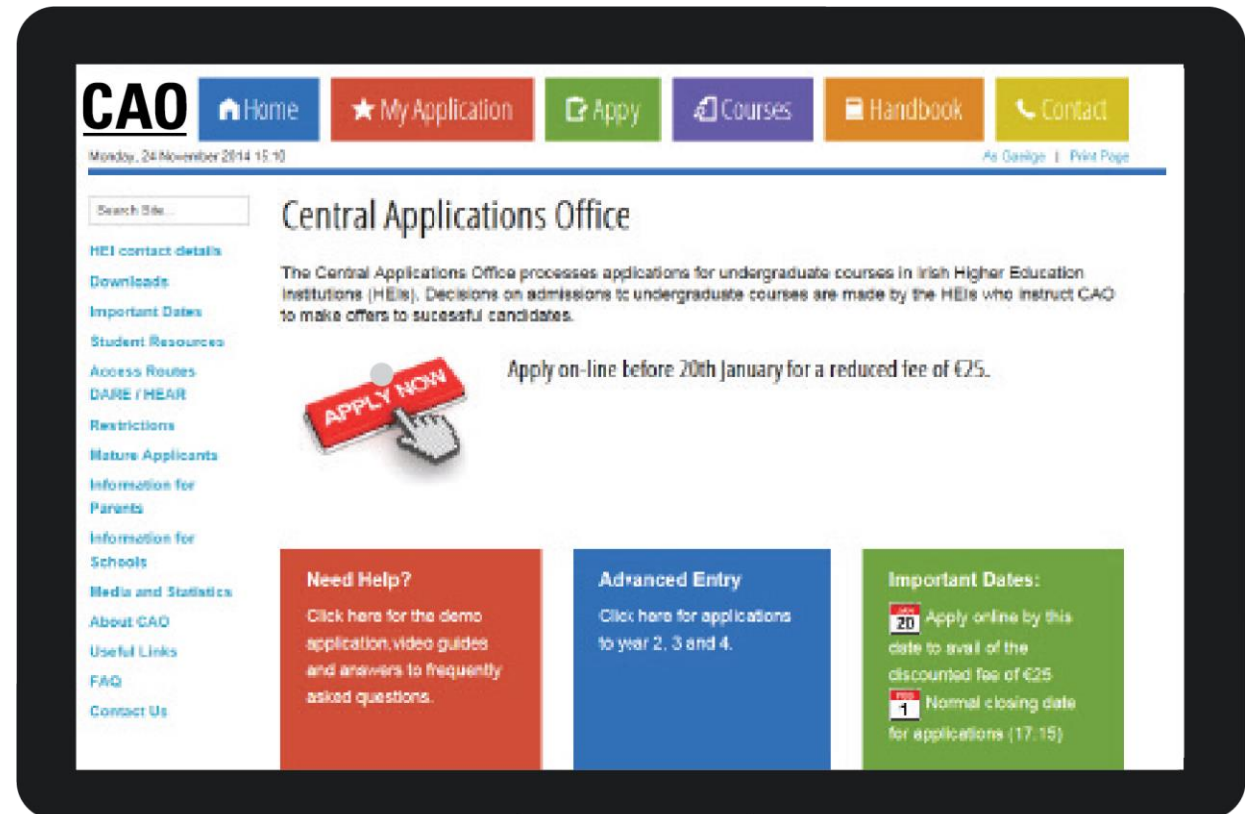
In order to be fair to all applicants, closing dates are strict and therefore action should be taken in good time.

Making an Application

Applicants are encouraged to apply online.

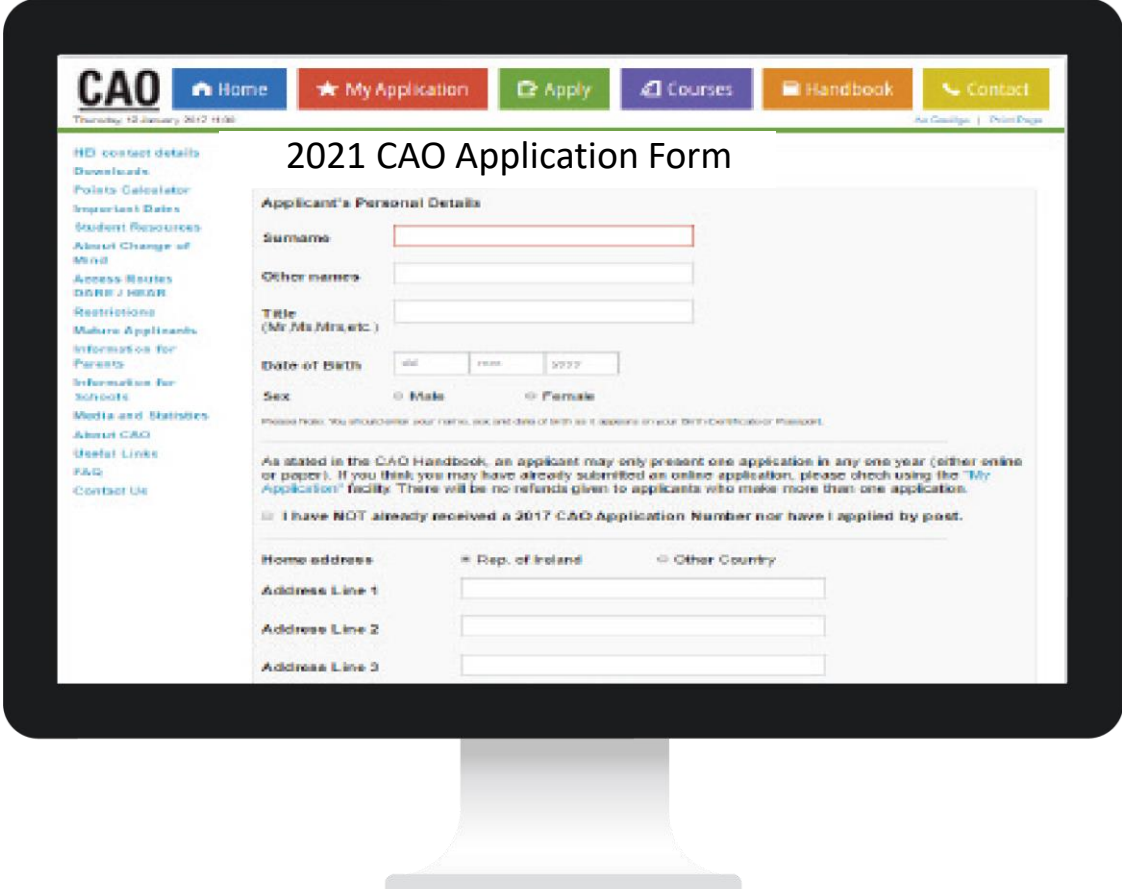
The website address is
www.cao.ie

Click on '**Apply**' and enter the information requested.



Application Form

- Information which identifies you is of the utmost importance.
- Carefully enter details such as your name, address, date of birth, schools attended, etc.
- Your examination details must be entered with great care.
- Make sure you inform CAO about all relevant qualifications and exemptions – select the relevant section(s) from the Qualifications and Assessments summary on the application form.



The screenshot shows the CAO website's application form interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, My Application, Apply, Courses, Handbook, and Contact. Below this, the page title is "2021 CAO Application Form". The main content area is titled "Applicant's Personal Details" and contains several input fields: Surname, Other names, Title (Mr/Ms/Mrs/etc.), Date of Birth (with day, month, and year dropdowns), and Sex (radio buttons for Male and Female). Below these fields, there is a note about the importance of accurate details and a checkbox for "I have NOT already received a 2017 CAO Application Number nor have I applied by post." At the bottom, there are fields for Home address, with a dropdown for "Rep. of Ireland" or "Other Country", and three lines for the address (Address Line 1, Address Line 2, Address Line 3).

Application Number

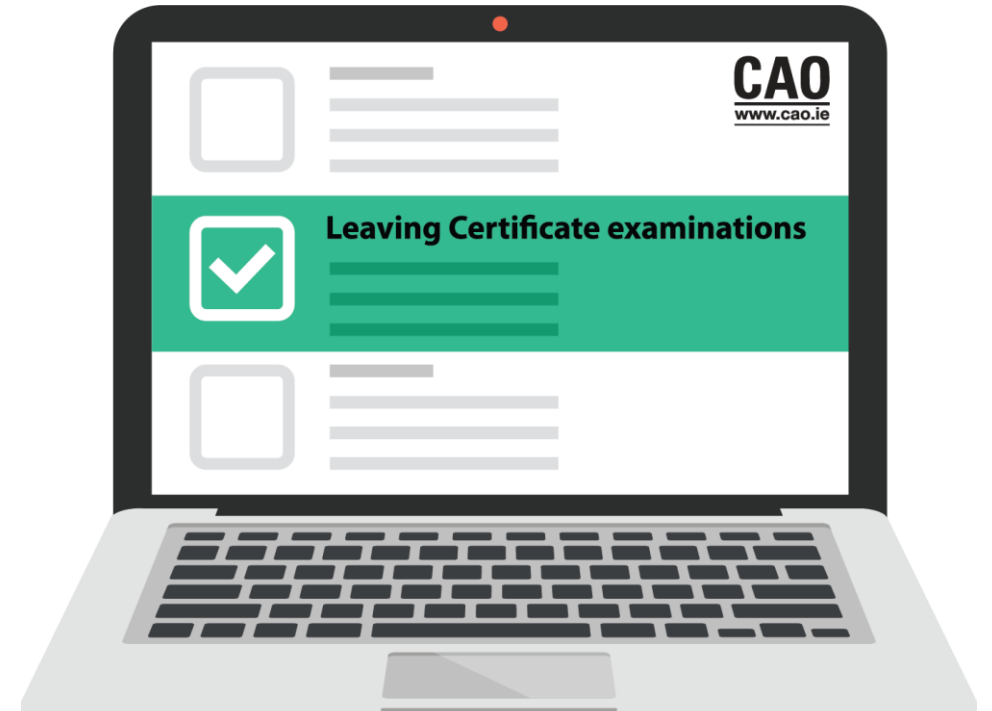
- When you apply online your application number will appear on screen. You will also receive an email containing your CAO application number and an email verification code.
- Your application number is private and it will be used in every correspondence between you and the CAO for the rest of the year.



Qualifications & Assessment

- You must complete the Qualifications and Assessments section(s) that is relevant to you.

For example, if you are a first-time Leaving Certificate candidate under the age of 23 and with no other relevant qualifications, you will be asked to enter your school name and address and the years attended. You must also tick the Leaving Certificate examinations box and subsequently indicate the year of your Leaving Certificate.



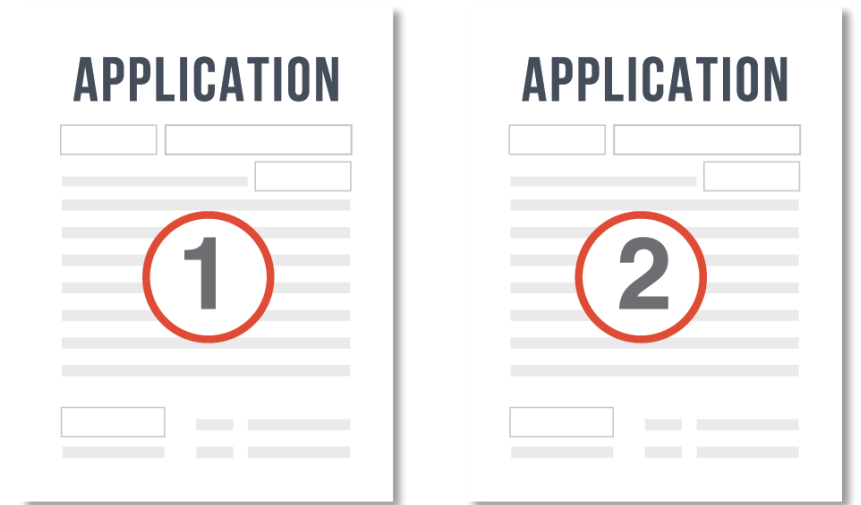
Choosing Courses

- **Consult your Guidance Counsellor.**
- **Discuss your options with family and friends.**
- **Details about courses may be found in HEI prospectuses and by consulting HEI websites.**
- **A course search facility is available at www.cao.ie**



2 Applications in 1

- There are 2 course choice lists (Level 8 and Level 7/6) and applicants may make up to 10 course choices on each list.
- Your choices on one list do not in any way affect your choices on the other list. They may be considered two separate applications on one form.
- It is possible to receive an offer on both lists. You may then decide to accept either your Level 7/6 or your Level 8 offer.
- Alternatively, you might not wish to accept either offer.

The image shows two identical application forms side-by-side. Each form has the word 'APPLICATION' at the top in a bold, sans-serif font. Below the title, there are several horizontal lines representing text input fields. A large red circle with a white number inside is centered on each form: a '1' on the left form and a '2' on the right form. The forms are white with a light gray border and a subtle drop shadow.

Order of Preference

- If you learn nothing else from this presentation let it be this...

**PLACE YOUR
COURSES IN
GENUINE ORDER
OF PREFERENCE!**



1



2



3



To do otherwise is a
grave mistake.

Restrictions

RESTRICTED COURSES

**RESTRICTED-CATEGORIES
OF APPLICANTS**

HEAR
**SOCIO-ECONOMIC
DISADVANTAGE**

DARE
DISABILITIES/SLD

Applications must be made by 1 February at 5:15pm. Consult CAO Handbook for full details.

Change of Mind Facility



You may use this facility to change the order of your course choices and/or to introduce new courses, subject to the restrictions detailed in the handbook.

The Change of Mind opens in early May and closes on the 1st of July at 5:15pm.

Statement of Application Record

**If you do not
receive a
Statement by**



**contact CAO
immediately.**

Before the end of May you will be sent a Statement of Application Record as a final acknowledgement and to enable you to verify that all information has been recorded completely and correctly.

Check the following carefully, and if there is any error or omission amend the Statement and return it to CAO.

Are all the courses shown and in the correct order?

Are all the codes correct?

Are the exam numbers correct?

Are all exams mentioned?

Are all exemptions listed?

The Offer Process



- Following the release of the Leaving Certificate results CAO will send a communication to all applicants.
- If you have not yet become entitled to an offer you will be sent a Statement of Application email asking you to check your account information carefully as important information may be incorrect or missing.

The Offer Process



- If you are entitled to an offer, you will be sent an email with details of your offer(s). You may receive more than one email if you have received an offer off both your Level 8 and Level 7/6 lists.
- You will also receive an SMS text message if you have selected this option.
- You should check that all of the details in your CAO Account are correct and that there are no errors or omissions.
- Offers will also be available on the CAO website.
- You may check for and accept offers on the website.

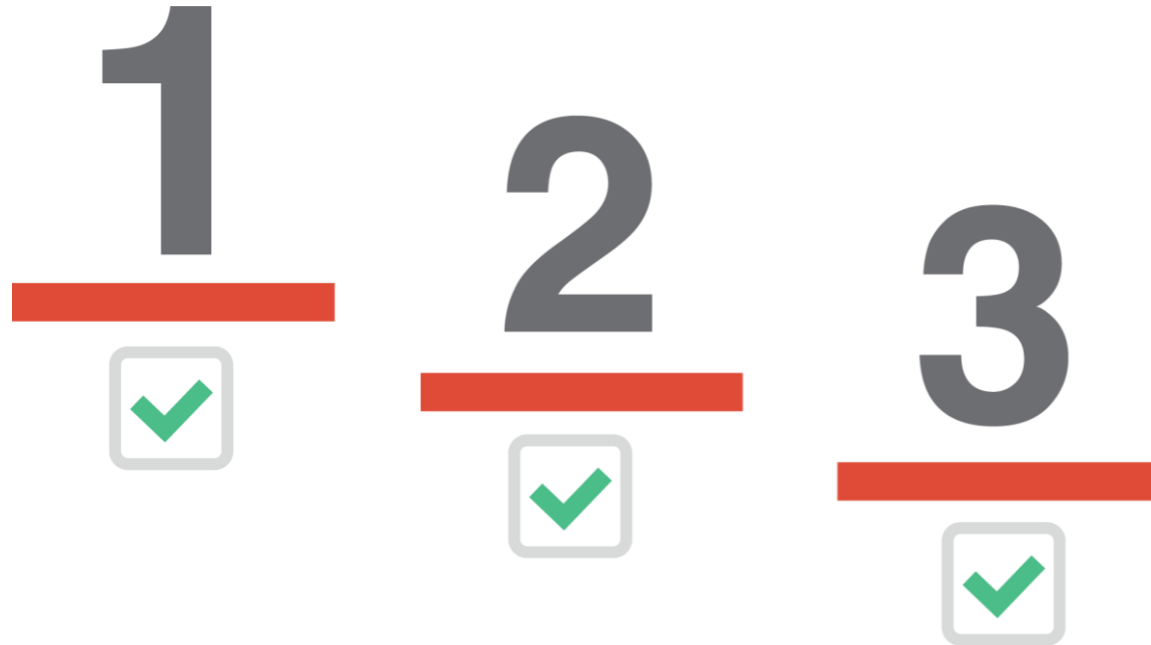
The Offer Process



There can be no delays at the offer/acceptance stage.

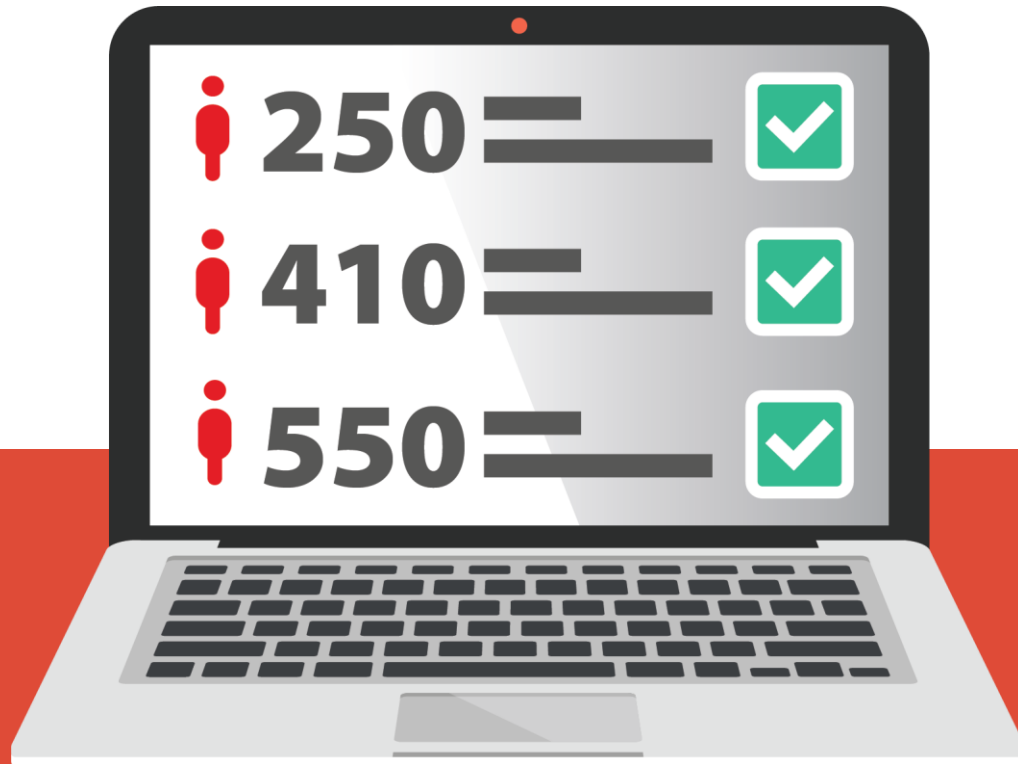
- Any offer not accepted by the closing date for receipt of acceptance of offers in CAO may be offered to another applicant in the next round of offers.
- You will receive an e-mail acknowledging your acceptance.

Place Allocation



- We will look just at Level 8 courses, but exactly the same process will take place with Level 7/6 courses, and at the same time.
- The importance of you, the applicant, placing courses in genuine order of preference will become apparent in the following pages.

Place Allocation



- When examination results are released they are entered into the CAO computer.
- The computer checks each applicant's results.

For each course the applicant has applied for, the computer first determines if the applicant has the minimum entry requirements for the course.

Place Allocation

If the applicant meets the minimum entry requirements for the course, the applicant's points are calculated for this course choice.

To view how to calculate your points go to the **Student Resources** section of www.cao.ie or see the CAO Handbook. A points calculator and converter is available at www.cao.ie.

All eligible applicants are then placed on a list, in order of academic merit, for each course that they applied for.

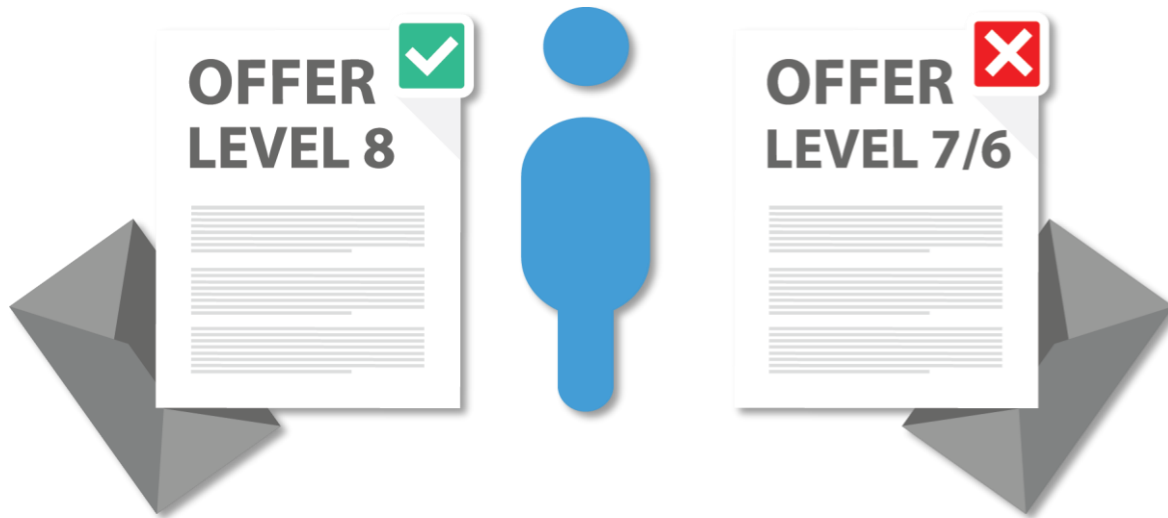
Minimum Entry Requirements + Points
Score = **Position on Order of Merit List**

Place Allocation



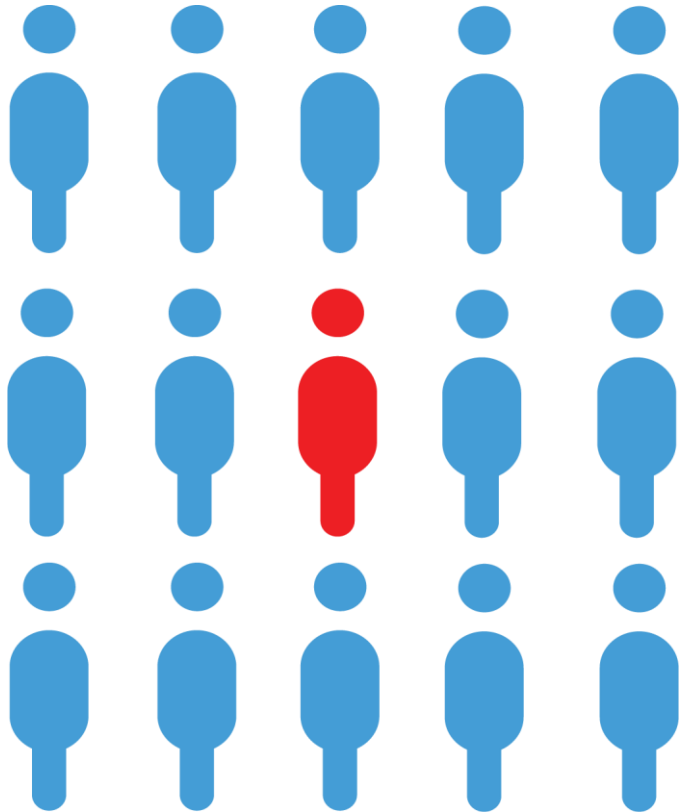
- The admissions officers of the Higher Education Institutions tell CAO how many places are to be offered on each course.
- CAO then makes offers to the required number of applicants on each course, starting with the applicant with the highest points and working down until enough places have been offered.

Place Allocation



- Should some applicants decline to accept their offers these places become available in the next round of offers.
- They will be offered to the next applicants on the Order of Merit list. This process continues until all of the places on the course are filled or until all of the eligible applicants on the Order of Merit list have been offered places.

Place Allocation

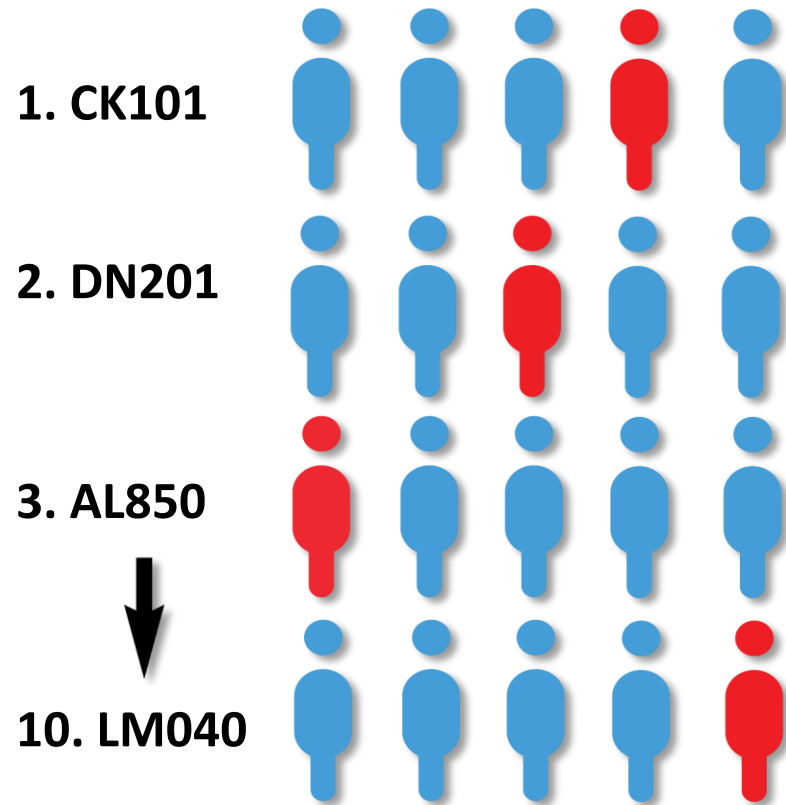


EXAMPLE

– no results yet!

- These are the applicants for CK101 - Arts in UCC.
- The examination results have not yet been released, so these applicants are in no particular order.
- We are going to trace the progress of the applicant marked in **red**.

Place Allocation

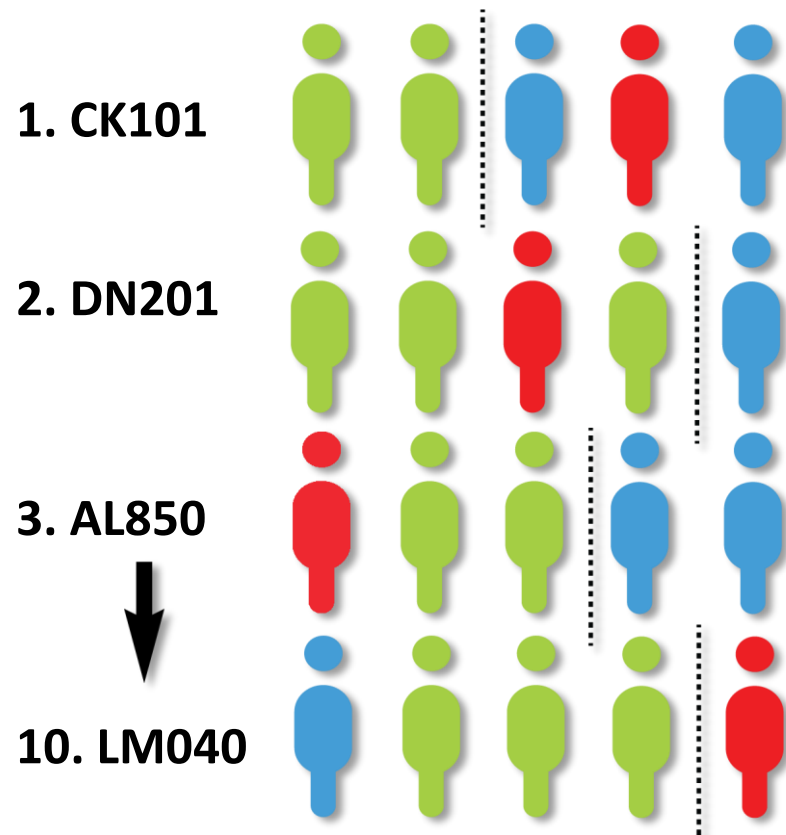


EXAMPLE

– LC results have been released.

- Applicants are placed in a queue for each course they applied for. Their position in the queue is determined by their points.
- The applicant with the highest points is placed at the top of the queue. The points achieved by the applicant in red determines her position in the queue for each course she has applied to.

Place Allocation

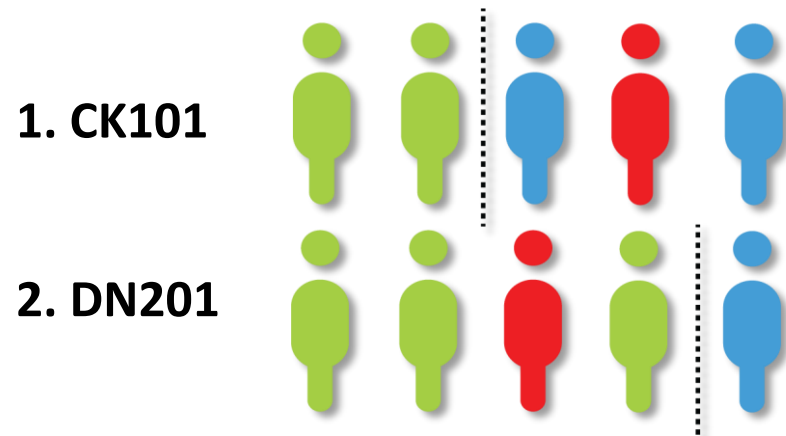


EXAMPLE

– HEIs issue R1 offers

- The applicants marked in **GREEN** have enough points to be offered places.
- The applicant marked in **RED** has enough points for her second preference.

Place Allocation



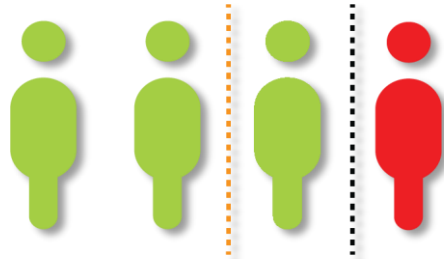
EXAMPLE

– HEIs issue R1 offers

- The applicant in **RED** is offered her second preference, the highest preference course that she has enough points for, and she will now disappear from the queue for all her lower choices.
- Placing DN201 as her second preference meant that she would prefer to receive an offer on DN201 than on any other course except CK101 - which is her first preference.

Place Allocation

1. CK101

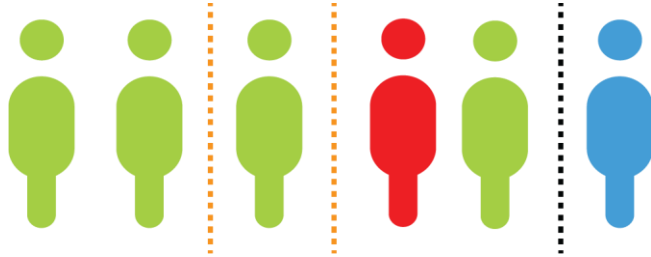


EXAMPLE – R2 offers

- After Round 2 offers are issued, our applicant is now in first place on the waiting list for her first preference course.
- She has already accepted her 2nd preference course. **Accepting or not accepting** her 2nd preference course will not prevent her from receiving an offer of her 1st preference course if she is deemed eligible by the institution in a later round.

Place Allocation

1. CK101



EXAMPLE – An offer is issued in R3 for her 1st preference!

- In the third round of offers two more offers are made on CK101 and our applicant, who was at the top of the queue, now receives an offer.
- She may do nothing and remain in DN201 or she may accept the offer.

Genuine Order



- You do not need to guess what the points are going to be for the courses you are interested in.
- Simply list your courses in genuine order of preference from the highest preference 1, to the lowest preference 10.
- If you are entitled to an offer, you will be offered the highest preference that you are entitled to.

Common Queries

Q

I have received an offer of my 2nd preference course – if I accept this offer does this mean I won't get any further offers?

Q

I received my 3rd preference course but I would prefer my 4th, what should I do?

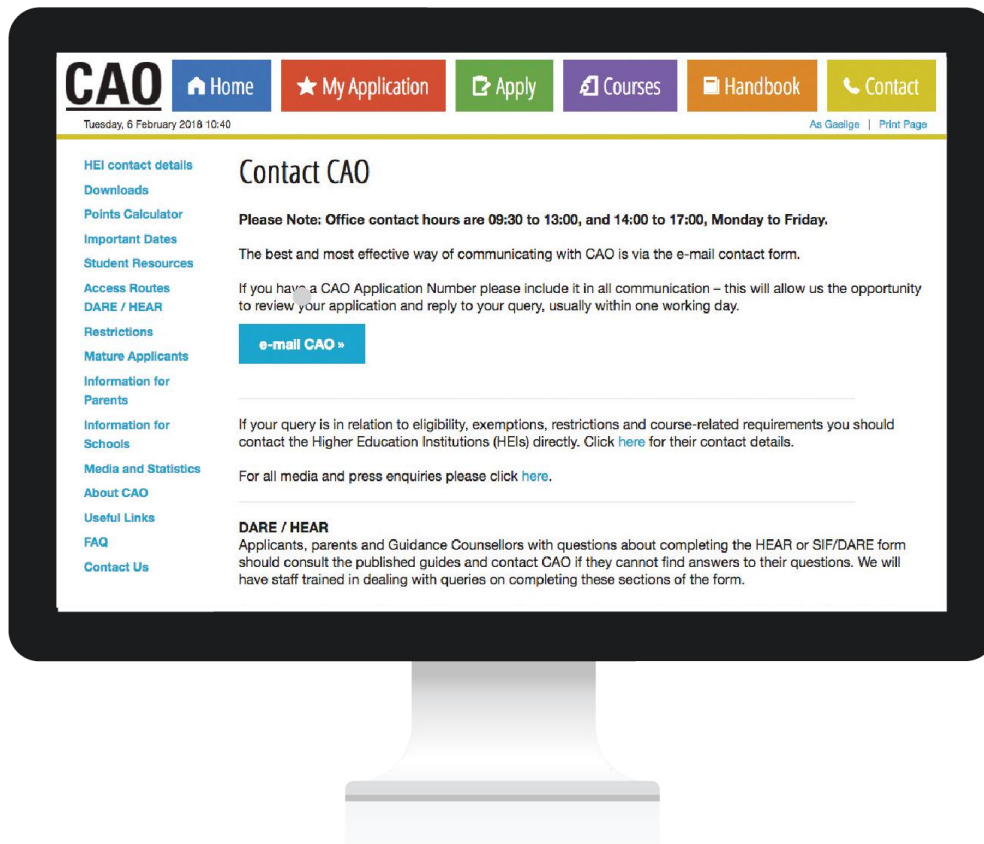
Q

I have the points, why didn't I receive an offer?

Q

I have not received any offers, what are my options?

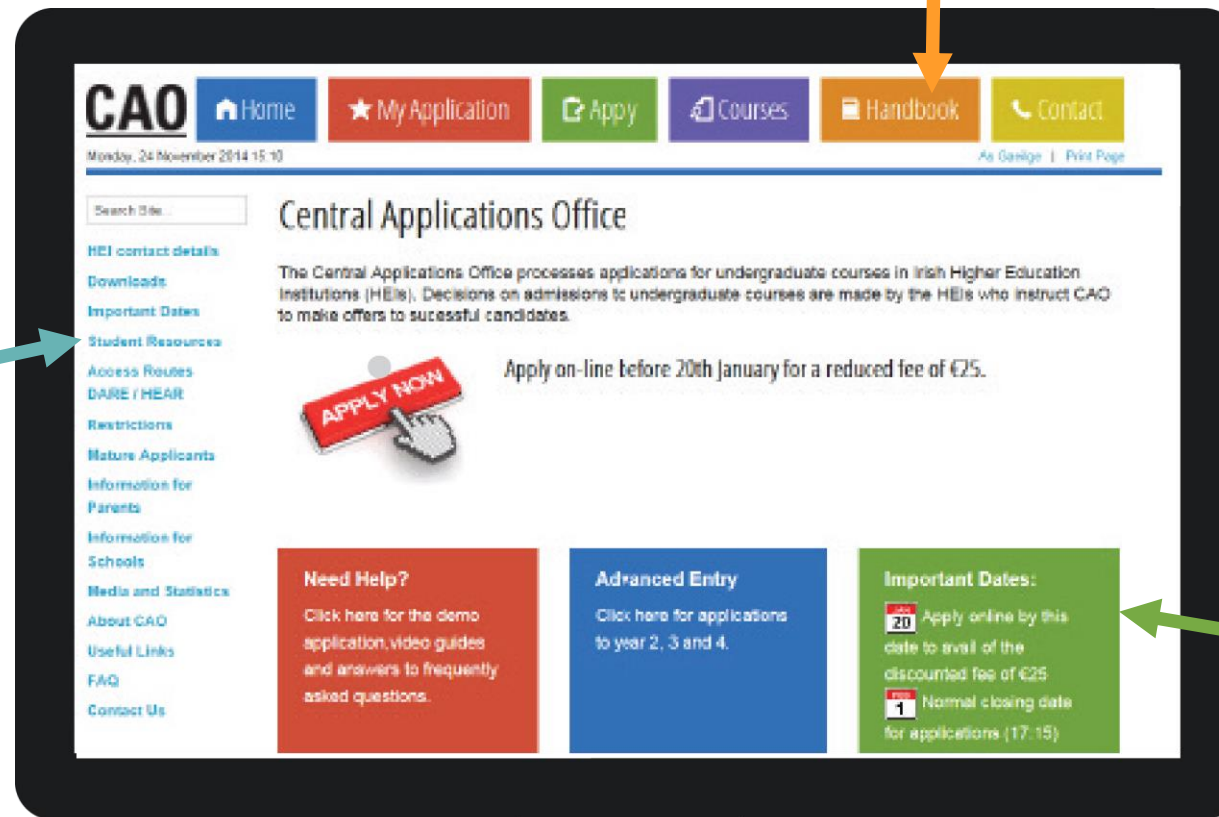
Communication with CAO



- The easiest and most efficient way to communicate with CAO is by using the Correspondence Section of your CAO Account. Give us as much information as possible and you will receive a reply to your query, usually within one working day.
- Always quote your CAO application number in any communication with CAO.
- If you post something to CAO always obtain a certificate of posting at the post office. This is a free service and it offers you peace of mind.

Useful Resources

Visit the 'Student Resources' section accessible here for Video Guides and useful resources including the 'Demo Application' facility.



An online copy of the CAO Handbook is available here

Watch this space for 'Important Dates'.

Finally...



Remember to carefully read all of the documents and instructions from CAO.

Most applicants follow the simple instructions from CAO and get along just fine.



If you are unclear on any matter concerning the application process, please contact us via our website: www.cao.ie