

# National Centre for Guidance in Education

Applying to Higher Education from Further Education  
in association with CAO / IUA and HEI.



Lárionad Náisiúnta *um* Threoir *san* Oideachas  
National Centre *for* Guidance *in* Education



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

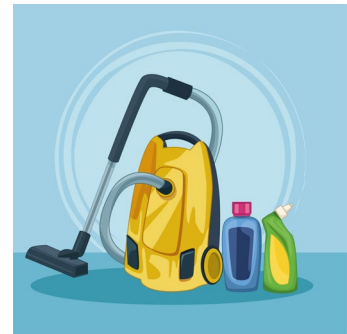


# 'Housekeeping' : A quick note on our post-primary webinar series



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- Relevant topics, up-to-date information and thought-provoking content (which can be adjusted to suit the needs of your school).
- Certificate of Attendance for live event.
- Useful resource (editable template for Guidance Planning).
- Recorded webinar for further reflection / future reference.
- Today: 2:30 – 4 / Questions welcome in 'chat' during presentation





# The Panel



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**NCGE:** Dr. Carol Guildea, Guidance Programme Coordinator (Post Primary)

**CAO:** Eileen Keleghan, Communications Officer

**HEI:** Lillian Griffin, Admissions Officer, Munster Technological University

**IUA:** Colm Downes, Access Programme Manager

**NCGE:** Mary Stokes, Guidance Programme Coordinator (FET)



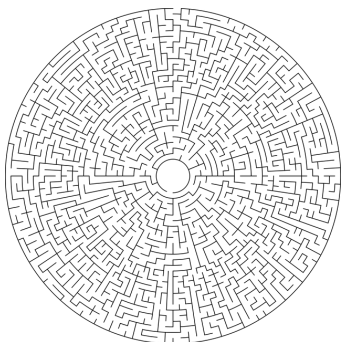


# Contextualising this webinar



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- An overview of the process of progression from Further Education (FE) to Higher Education (HE).
- Focus on the practical implications and key considerations involved in transitioning from Further to Higher Education.
- Focus on information, empowerment and inclusion: lifelong guidance is addressed in relation to a systematic approach to progression.

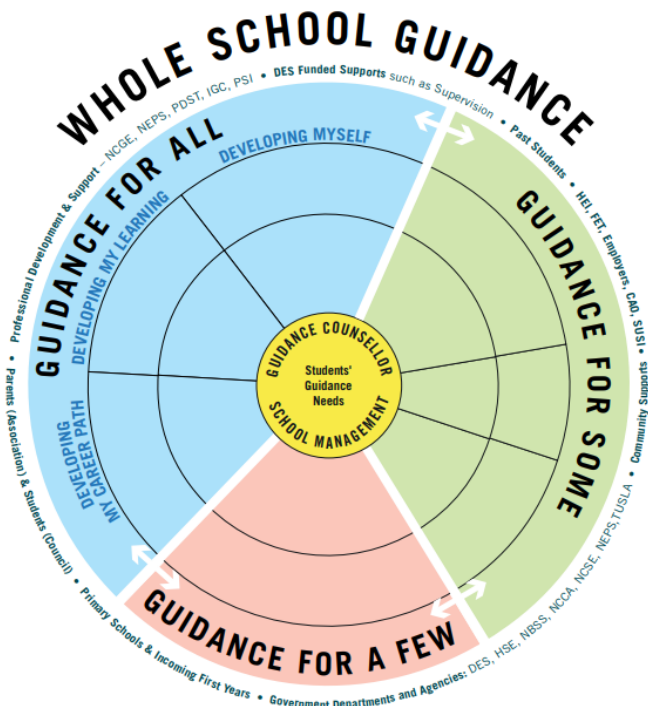




# Inclusion...the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.



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As we know:

- FE = A Qualification in itself: for all / some / a few
- Students develop themselves / their learning / career path
- Multiple paths of progression to HE/Employment

## Developing Myself

- Developing & maintaining self-esteem & a positive self-concept
- Interacting effectively with others (face-to-face & online)
- Developing & growing throughout life

## Developing My Learning

- Employing effective personal learning/exam strategies
- Making educational choices in line with career aspirations

## Developing My Career Path

- Using career related information & sources appropriately
- Understanding the world of work & life roles
- Managing career development & decision making



# Representing this Information in the Guidance Plan: An editable template

<https://www.ncge.ie/www.ncge.ie/resource/template-guidance-plan-applying-he-from-fe>



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Page 1 of 2

Acmhainní don Iar-Bhunscoil
Resources for Post Primary

### Template for Guidance Plan: Applying to Higher Education from Further Education

This resource has been developed in order to provide an example of how the content from the webinar [‘Applying to Higher Education from Further Education’](#) can be incorporated into a post-primary Guidance plan.

This template aims to provide a stimulus for thought and is not prescriptive in terms of the content of a guidance plan. It may be adapted to meet the needs of the school and appended into a preexisting Guidance plan.

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**Focusing on Further Education**

Further Education is discussed with students throughout their time in our school as follows:

**Junior Cycle**

Junior cycle students engage in [‘Guidance Related Learning’](#) content in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year and Further Education is noted and introduced within the units of learning. For example, in 3<sup>rd</sup> years, ‘Pathways’ are discussed with students and FE is discussed.

**Senior Cycle**

Activities within senior cycle include the following:

	TY students	5 <sup>th</sup> year students	6 <sup>th</sup> year students
<b>Guidance for All</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-One guidance class focusing directly on FE</li> <li>- Mr. Smith facilitates second class reflecting on his experience of a PLC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One guidance class focusing on FE.</li> <li>- Mr. Smith facilitates second class reflecting on his experience of a PLC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two guidance classes focusing on FE.</li> <li>- Students encouraged to attend open days/evenings.</li> <li>- Groupwork on preparing for interview.</li> <li>- References for students who will be applying, completed by year head.</li> </ul>
<b>Guidance for Some</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students complete a ‘mock application’ and interview for PLC as an optional activity. Feedback provided by GCIR and interviewing teacher.</li> </ul>	

Page 2 of 2

Acmhainní don Iar-Bhunscoil
Resources for Post Primary

<b>Guidance for a few</b>	Guidance Counsellor takes group of students who show interest in FE as a group at this stage in their education and facilitates discussion.	Personal guidance to support students who are nervous about interviewing.
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**Parents**

Parents are informed about further education throughout the school year in the following ways:

- Our ‘Careers Night’ for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year students and their parents takes place in October of each academic year. At this information evening, the Guidance Counsellor outlines the benefits of FE in her presentation and three of the local FE colleges present options to all attending.
- The school holds a ‘CAD Information Evening’ one month after our careers night for parents of 6<sup>th</sup> year students. The Guidance Counsellor includes content on colleges of FE and details how a student can (i) find out more and (ii) apply.
- The school website provides a section of information on colleges of FE.
- The school twitter account notifies followers of key dates/information concerning local Colleges of FE.
- The ‘Guidance’ noticeboard is located in the canteen and is visible for all parents during parent teacher meetings and any other events that take place in the school e.g., the Talent competition that takes place each March.

**Whole School Approach**

- The Guidance Counsellor did a survey with staff a year ago to ascertain how many members attended a college of FE and what course they did. With the permission of staff members, this information was summarized in poster form and is displayed in key locations throughout the school. Students can ask members of staff about their previous education and pathways into their current roles.
- Teachers facilitated mock interview for 5<sup>th</sup> year students as noted in the table above.
- Guidance Counsellors work with Modern Languages teachers to compile resource on interviewing/ preparing for Oral Assessments.
- Year heads complete references for students as noted in the table above.

Developed by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) 2022

Developed by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) 2022





A background image showing a group of students in a classroom. A young woman with glasses is in the foreground, looking down. Other students are visible in the background, slightly out of focus.

# Applying to HE from FE

*An overview of the HE application process for QQI FET/FETAC applicants*

**CAO**  
[www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)



# Applying to HE from FE

- FE applicants should apply through CAO for the level 6/7/8 courses listed on the CAO website/CAO Handbook
- When completing the application form, FE applicants should tick box 2 for '2002 – current year further education level 5/6 exams'
- If the FE applicant has any additional qualifications, e.g. Leaving Certificate or if they are mature, they should tick these boxes also
- Applicants applying on the basis of FE or school leaving qualifications can apply by the normal (1 February at 5pm) or late (1 May at 5pm) application closing date. If the applicant also wishes to be considered on mature grounds they should apply by 1 February at 5pm and complete the mature applicant form by 1 March at 5pm.



# QQI FET/FETAC Qualifications and Assessments

- If the applicant is taking, and/or has completed, a FETAC Level 5/6 award between 2002 and current year, they enter their assigned PPS Number when completing the qualifications and assessments section of the CAO application form - CAO will then automatically receive details of their qualifications from QQI
- If their FETAC examinations were fully completed pre-2002 they must select section 3 in the qualifications and assessments summary part of the CAO application, they will be asked to provide further information when completing the qualifications and assessments section in detail. They must also send a statement of results or a certificate of results.



# Minimum entry requirements

- QQI FET/FETAC applicants must obtain a full QQI FET/FETAC level 5/6 major award. A QQI FET/FETAC Level 5/6 Record of Achievement is NOT sufficient
- A major award normally contains 8 components and the award may be accumulated over more than one academic year
- Certain courses may require specific results in a particular QQI FET/FETAC level 5/6 major award module
- All applicants applying to CAO on the basis of QQI FET/FETAC results must check that they meet the minimum entry requirements – information should be obtained from the websites or prospectuses of the higher education institutions



# Minimum entry requirements

CAO Home My Application Apply Courses Handbook Contact

Wednesday, 5 January 2022 12:27 [As Gaelige](#) | [Print Page](#)

Contact a HEI  
Downloads  
Mature Applicants  
**QQI FET Applicants**  
Advanced Entry  
Entry to Medicine  
Restrictions  
Media and Statistics

**Covid-19 update:**  
The CAO premises are temporarily closed due to the government measures introduced to control the spread of Covid-19. If you have a question for CAO, please click [here](#). Please note: postal correspondence is being processed as usual.

The Central Applications Office processes applications for undergraduate courses in Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Decisions on admissions to undergraduate courses are made by the HEIs who instruct CAO to make offers to successful candidates.

Read the interactive 2022 CAO Handbook here

Applicants Parents / Guardians Guidance / Schools Access Routes DARE / HEAR

Further Education and Training & Apprenticeship Open Days Have a question? Important Dates

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[About CAO](#) | [Data Privacy](#) | [Media and Statistics](#)

CAO Home My Application Apply Courses Handbook Contact

Wednesday, 5 January 2022 12:28 [As Gaelige](#) | [Print Page](#)

Contact a HEI  
Applicant Resources  
Downloads  
Important Dates  
Have a Question?  
Mature Applicants  
Access Routes DARE / HEAR  
QQI FET/FETAC  
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Restrictions  
Parents / Guardians  
Guidance / Schools  
Media and Statistics  
Useful Links  
Contact Us

## 2022 QQI FET/FETAC Requirements Look-up (CAO Courses only)

QQI FET/FETAC level 5/6 major awards are made up of a number of component awards. Different sets of components lead to different major awards.

The applicant must be getting a FULL major award. Some courses require a specific major award and/or a specific grade in specific components.

For information on the evaluation of QQI FET/FETAC qualifications, click [here](#).

QQI FET/FETAC requirements are provided where supplied. For HEIs not listed, you may wish to view 2021 entry requirements by clicking [here](#).

Enter a CAO course code and click on Go.

Course Code :

Select an Institution and click on Go.



Institution :

For HEIs not listed, you may wish to view 2021 entry requirements by clicking [here](#).

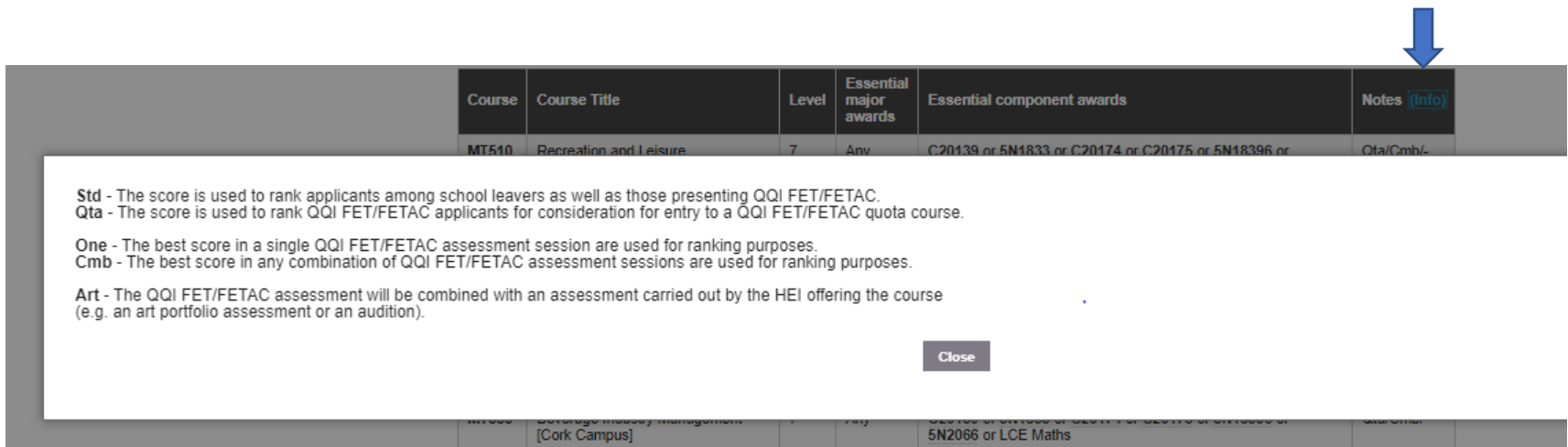
Whilst every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the QQI FET/FETAC Links information is correct at the time of compilation, Central Applications Office, Galway (CAO) is not bound by any error in, or omission from, the material published.

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# Minimum entry requirements

Course	Course Title	Level	Essential major awards	Essential component awards	Notes (Info)
MT510	Recreation and Leisure Management [Cork Campus]	7	Any	C20139 or 5N1833 or C20174 or C20175 or 5N18396 or 5N2066 or LCE Maths	Cta/Cmb/-
MT541	Business (Common Entry) [Kerry Campus]	7	Any	None	Std/One/-
MT550	Business (Common Entry) [Cork Campus]	7	Any	C20139 or 5N1833 or C20174 or C20175 or 5N18396 or 5N2066 or LCE Maths	Cta/Cmb/-
MT551	Business Administration [Cork Campus]	7	Any	C20139 or 5N1833 or C20174 or C20175 or 5N18396 or 5N2066 or LCE Maths	Cta/Cmb/-
MT552	Tourism Management [Cork Campus]	7	Any	C20139 or 5N1833 or C20174 or C20175 or 5N18396 or 5N2066 or LCE Maths	Cta/Cmb/-
MT553	Beverage Industry Management [Cork Campus]	7	Any	C20139 or 5N1833 or C20174 or C20175 or 5N18396 or 5N2066 or LCE Maths	Cta/Cmb/-
MT554	Hospitality Management [Cork Campus]	7	Any	C20139 or 5N1833 or C20174 or C20175 or 5N18396 or 5N2066 or LCE Maths	Cta/Cmb/-
MT555	Culinary Arts [Cork Campus]	7	Any	C20139 or 5N1833 or C20174 or C20175 or 5N18396 or 5N2066 or LCE Maths	Cta/Cmb/-
MT556	Food Business Innovation [Kerry Campus]	7	Any	None	Std/One/-
MT571	Early Childhood Care and Education [Kerry Campus] 	7	Any	None	Std/One/-
MT572	Early Childhood Education and Care [Cork Campus] 	7	Any	None	Cta/Cmb/-

# Quota or non-quota courses



The screenshot shows a table with columns: Course, Course Title, Level, Essential major awards, Essential component awards, and Notes. A blue arrow points to the 'Notes' column header. A modal window is open over the 'Notes' column, displaying the following text:

**Std** - The score is used to rank applicants among school leavers as well as those presenting QQI FET/FETAC.  
**Qta** - The score is used to rank QQI FET/FETAC applicants for consideration for entry to a QQI FET/FETAC quota course.  
**One** - The best score in a single QQI FET/FETAC assessment session are used for ranking purposes.  
**Cmb** - The best score in any combination of QQI FET/FETAC assessment sessions are used for ranking purposes.  
**Art** - The QQI FET/FETAC assessment will be combined with an assessment carried out by the HEI offering the course (e.g. an art portfolio assessment or an audition).

Close

Course	Course Title	Level	Essential major awards	Essential component awards	Notes <a href="#">[info]</a>
MT510	Recreation and Leisure	7	Any	C20139 or 5N1833 or C20174 or C20175 or 5N18396 or	Qta/Cmb/-
MT500	Marketing Management [Cork Campus]	7	Any	5N2066 or LCE Maths	Qta/Cmb/-

# Quota of Places

- It is important to note that for certain courses in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) there is a reserved quota of places for applicants presenting QQI FET/FETAC Level 5/6 awards
- Where a quota applies, QQI FET/FETAC applicants compete for these places separately from other applicants
- QQI FET/FETAC applicants should check the prospectus of the course that they are applying to for more information on quotas and entry-requirements.



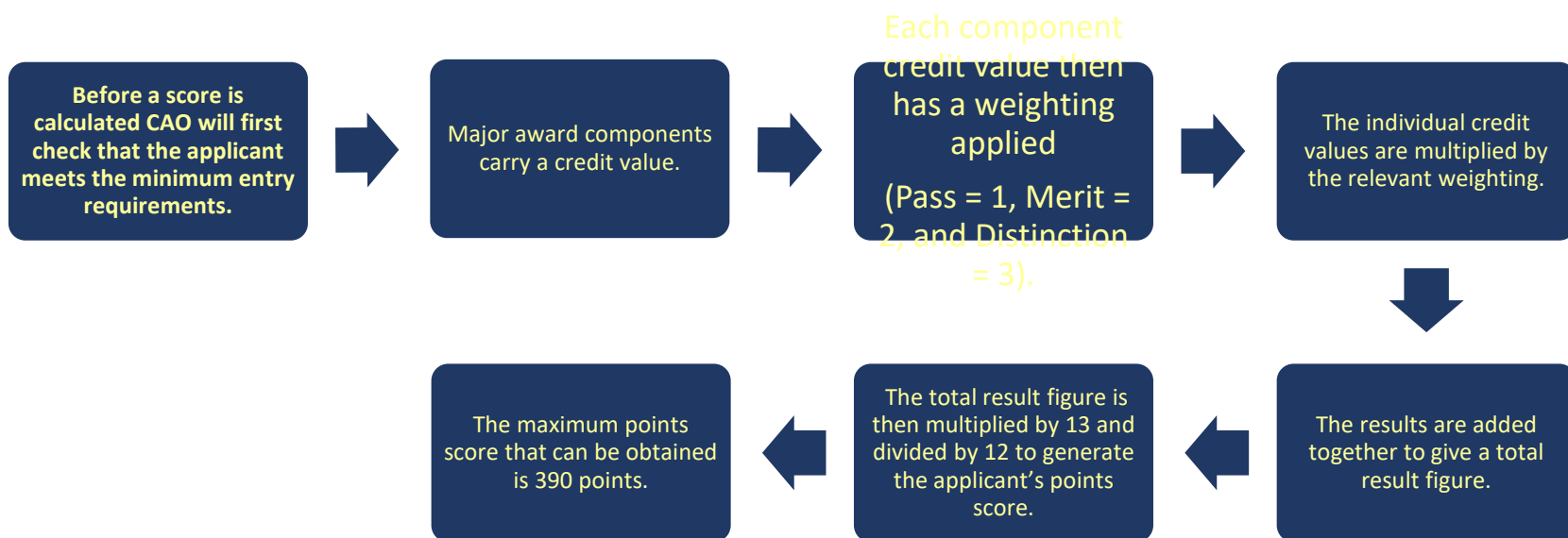
# How FE applicants are assessed

- For FE applicants who meet minimum entry requirements, a points score is calculated and the applicant is ranked by their order of merit (i.e. applicant with highest points goes to the top of the list, second highest goes second, and so on)
- The offer round that the applicant is competing in depends on whether they are being considered for a quota or non-quota course.
- If the applicant has additional qualifications, Admissions Officers will also assess the applicant based on their additional information (or using the central evaluation software in the case of an applicant who is also presenting Leaving Certificate results). The results which present the best outcome for the applicant will be used by the HEIs when allocating places, so it is important that applicants supply CAO with evidence of all relevant qualifications.





# QQI FET/FETAC Applicant Scoring System



# Statement of Application Record

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



**contact CAO  
immediately.**

Before the end of May, all applicants are sent a Statement of Application Record to enable them to verify that all of their information has been recorded completely and correctly.

Applicants should check and confirm their CAO account carefully, and if there is any error or omission, update their information online or inform CAO immediately via the Correspondence Section of their account.

**Are the exam numbers correct (i.e. PPSN and/or Leaving Certificate if relevant)? Do not assume that they are.**

**Are all examinations mentioned?**

**Are all exemptions listed?**

**Are all of your courses shown and in the correct order?**

**Are all the course codes correct?**

# FE resulting – common errors and omissions

- The applicant must ensure that the PPSN supplied by their college/centre/provider to QQI is the same as the one the applicant has supplied to CAO. Unless we have the correct information the applicant's QQI FET or FETAC results cannot be considered. Take care not to substitute a letter such as O with a number such as 0 (zero). Be careful not to enter an I (i) where an L is required and vice versa.
- All QQI FET and FETAC awards completed in the years 2002 to 2021 inclusive should appear in the Qualifications and Assessments section of the applicant's account, along with the correct major award code. (If no major award was achieved the award code will read RAXXX – this indicates that a Component Certificate was achieved, but not a major award.)
- If the applicant indicated Further Education (box 6) on their CAO application, but should have ticked QQI/FET 2002 – 2022 (box 2), they should email CAO via the Correspondence Section of their account and instruct CAO to tick box 2 on the applicant's behalf
- Qualifications that may be included under the Further Education category (box 6) include City & Guild awards, FAS awards, BTEC level 4 or higher, Post-Leaving Certificate Courses (Republic of Ireland) etc
- CAO may contact applicants by email – it is important that applicants monitor their email address throughout the CAO process for important messages from CAO

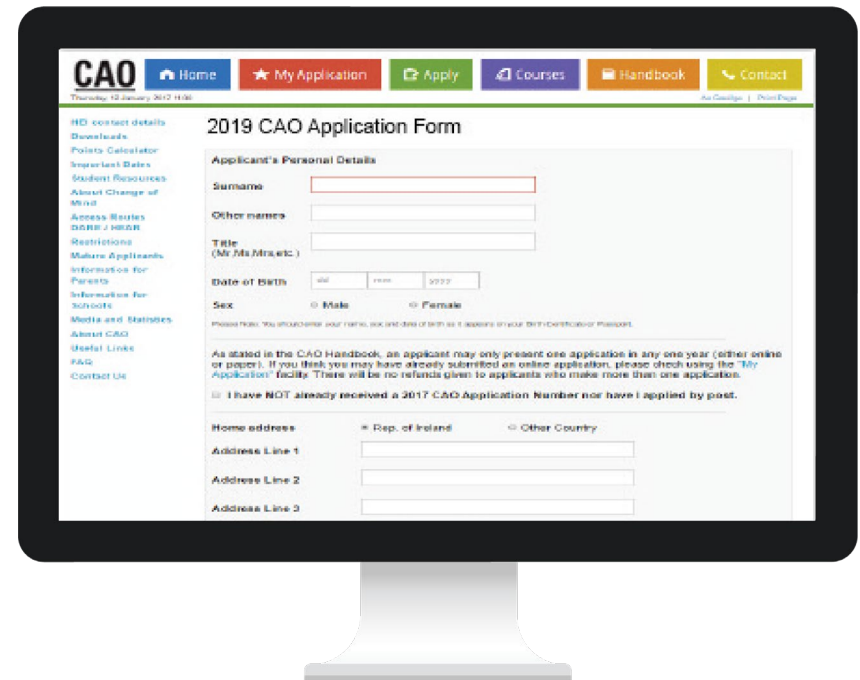
# CAO offers to FE applicants

- FE applicants competing for a quota course are considered in Round 0 (early August)
- FE applicants competing for a non-quota course are considered in Round One in competition with school leaving applicants (mid-August)
- If an FE applicant is also a mature applicant, and has completed the mature application form, they may be considered in Round A (early July) and subsequent rounds



# CAO resources for FE applicants

- CAO Handbook [www.cao.ie/handbook](http://www.cao.ie/handbook)
- CAO Demo application form [www.cao.ie/demo](http://www.cao.ie/demo)
- QQI FET/FETAC section [www.cao.ie/qqi](http://www.cao.ie/qqi)
- Applicants section of CAO website
- Video guide for QQI FET Applicants [www.cao.ie/video](http://www.cao.ie/video)



The image shows a computer monitor displaying the CAO website's application form. The browser's address bar shows the URL [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie). The page title is "2019 CAO Application Form". The navigation menu includes "Home", "My Application", "Apply", "Courses", "Handbook", and "Contact". The left sidebar contains links such as "HD contact details", "Downloads", "Points Calculator", "Specialist Sites", "Student Resources", "About Change of Mind", "Access Routes", "DARE / HERR", "Restrictions", "Mature Applicants", "Information for Parents", "Information for Schools", "Media and Statistics", "About CAO", "Useful Links", "FAQ", and "Contact Us". The main content area is titled "2019 CAO Application Form" and contains the "Applicant's Personal Details" section. This section includes input fields for Surname, Other names, Title (Mr/Ms/Mrs/etc.), Date of Birth (with separate fields for day, month, and year), and Sex (radio buttons for Male and Female). Below these fields is a warning: "PLEASE NOTE: YOU MUST CHECK THE DATE OF BIRTH AS IT IS A REQUIREMENT OF YOUR INTERNATIONAL PASSPORT." A note states: "As stated in the CAO Handbook, an applicant may only present one application in any one year (either online or paper). If you think you may have already submitted an online application, please check using the 'My Application' facility. There will be no refunds given to applicants who make more than one application." A checkbox is present with the text: "I have NOT already received a 2017 CAO Application Number nor have I applied by post." At the bottom, there are radio buttons for "Rep. of Ireland" and "Other Country", followed by three input fields for Address Line 1, Address Line 2, and Address Line 3.



**HEA** | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY  
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS



**MTU**

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Mumhan  
Munster Technological University

# FE Applications from an Admissions Perspective

Lillian Griffin

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

# What happens when we receive your application



- This will depend on the categories ticked by the applicant on their CAO Form ie: FE/Mature
- FE Applicants who also qualify as Mature applicants are assessed through both assessment tools
- Those meeting mature requirements will be sent to assessors within the college for consideration for Rd A also
- All others will be ranked for offers in Rd 0 in August, for Quota places or subsequent rounds depending on how points fall



# How are requirements decided

Each year the Heads of Dept/Course co-ordinators are asked to review the current requirements for their programmes

They are provided with progression rates of all categories of entrants from previous years to assess the pitfalls that prevent a student progressing ex maths

Where a potential recurring issue is observed in QQI applicants it may then be decided to put in place a requirement for this for incoming students

This requirement would come into play for entry for the following year ex 2023 if decided in 2022

# Requirements

<b>MT550</b>	Business (Common Entry) [Cork Campus]	7	Any	<b>C20139</b> or <b>5N1833</b> or <b>C20174</b> or <b>C20175</b> or <b>5N18396</b> or <b>5N2066</b> or LCE Maths	Qta/Cmb/-
<b>MT551</b>	Business Administration [Cork Campus]	7	Any	<b>C20139</b> or <b>5N1833</b> or <b>C20174</b> or <b>C20175</b> or <b>5N18396</b> or <b>5N2066</b> or LCE Maths	Qta/Cmb/-
<b>MT552</b>	Tourism Management [Cork Campus]	7	Any	<b>C20139</b> or <b>5N1833</b> or <b>C20174</b> or <b>C20175</b> or <b>5N18396</b> or <b>5N2066</b> or LCE Maths	Qta/Cmb/-
<b>MT553</b>	Beverage Industry Management [Cork Campus]	7	Any	<b>C20139</b> or <b>5N1833</b> or <b>C20174</b> or <b>C20175</b> or <b>5N18396</b> or <b>5N2066</b> or LCE Maths	Qta/Cmb/-
<b>MT554</b>	Hospitality Management [Cork Campus]	7	Any	<b>C20139</b> or <b>5N1833</b> or <b>C20174</b> or <b>C20175</b> or <b>5N18396</b> or <b>5N2066</b> or LCE Maths	Qta/Cmb/-
<b>MT555</b>	Culinary Arts [Cork Campus]	7	Any	<b>C20139</b> or <b>5N1833</b> or <b>C20174</b> or <b>C20175</b> or <b>5N18396</b> or <b>5N2066</b> or LCE Maths	Qta/Cmb/-

<b>MT836</b>	Mechanical Engineering [Cork Campus]	8	Any	Distinctions in 3 modules and a Merit in one from the following: <b>C20174</b> or <b>C20175</b> or <b>C20139</b> or <b>5N1833</b> or <b>5N2066</b> or <b>6N3395</b> or <b>5N0556</b> or <b>5N18396</b> or <b>5N0554</b> or <b>6M5154</b> or 6M20906 or 6M20520 or <b>5M2061</b> or LCE Maths (H4 or better)	Qta/Cmb/-
<b>MT837</b>	Sustainable Energy Engineering [Cork Campus]	8	Any	Distinctions in 3 modules and a Merit in one from the following: <b>C20174</b> or <b>C20175</b> or <b>C20139</b> or <b>5N1833</b> or <b>5N2066</b> or <b>6N3395</b> or <b>5N0556</b> or <b>5N18396</b> or <b>5N0554</b> or <b>6M5154</b> or 6M20906 or 6M20520 or <b>5M2061</b> LCE Maths (O3/H6 or better)	Qta/Cmb/-
<b>MT838</b>	Chemical and Biopharmaceutical Engineering [Cork Campus]	8	Any	Distinctions in 3 modules and a Merit in one from the following: <b>C20174</b> or <b>C20175</b> or <b>C20139</b> or <b>5N2066</b> or <b>6N3395</b> or <b>5N0556</b> or <b>5N18396</b> or <b>5N0554</b> or LCE Maths (H4 or better)	Qta/Cmb/-
<b>MT839</b>	Biomedical Engineering [Cork Campus]	8	Any	Distinctions in 3 modules and a Merit in one from the following: <b>C20174</b> or <b>C20175</b> or <b>C20139</b> or <b>5N1833</b> or <b>5N2066</b> or <b>6N3395</b> or <b>5N0556</b> or <b>5N18396</b> or <b>5N0554</b> or <b>6M5154</b> or 6M20906 or 6M20520 or <b>5M2061</b> or LCE Maths (H4 or better)	Qta/Cmb/-
<b>MT847</b>	Automotive Business Management and Technology [Cork Campus]	8	Any	Distinctions in 3 modules and a Merit in one from the following: <b>C20174</b> or <b>C20175</b> or <b>C20139</b> or <b>5M2468</b> or <b>5M2102</b> or <b>5M2061</b> or <b>5M2767</b> or LCE Maths	Qta/Cmb/-

# Additional Supports



Most HE institutes offer supports to FE applicants



Open Evenings/Information Sessions



May)the results of which can be used if the Maths requirement



Mature maths...Engineering and Science based courses



Orientation Programmes upon registration

# Cork Colleges Progression Scheme

MTU Cork Campus has a scheme for the admission of students who successfully complete courses in Further Education (FE) Colleges in Cork called the **Cork Colleges Progression Scheme (CCPS)**.

Under the CCPS a number of courses in MTU Cork are linked to certain courses in the FE colleges.

MTU Cork reserves a number of places on its linked courses for applicants achieving specified levels and other requirements in their awards.

# The importance of collaboration

Most Admissions Officers/Access Officers will have strong working relationships with their local FE Providers/ETB, as often these will be the main feeder institutions for FE applicants



We would be quite familiar with the current cohort of programmes in each linked institutions, and would act as the point of contact should a HoD wish to change the entry requirements for a programme



Use example of a new course – Smart Product Engineering

# Stats

Current guidance is that 15% of places should be offered to FE Applicants and in general we strive to adhere to this

Quota places are reviewed annually and in some courses the quota would be higher than 15%

One increasing concern is the inflation of points in recent years with some of our courses having been pushed beyond 390: one positive is Rd 0 is before points are set for Rd 1

# Frequently asked question of FE Applicants

Most queries we get  
are around entry  
requirements

Course linkage is  
another key area of  
enquiry

How can I increase my  
chances of getting in  
QQI Maths and  
Matures Maths Level 7s  
accept any award

Should I apply for  
Advanced Entry – QQI  
L6 required





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UNIVERSITIES  
ASSOCIATION**

# Applying to Higher Education – NCGE Seminar

18 January 2022



## Policy Context


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- National policy documents and reports emphasise the social, economic and cultural importance of learner progression between Further Education and Higher Education.
- SOLAS Further Education and Training (FET) Progression to Higher Education (HE) Transitions Reform Working Paper – June 2020
- The National Access Plan to 2021 (HEA) set an increased target of 10% (from 6.6%) of new entrants to Higher Education; this target has been maintained in the recent Progress Review (2018) of the NAP and Priorities to 2021.



## DARE and HEAR

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- Each university had its own **separate parallel access schemes**
  - Stagnating numbers of local applicants due to **splintered approaches**
  - 8 largest HEIs developed **common criteria and processes** for students with disabilities and underrepresented socioeconomic groups
  - **Greater visibility** for students and schools. **Larger numbers of applicants and admissions**
  - Operations mostly now undertaken centrally by Central Admissions Office and the Irish Universities Association
  - Universities now **focus on outreach and post-entry support**
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## IUA Further Education Progression Sub Group: Context

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- Developments have taken place across the HE sector to address this issue
- IUA's Access Steering Group (ASG) has decided to set up a Further Education Progression Subgroup to consider:
  - “how to contribute to achieving this target through a more consolidated system-wide approach...discuss the policy context and practices and to identify potential actions that could be pursued to progress towards achieving this national target.”



## IUA Further Education Progression Sub Group

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- Cross representation of Universities (Access and Admissions), CAO, SOLAS, NCGE and QQI
- ***Improve and simplify the process for FE award holders applying to Higher Education through the CAO, including advanced entry, building on the recent and ongoing developments within SOLAS, QQI and the Department of Education and Skills;***
- ***Develop a consistent way of expressing higher education matriculation requirements for FE applicants;***
- Contribute to implementation of the recommendations emerging from the ESRI evaluation of the PLC programme and the SOLAS response to it;
- Monitor the Further Education to Higher Education progression rates in the context of the National Access Plan and Systems Performance Framework;

Cross representation of Universities Access /Admissions, IUA, CAO, SOLAS, NCGE and QQI



## Sub Group: Work to Date

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1. Analysis of ***strategic approaches of Irish Universities to increase access to and success in HE by FET award holders***
2. ***Meta analysis of entry criteria*** for FET awards holders across all first year undergraduate programmes v LC entry
3. ***Collated data and reported on entry and retention for FET Award Holders in FE***



# 1

## Analysis of strategic approaches of Irish Universities to increase access to and success in HE by FET award holders





# Good Practice Example 1: Maynooth University

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## Student Benefits

- Academic skills:
  - Academic writing
  - Critical skills, analysing materials
  - Research
  - Continuous Assessment/Exams
- Communication skills – written/verbal
- Self-directed learning
- Meeting deadlines
- Confidence
- Exposure to third level subjects

## Strategy on FET Participation and Retention

- Strong and sustainable relationships with FET colleges/Guidance Counsellors
- Increased visits to CFEs (Admissions/Access)
- Inclusion in MAP Shadowing Programme/MU Open Days
- Website information
- Pathways
- MEND FET2HE Network
- College Connect – regional approach
- FET students supported by MAP:
  - Launchpad, MAP Drop-in, Student Advisors, MAP Academic Advisors, Technology support, MAP Moodle, general MAP communications, financial supports)
- Tracking FET students:
  - Using supports (MAP drop-in, SAF, 1916 Bursaries, SBAS)



## Good Practice Example 1: Maynooth University

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- MU's intake has increased to 196 (in 2019/20) from 100 (in 2014/15)
- Retention is around parity with mainstream



## Good Practice Example 2: UCC

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- **Strategy on FET Participation and Retention**

- T2UCC – workshops for QQI FET and Mature students
- Visits to Colleges of Further Education
- Taster sessions - programme specific
- QQI-FET Welcome and Orientation

- **Post Entry Support**

- Skills Centre (Note-Taking, critical thinking skills, exam preparation, time management)
- UCC PLUS Programme
- Disability Support Service
- Peer Support
- Financial Supports
- Counselling Service
- Scholarships - Quercus Talented Students Programme



## Good Practice Example 2: UCC

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- UCC's intake has increased to 201 in 2018 from 54 in 2012
- Developing and improving retention strategy ie surveying reasons for withdrawal from a programme.



# 2

## Meta analysis of entry criteria for FET awards holders across all first year undergraduate programmes v LC entry



## Analysis of entry criteria for FET awards holders across all first year undergraduate programmes v LC entry

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- All university first year undergraduate programmes
- Collected FET award holder entry criteria requirements (major/minor awards) across programmes for each university
- Collected LC entry criteria requirements for the corresponding programmes for each university
- Highlighted that FE entry criteria are less uniform than LC
- Presenting barriers to accessing the information and application and therefore more complex



# 3 Collated data and reported on entry and retention for FET Award Holders in FE



## What the Data is telling us

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- No of entrants by FET award holders into Irish Universities was 934 in 2019/20 (compared to 194 in 2010/11).
- Well developed pathways in First Year Arts, Social Sciences, and Celtic Studies. Other programme areas also working to develop pathways. Increased places available.
- Where a ***coordinated institutional approach*** is taken, the ***numbers follow***
- Where close links between FE Providers are provided for in strategic University approaches, there is a ***similar retention rate to mainstream cohort***





## What the Data is telling us

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- **Fragmented nature of application/progression/pathways to HE nationally**
- **Lack of national and central information/guidance on pathways from FET to HE**
- **Meeting HE entry requirements provides no guarantee of progression**
- **Little/fragmented recognition of FET qualification through advanced entry provision**
- Change in support
- Financial:
  - Socio-economic background
  - Childcare costs
  - Change in financial support from FET
- Mathematics



## Next Steps

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- Work with Universities to develop more uniform ways of expressing entry requirements
- Monitor impact of actions on application, admission and retention data
- Continue to identify barriers to same (address on a phased basis)



## References

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- <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2019/01/HEA-Progress-Review-2021-NAP.pdf>
- <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/06/National-Plan-for-Equity-of-Access-to-Higher-Education-2015-2019.pdf>
- <http://www.transition.ie/files/2020/des-transitions-sub-group-working-paper-june-2020.pdf>



Thank you.





# Final Thoughts



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**NCGE:**

Mary Stokes, Guidance Programme Coordinator (FET)

# Where are FET students going?

**Progression:** Almost one fifth of PLC graduates are progressing to higher education, representing almost one-fifth of the overall first-year intake at institutes of technology and technological universities.

**Completion:** Emerging evidence that they are well prepared to complete their degree programmes

**Variety:** FET includes all these programmes...

- **Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) QQI level 5/6 in Colleges of Further Education / Dual Provision**
- **Apprenticeships** 17 new apprenticeship programmes will be developed in 2022
- **Traineeships** <https://www.solas.ie/programmes/traineeship/>
- **Youthreach - Community Training Centres (CTCs)**
- **Local Training Initiative Programme (LTI)**
- **Bridging/Foundation Courses**
- **Specialist Training Providers (STPs)**
- **Specific Skills Training (SST)**
- **Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)**

# Reflections & Conclusions



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## **SOLAS Future FET: Transforming Learning 2020 – 2024**

**Ambitious new strategy based around the three core pillars of building skills, fostering inclusion, and facilitating pathways.**

## **What skills are currently seen as valuable for Careers?**

Consistent in all contexts is the increased value for employability are **competencies** such as **Project Management, Transversal skills, Communications, Information Technology and Digital Skills, Creative and Innovative skills, and skills like problem solving communication skills and interpersonal skills.**





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# Discussion / Q & A



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