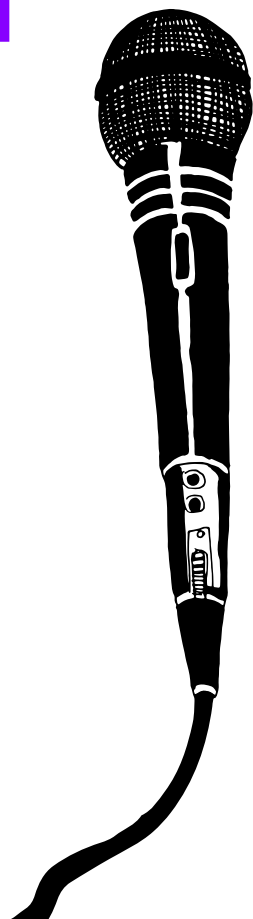


FREE THOUGHTFM



DIFFERENT ROUTES TO EDUCATION

There is more than one way to get to college. This booklet will give you information about how to apply for college and other courses, grants that are available to pay college fees, information for mature students and the Leaving Certificate points system.

GETTING AN EDUCATION

WHAT'S THIS BOOKLET GOING TO TELL YOU?

This booklet has been written to show you the different ways you can get into college, when you might have thought you didn't stand a chance.

You might have circumstances you think rule you out of going to college: money, age, Leaving Cert results, or even all of these.

Loads of people don't even try because they think that their only shot is doing a good Leaving Certificate and having loads of money to support them.

This isn't the case. There are other ways to do what you want to do.

We have written this booklet because sometimes websites have a habit of overcomplicating things. We want this message to be as clear as possible. We want you to know that getting a third-level education, a PLC course or an apprenticeship is within everyone's reach.

FREE THOUGHT FM

Just a bit of background first. Why is this being written now?

This has been produced as part of *FREE THOUGHT FM*, which is a new art project by an artist called Garrett Phelan.

It's happening in The Douglas Hyde Gallery for ten weeks, from March to May 2019. For four of those weeks, Garrett will be broadcasting *FREE THOUGHT FM* live from the gallery. He'll be having a big, public conversation about inequality in Dublin and going to college, live, on air. Everyone is invited to take part.

FREE THOUGHT FM wants to talk about inequality in this city and wants to ask what needs to change to make things more equal.



POST LEAVING CERT COURSES

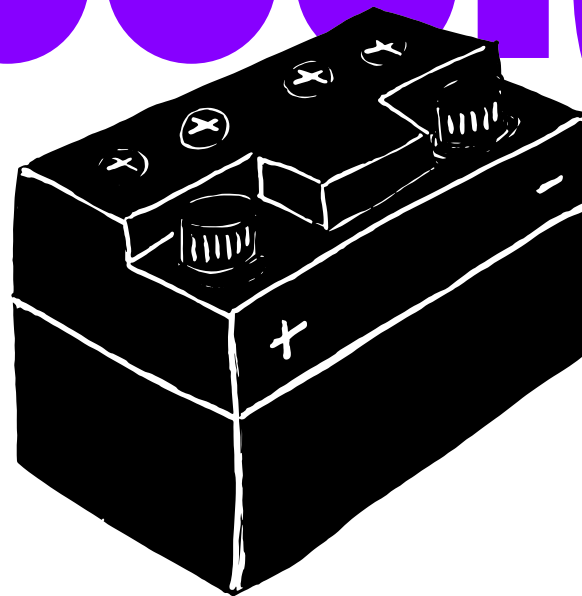
PLC

A Post Leaving Cert (PLC) course is usually a full-time course that lasts one or two years. They happen in community education centres, schools and colleges around the country.

Students do not apply for PLC courses through the CAO application process. Students can apply directly to PLC courses.

Some PLC courses will qualify you to go on to further education at third level.

If you haven't done your Leaving Cert, but have relevant work experience, you may still be eligible for a PLC. The basics needed for these courses are normally five passes on the Leaving Certificate but ask to meet with a course coordinator and explain your circumstances.



FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on Post Leaving Cert (PLC) courses go to www.plccourses.ie

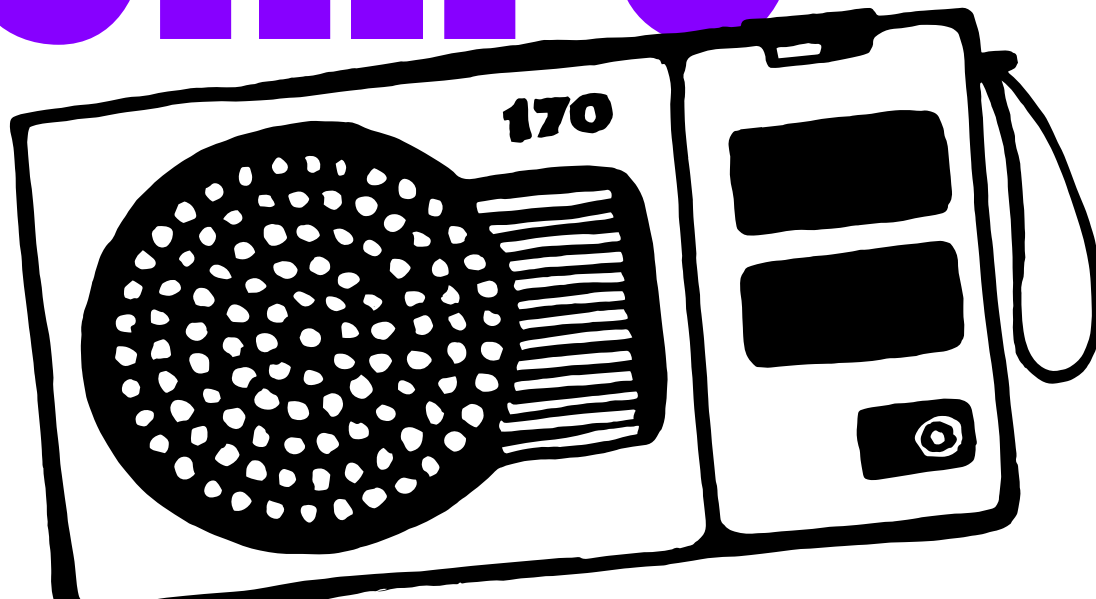
APPRENTICESHIP

An apprenticeship is a programme of education and training. It is a really great way for you to mix learning in the workplace with learning in an education or training centre.

It's a mix of on-the-job employer-based training and off-the-job training for you.

You don't need to do the Leaving Cert to apply for an apprenticeship.

You can begin most traditional craft apprenticeships once you've turned 16.



There are 3 ways to qualify for a craft apprenticeship:

- * Grade D in five Junior Cert exams.
- * If you don't meet the Junior Cert requirements, you may still be able to register if you complete an approved Pre-Apprenticeship course.
- * You may be eligible if you are over 16 years old and have three years of relevant work experience.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on apprenticeships contact your local Education and Training Board (ETB) or visit the website www.apprenticeship.ie.

SUSI

THE SUSI GRANT SCHEME: HOW TO AFFORD COLLEGE, WHEN YOU CAN'T AFFORD COLLEGE.

SUSI stands for Student Universal Support Ireland and it was set up to help give access to education for the people who can least afford it.

You think you can't go to college because you don't have enough money to support yourself. That's understandable. But thankfully, it's easy to prove wrong.

There are grants in place to make it easier for you to afford college.

The SUSI grant scheme is the main way to receive help with the cost of education.

SUSI GRANTS GIVE YOU MONEY. BUT WHAT FOR?

There are two types of grant. A maintenance grant and a fees grant. The maintenance grant gives you money to live while you're in college, and the fees grant pays for the course itself.

THE FEES GRANT

This one is worked out based on how much your parents, parent or guardian earn. If you're a mature student, it's based on how much you earn yourself.

THE MAINTENANCE GRANT

This grant is worked out based on how close you live to the place you want to study. If you live really close by, it's called an 'Adjacent Rate'; if you live further away it's called a 'Non-Adjacent Rate'.

THE BIG QUESTION: HOW MUCH CAN YOU GET?

The fees grant goes to a maximum of €6,270 per year
The maintenance goes to a maximum of €5,915 per year

But all the grants are calculated on a case-by-case basis. The best thing to do is apply and speak to someone in SUSI.

There's lots of things that can affect a student being eligible for the SUSI grant but the SUSI website has an Eligibility Reckoner which will give you an idea of whether or not you qualify. Don't assume you won't qualify! Check the site because it could change your life.

THINGS THAT WILL AFFECT THE GRANT INCLUDE:

The income limit is €39,875. SUSI take into account the earnings of your family and will take into account how many children are in the family and how many other people are going to college. You might get more of an allowance if another member of your family is already a student.

You don't have to be a first-time student to get the SUSI grant. Maybe you went to college before and it didn't go so well. It happens. People drop out and have a change of heart down the line. You can still get the SUSI grant so long as:

- * You have had a five-year break in study.
- * You are 23 years old on the first of January the year your course commences.
- * You lived independently of your parents the previous year.

The SUSI isn't just for undergraduate students, (students doing a diploma or degree), you can also get it for postgraduate (Masters or PhD) and for Post Leaving Cert courses.

SUSI isn't just for studying in Ireland. If you want to study abroad in the EU, you can also apply.

SUSI ADVICE

**HERE'S SOME ADVICE FROM
THE PEOPLE MOST QUALIFIED
TO GIVE IT. NOT TEACHERS,
BUT OTHER STUDENTS WHO'VE
GOTTEN THE SUSI GRANT**

Do not leave the application to the last minute.

Follow up on everything you send to them.

Get a contact name for everyone you speak to.

Get all your documentation in order at the same time.
Review it all and send everything off at the same time.

Be organised with everything you have.

Prepare all your documents in advance, especially your
bank statements.

Call SUSI if you have any questions on what might apply
to you or not.

Give yourself enough time to apply as you may be asked
for supporting documentation.

Keep your passwords safe.

Work with your parents – you won't know all the info
you need to provide yourself.

SUSI Support Desk

**Opening Hours: Monday to Friday
(9.00am – 5.30pm), excluding public holidays.**

Email: support@susi.ie

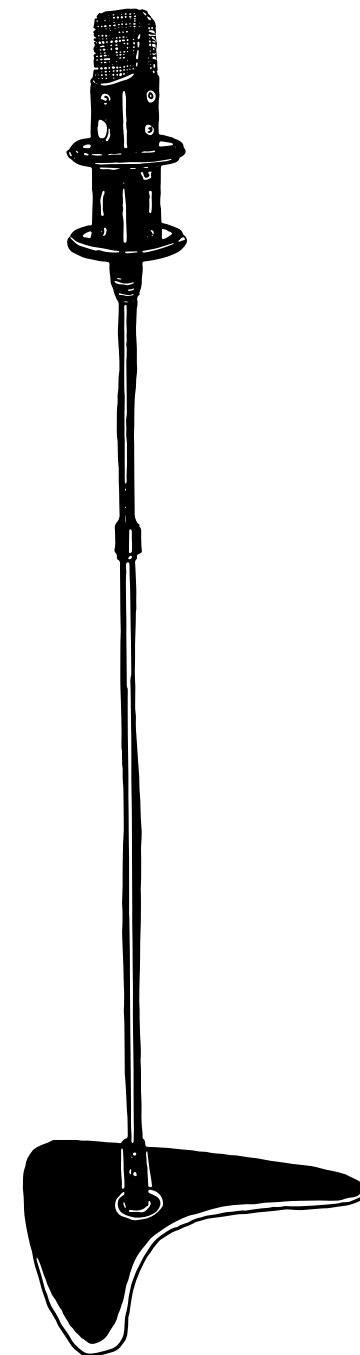
Phone: 0761 08 7874

www.twitter.com/susihelpdesk

www.facebook.com/susisupport

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information
on the SUSI grant scheme
visit www.susi.ie



MATURE STUDENTS



So the Leaving Cert might not have gone so well, but you're older now and you still want to go to college. Don't worry, you still can. If you are over 23, you do not always need to have a Leaving Cert to become a mature student. The colleges usually do an interview process and ask you about your life experience, work experience and so on. Check out each college for the different rules for mature students.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on becoming a mature student visit www.cao.ie and select 'Mature Applicants'.

THE CAO

You might remember this one, but it's grand if you don't. The CAO stands for the Central Applications Office. It's the place where you send your application when you want to go to college in Ireland.

It's the main way used to apply for college courses, but it's not the only option. There are other ways to get a place on a course, such as doing a Post Leaving Certificate Course (PLC), an Apprenticeship, or even going abroad to study.

When you sit the Leaving Cert, each result that you get has what's called a 'points' value.

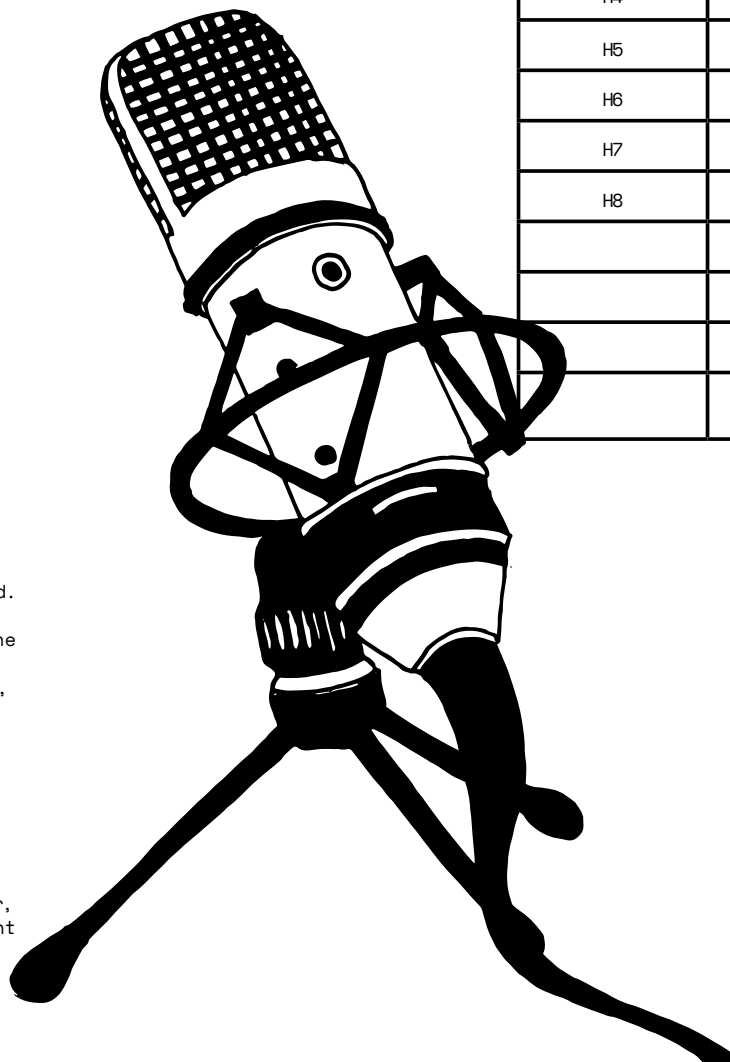
For each course listed under the CAO, there are a certain number of points needed to get a place on that course.

All of the points from your Leaving Cert results are added together, and you can then do the course that you choose if you have the right number of points (or more) to get onto that course.

CAO POINTS ON OFFER

Higher Level	Points	Ordinary Level	Points
H1	100		
H2	88		
H3	77		
H4	66		
H5	56	01	56
H6	46	02	46
H7	37	03	37
H8	0	04	28
		05	20
		06	12
		07	0
		08	0

If you look at the graph, you can see the difference between how many points are given for higher level subjects versus ordinary level subjects. It is really worth taking some time to figure this out as it can make a huge difference to the decisions you make about which level to do in your subjects.



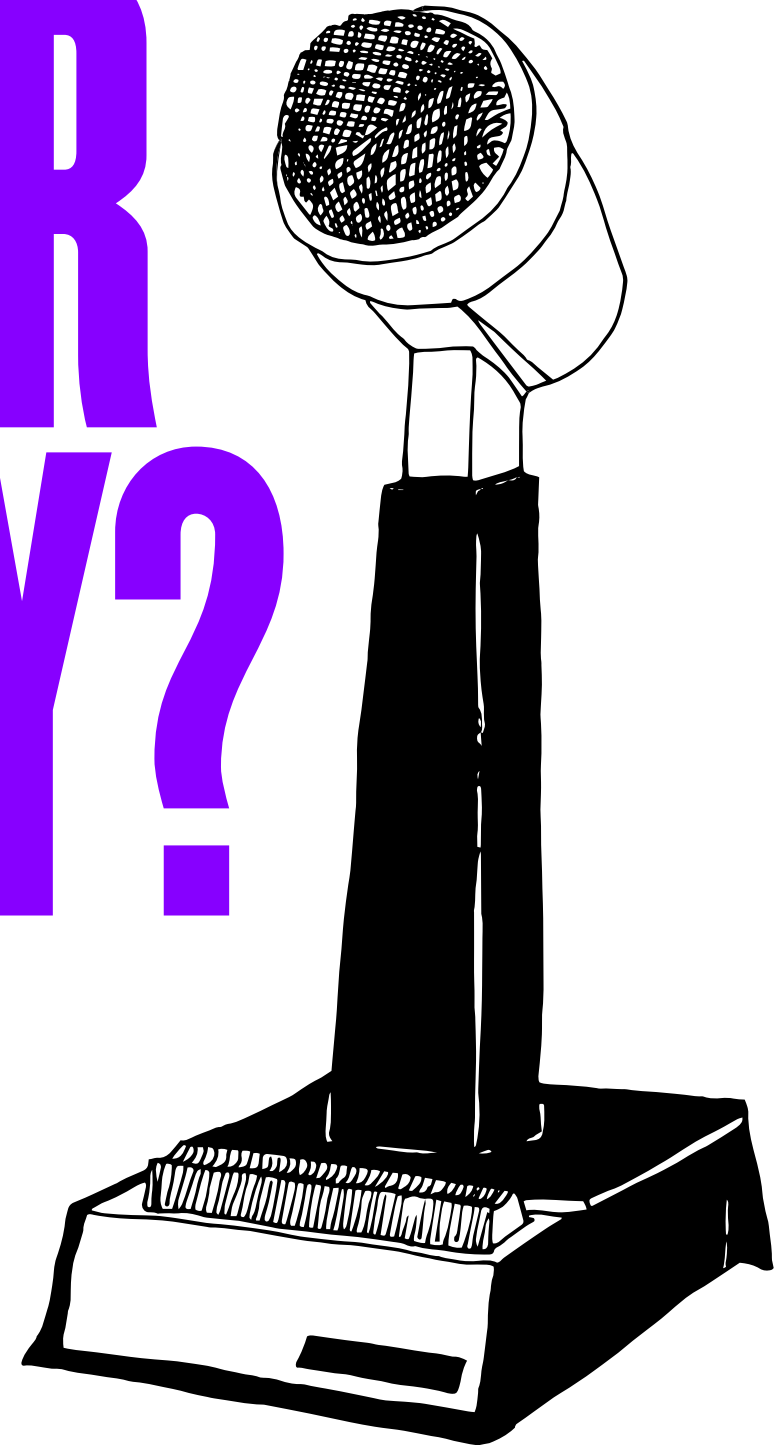
HIGHER OR ORDINARY?

**BEFORE DECIDING TO TAKE
HIGHER OR ORDINARY LEVEL,
IT'S WORTH THINKING ABOUT
THESE FACTS:**

The top grade (H1) for a higher level subject gives you **100 CAO points**. At ordinary level, the top grade (O1) only gives you **56 CAO points**. 56 CAO points is the same amount you get for a H5 at higher level.

A H7 result on a higher level subject gives you **37 CAO points**. An O7 result on an ordinary level subject gives you **0 CAO points**.

25 bonus points will be awarded for higher level mathematics for H6 grades and above. This means a H6 result in higher maths gives you 71 points, while an O1 will only give you 56 points



CAO APPLICATION

IMPORTANT CAO DATES

These dates apply for the 2018/19 year and they were correct when this booklet was published in March 2019, but the deadlines are around the same time every year. If you're reading this for a later year, you should check the CAO website for the exact dates.

This academic year, the CAO opening date was 5 November 2018.

Fee for application is €30 until 20 January 2019.

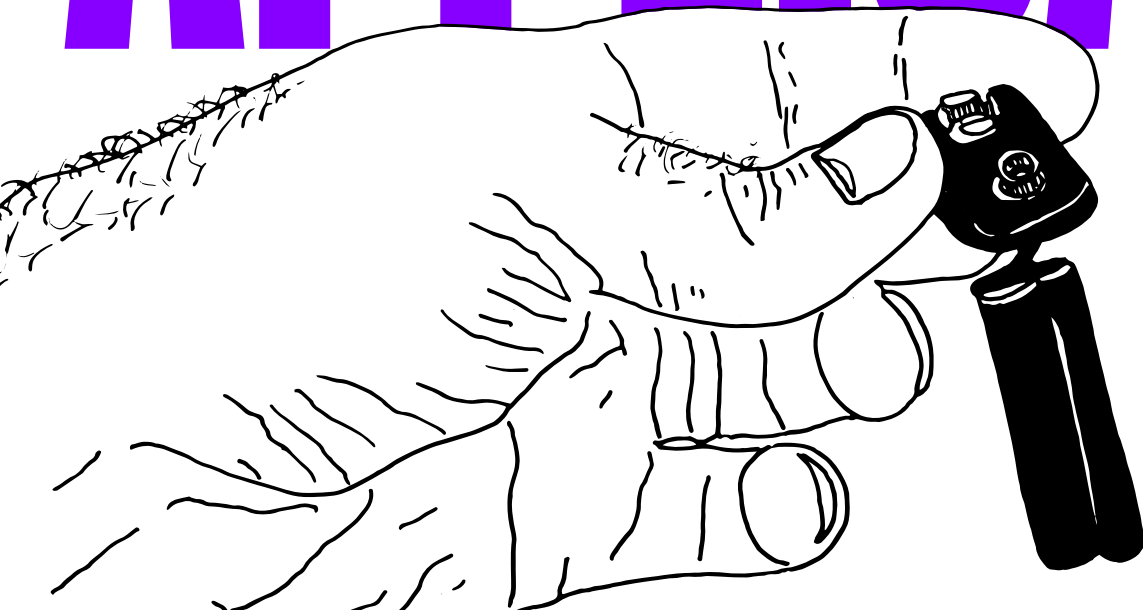
Fee for application increases to €45 until 1 February 2019.

Fee for application increases to €60 until 1 May 2019. (Restrictions apply)

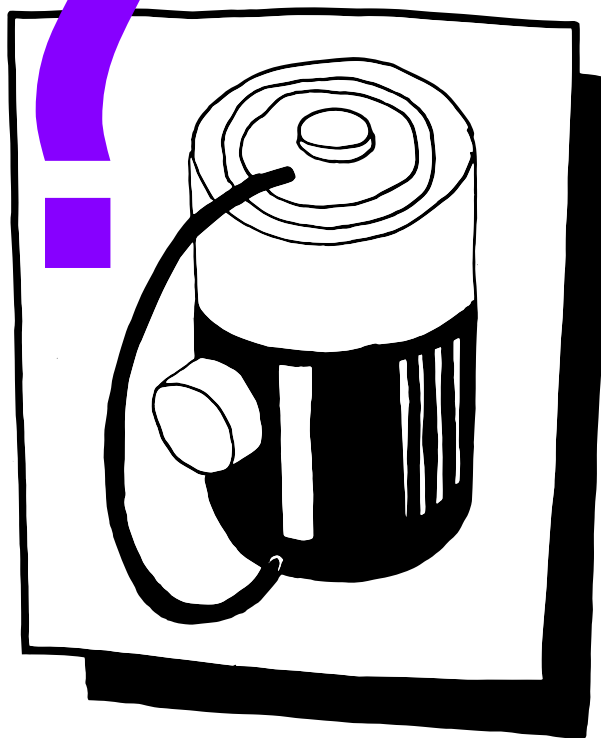
Fee for exceptional late application is €60. The final deadline is 22 July 2019. (Restrictions apply)

WHEN TO DO IT AND HOW MUCH IT COSTS

The cost of applying for your CAO will go up the longer you leave it. It is better to apply for your CAO as early as possible. You can change your mind about what courses you are applying for at a later date. Just go online and register your application. You can add course choices later when you know what you want to apply for.



CHANGE OF MIND?



NOT SURE ABOUT YOUR CHOICE?

You can change your course choices as often as you like until **1 February 2019** for no extra charge.

There is a €10 fee for changing your courses between **1 February and 1 March 2019**.

You cannot change courses between **1 March and 6 May 2019**.

THERE'S ROOM FOR CHANGING YOUR MIND

From **6 May to 1 July 2019**, you will be able to change your course choice online, free of charge. If you change online, you will get an email to let you know the change has been made.

IRISH FOR THE LEAVING:

WHEN CAN YOU AVOID DOING IRISH FOR THE LEAVING CERT?

If you were not born in the Republic of Ireland or if you went to school for a long time outside of Ireland, you might be able to get 'an exemption' from doing Irish to go to college. 'An exemption' means you don't have to follow the same rule as everyone else.

This means that you can apply to the NUI colleges (listed to the right) and will not need Irish as a subject to get in.

Students who have dyslexia or other specific learning difficulties may also be able to apply for this exemption.

If you want to apply for an NUI exemption, you must contact the NUI (see www.nui.ie for details). You also need to say this on your CAO online application. It's really important to apply to the NUI no later than 21 days after opening your CAO account.

If you're applying to somewhere else, they might have different rules for needing Irish in the Leaving Cert. So if your college isn't on the list, contact them directly.

DO YOU HAVE TO DO IT? EVEN IF YOU'RE TERRIBLE AT IT?

Before applying for any course, it is important to check what are the basic points and subjects you need to get in.

The National University of Ireland colleges require the following for entry:

6 Leaving Certificate subjects, including English and Irish.

WHAT ARE THE NUI COLLEGES?

The NUI colleges are four universities, two colleges and five linked colleges that make up the NUI. Here's the list:

Universities:

[UCD - University College Dublin](#)

[UCC - University College Cork](#)

[NUIG - National University of Ireland - Galway](#)
[Maynooth University](#)

Colleges:

[RCSI - The Royal College of Surgeons Ireland](#)
[Institute of Public Administration](#)

Linked Colleges:

[Shannon College of Hotel Management](#)

[NCAD - National College of Art and Design, Dublin](#)

[St Angela's College, Sligo](#)

[Burren College of Art](#)

[Institute of Banking](#)

FREE THOUGHT FM is a public artwork that has no affiliation with the Central Applications Office (CAO), Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI), Education & Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) or The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR).

The information in this booklet is designed to provide helpful information on the subjects discussed. All recommendations are made without guarantee on the part of the author and publisher. The author and publisher disclaim any liability in connection with the use of this information.

The information supplied in this booklet is not professional advice. If you need specific advice around any of the subjects discussed in this booklet, please seek a professional who is licensed or knowledgeable in this area.

References are provided for informational purposes only and do not constitute endorsement of any websites or other sources. Readers should be aware that the websites listed in this booklet may change.

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