

January 8th, 2020

**Re: Reminder of Important Dates**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We hope you had a lovely Christmas and we would like to extend our best wishes to you and your families for 2020. The Guidance Department would like to take this opportunity to remind you of relevant and upcoming dates pertaining to your child's college application as follows:

**Higher Education:**

**1. UCAS deadline January 15<sup>th</sup> 2020**

For students applying to UCAS this year the deadline is fast approaching. The application must include colleges and courses selected by students in the UK system, relevant fees, the student's personal statement and reference from Mr. Lowry. Students have been well-advised and informed about this process in one-on-one guidance meetings.

**2. CAO deadline February 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 at 5:15pm**

Students apply for CAO online by visiting [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie). This site opened on November 5th, 2019. If students apply by January 20<sup>th</sup> the application fee is €30 otherwise between that date and February 1<sup>st</sup> the cost is €45. Courses must be selected in order of **genuine preference** thus, students select their course choices in order of 1-10 in either or both categories for level 8 and levels 6-7 courses. **We also recommend that courses are adequately researched and are in line with students' aptitude and ability to avoid disappointment when CAO offers are released in August 2020.**

Students who are selecting **restricted courses** (courses which require interview, portfolio, specialised or aptitude testing and/ or performance elements as part of the selection process) must include these courses on the CAO application by this date otherwise they will be ineligible to apply for such courses after this deadline date.

Students who may be eligible to apply for the **HEAR and DARE** schemes are advised to select those options (by simply ticking the appropriate box) on the CAO application online. This must be done by February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

**3. Access-HEAR and DARE Schemes:**

HEAR is based on economic disadvantage while DARE relates to disability (physical, learning and emotional etc.) For further information please visit [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie) and the list of colleges participating in these schemes are listed here. Alternatively information on both schemes can be found in the student CAO handbook pages 9-11. Anyone requesting further information please contact the Guidance Department.

The following is a list of relevant dates for both of these schemes:

- February 1<sup>st</sup>- select/tick the DARE and/or HEAR options on the CAO application
- March 1<sup>st</sup> -apply for DARE/HEAR or both schemes online
- March 15th -all relevant documentation required for both schemes must be submitted to CAO by this date. Failure to meet this deadline will exclude your child from these schemes.

Information was provided to parents who attended the CAO talk given by Kay Mitchell, Student Liaison Officer at NUIM in November and to all students requesting the information in class.

**There will be an Advice Clinic at Athlone I.T. on this Saturday January 11<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to 2 pm; this will assist parents with the application procedures for both HEAR and DARE schemes. Parents and students have found this facility very helpful in the past.**

**Further Education and Training:**

For Post Leaving Certificate Courses/PLCs, students must apply directly to the relevant colleges. Deadline dates are available on the PLC college websites. Application deadlines may vary and thus students need to have their research completed.

**All of the above was covered in Guidance class in Term 1 or in individual appointments with the School Guidance Counsellors and those requesting supplementary information were provided with the appropriate literature as available.**

In the coming months, students will be provided with information in relation to the college grant system ([www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie)) and college scholarships ([www.gotocollege.ie](http://www.gotocollege.ie) and on the colleges' websites) and preparation for college life.

Please do not hesitate to call contact us if you have any queries with regard to the information provided above.

Kind regards,

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Tom Lowry

Principal

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Josephine Meehan

Guidance Counsellor

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Francis Lee

Guidance Counsellor