Guidance & Counselling St. Mary's CBS, Portlaoise

Preparing to move on from Second Level Education

In June 2025

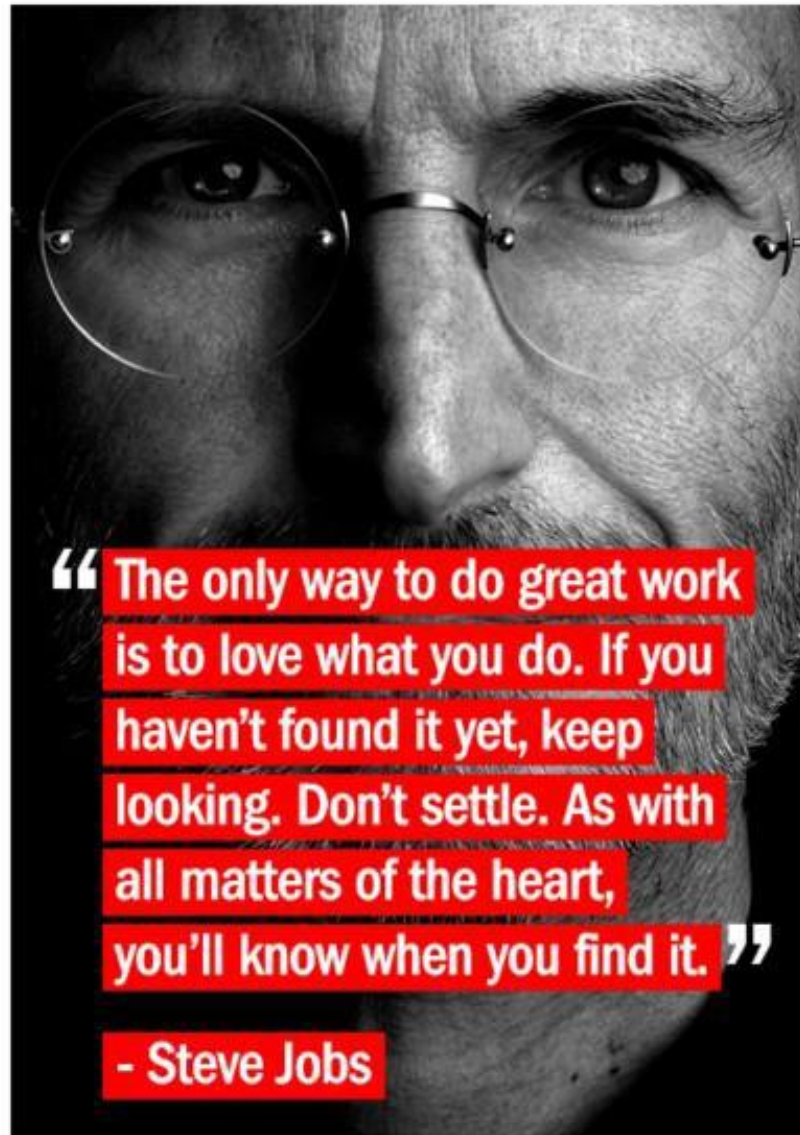# Overview of Presentation

We will offer you information about:

- **The National Framework for Qualification (NFQ)**
- **The CAO application process**
- **SUSI Grant**
- **HEAR and DARE**
- **UCAS**
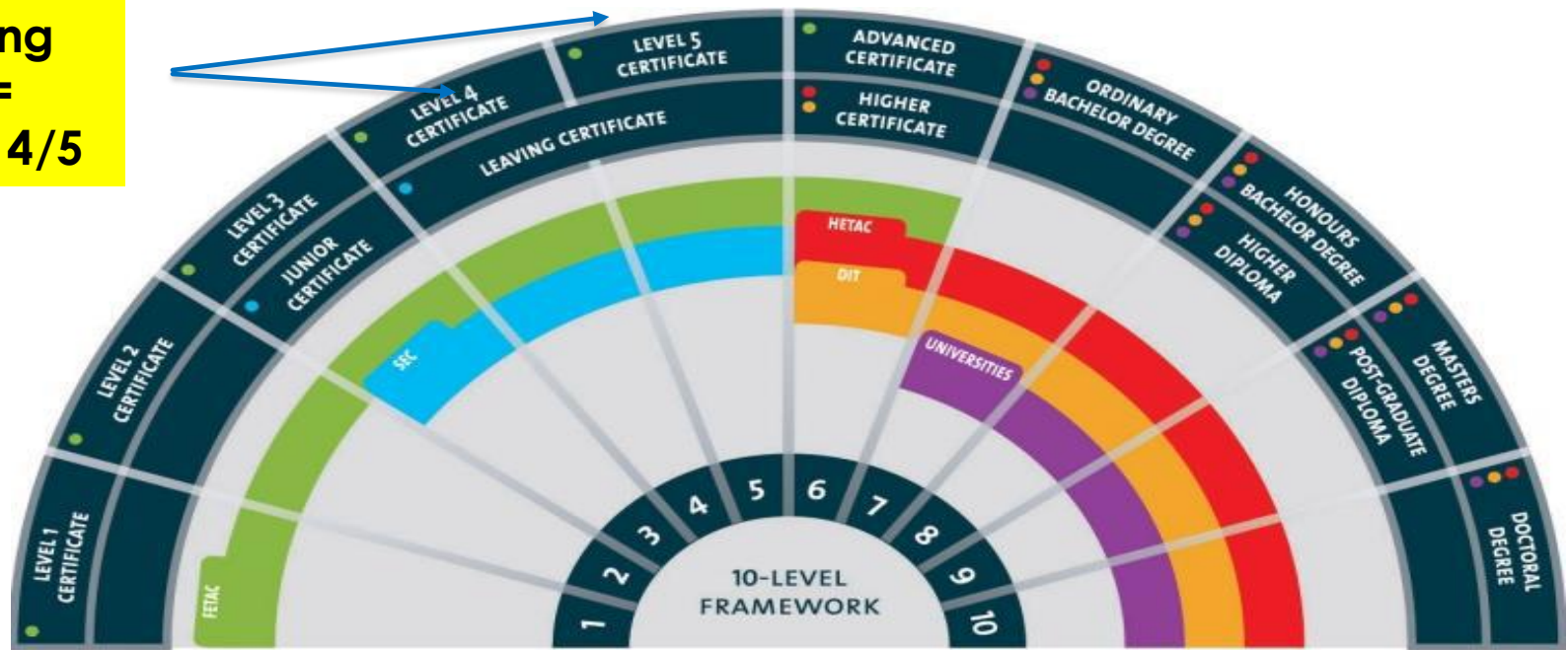- **Apprenticeships + PLC+ New Tertiary Degrees**

It's a BIG presentation in terms of length and importance...!

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it."

- Steve Jobs

Leaving Cert = Level 4/5

The National Framework for Qualifications

- 10 level framework.
- Generic ranges of standards of knowledge, skill and confidence at each level.
- Levels in the framework contain a wide range of awards.
- **Leaving Certificate is at level 4 and 5 on the NFQ**

Qualifications

AWARDING BODIES

LEVEL 5 CERTIFICATE

ADVANCED CERTIFICATE

LEVEL 4 CERTIFICATE

HIGHER CERTIFICATE

ORDINARY BACHELOR DEGREE

LEAVING CERTIFICATE

LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE

HONOURS BACHELOR DEGREE

HIGHER DIPLOMA

HETAC

DIT

UNIVERSITIES

POST-G... DIPLOMA

Post Leaving Certificate course Level 5 = 1 year study

Higher Certificates Level 6 = 2 years' study

Ordinary Degrees Level 7 = 3 years' study

Honours Degrees Level 8 = 4 years' study

Traditional Craft Apprenticeship usually Level 6= 4 years

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10-LEVEL FRAMEWORK

Students have so many options open to them after their Leaving Certificate

Ladder System = Progression

Universities
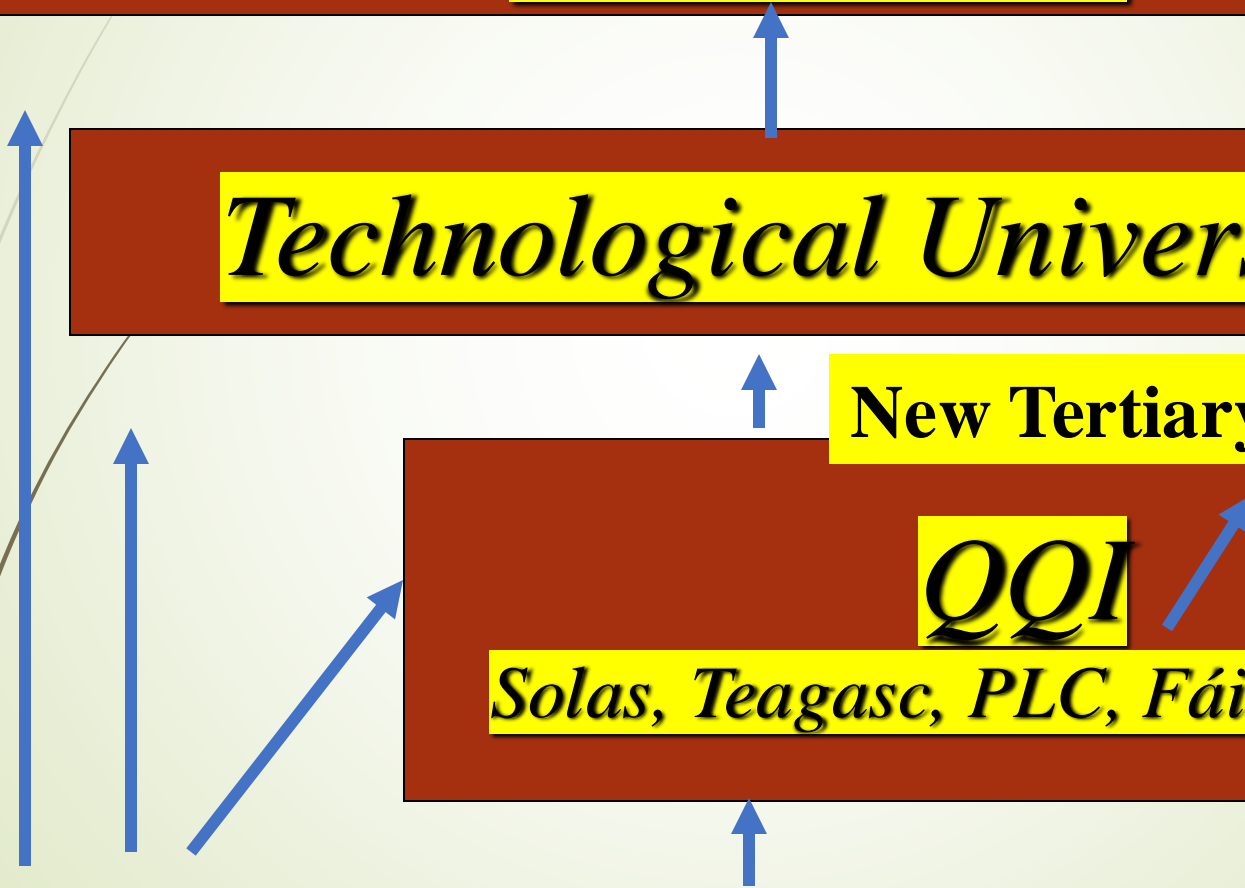
Technological Universities

New Tertiary Degrees

QQI

Solas, Teagasc, PLC, Fáilte Ireland

Leaving Certificate

Let us Start with applying to Higher Education-

What is CAO?

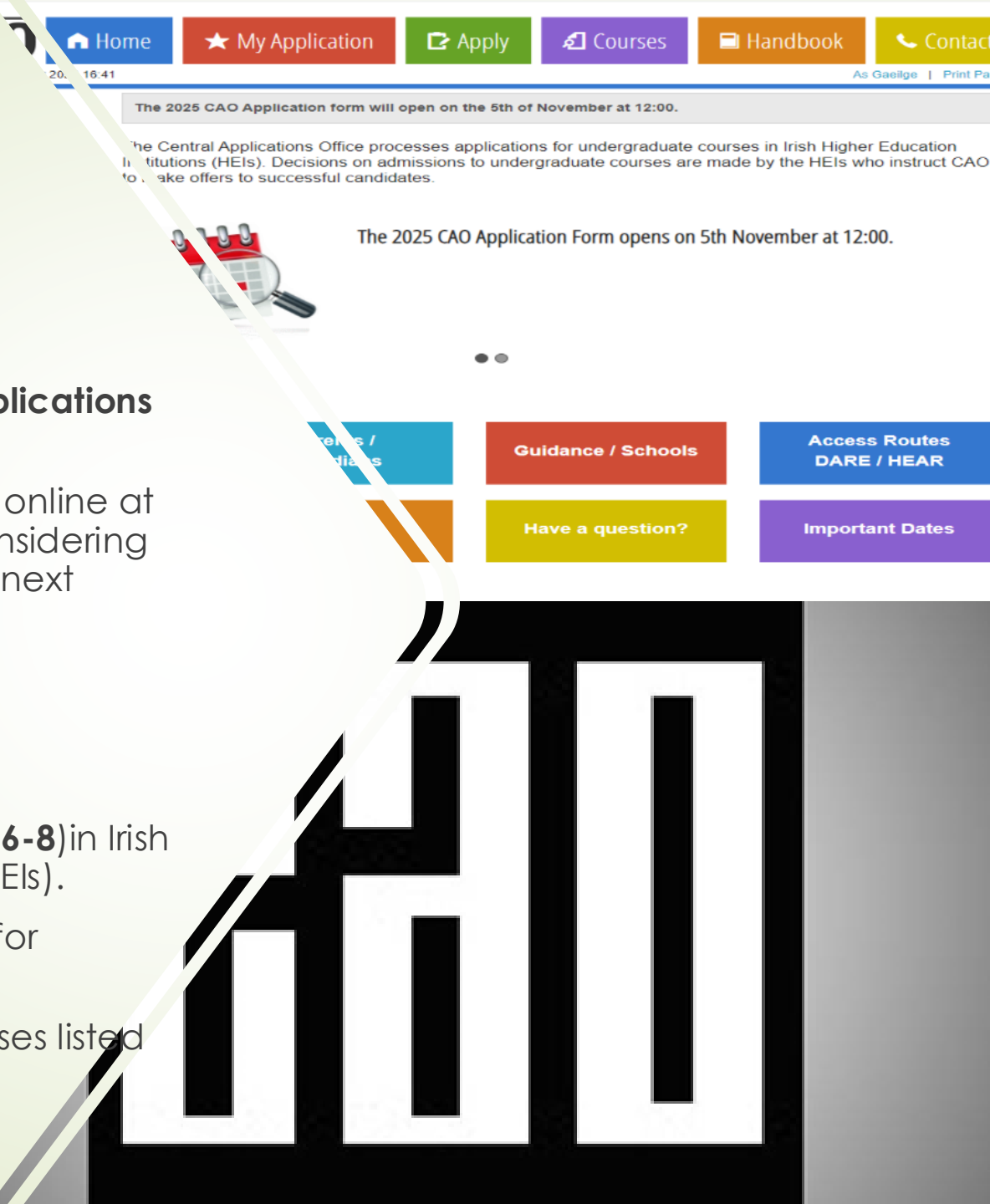- **CAO stands for Central Applications Office**

- Students apply to the CAO online at www.cao.ie if there are considering going to College in Ireland next year.

- **What does CAO do?**

•They **process** applications for undergraduate courses (**Level 6-8**)in Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

•CAO does not **SET** the points for courses.

- CAO has thousands of courses listed in th**e CAO Handbook**

The 2025 CAO Application form will open on the 5th of November at 12:00.

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.

The 2025 CAO Application Form opens on 5th November at 12:00.

Guidance / Schools

Access Routes DARE / HEAR

Have a question?

Important Dates

The Handbook

- The CAO Handbook is an interactive available on the CAO website https://www2.cao.ie/handbook/handbook2025/hb.pdf

- The most important thing you do is **Read this Handbook Carefully.**

- It is your <u>contract </u>with the CAO

- All their questions about application and offers are answered there

Read **T**he **CAO Handbook**

- The CAO handbook has two sections.

1st Section - White Pages

Details Of Applications Procedures, Offers, Deadlines And Other Instructions.

2nd Section – Yellow Pages

Lists of courses & codes in the different colleges

CAO Important Dates & Fees:

2024

September	• CAO 2025 Interactive Handbook available online at **www.cao.ie**
October	
November	• CAO online application facility opens on **5 November at 12:00 noon** • Facility to add/change course choices opens on **5 November at 12:00 noon**
December	

2025

January	• Discounted application fee (€30 fee) available up to **20 January at 5pm**
February	• Normal closing date for applications (€45 fee) is **1 February at 5pm** • Online Change of Course Choices (free) facility closes **1 February at 5pm** • Online facility to amend course choices becomes available (€10 fee) on **5 February at noon**
March	• Closing date for amending course choices is **1 March at 5pm** • Most tests and interviews for restricted courses are held in March and April • Closing date for final completion of online DARE/HEAR forms is **1 March at 5pm** • Closing date for completion of Mature Applicant section of CAO form is **1 March at 5pm** • Late application facility opens on **5 March at 12:00 noon** • **DARE/HEAR** supporting documentation to arrive in CAO before **15 March at 5pm**
April	• Most tests and interviews for restricted courses are held in March and April
May	• Closing date for late applications is **1 May at 5pm** • Online Change of Mind (free) facility becomes available on **6 May at 12:00 noon** (expected date) • Statement of Application Record email sent to all applicants before end of May. Inform CAO if you do not receive it.
June	• Leaving Certificate examinations
July	• Change of Mind Closes on **1 July at 5pm** • Round A offers for certain categories of applicant e.g. mature, deferral, etc. are issued in **early July**
August	• Round Zero offers for certain categories of applicant issued in **early August** • Current year Leaving Certificate results issued (date to be confirmed) • Round One offers (date to be confirmed) • HEIs begin registration
September	• HEIs begin registration • Results of Leaving Certificate appeals released (date to be confirmed) • Offer season ends (date to be confirmed)

Stages of CAO Application

Stage 1:	**Before you apply: Do your research, register for virtual open days, study, set goals, double check entry requirements for the Courses you are interested in.**
Stage 2:	Completing your application: Online is recommended www.cao.ie
Stage 3:	Record of Application: CAO will send you a statement of application record (end of May)
Stage 4:	Change of Mind: Up until the 1st of July
Stage 5:	Leaving Certificate Results (mid-August)
Stage 6:	Offers and acceptances of places: (end of August, early September)

Stage 1- Doing Your research on your chosen course

To answer the question you must

Do Research: Use Careers Portal and Qualifax

Talk with Guidance Counsellor

Go to open days and guest speakers in school.

Visit the college CAMPUS (IF POSSIBLE)

Read College Prospectus / email

Subjects in First Year? / Choices in 2nd year

Is there work experience/Erasmus Year

Concerns about the Course/ Distance/Accommodation

Talk to current 3rd level friends

Recognition of Course

Future Skills and Trends

Job for Life?

Stage 2. Applying – getting your Application Number

- Apply online - application number will appear on your *Receipt of Online Application.*
  - This number is private and it will be used in every correspondence between you and the CAO for the rest of the year.
  - If you apply online you may change your course choices free of charge until 1st February ay 5pm. .

  - *Goal* Apply now and have at least one course entry made before the Holidays

Stage 3- Reply from CAO - Statement of Application Record

The Statement is important for two reasons:

1. The Statement of Application record includes notification of your **CAO application number**.

2. It also includes a **list of the courses** that   you have applied for.

    If you have made any mistake or omission in your course choices then now is the time to rectify your error. The statement of application record arrives late May.

    Pay particular attention to restricted courses.

Check Your Statement of Application Record.

Check the following carefully, 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?

If you do not receive a Statement by 1st June contact CAO immediately.

Stage 4- Change of Mind

Change Of Mind

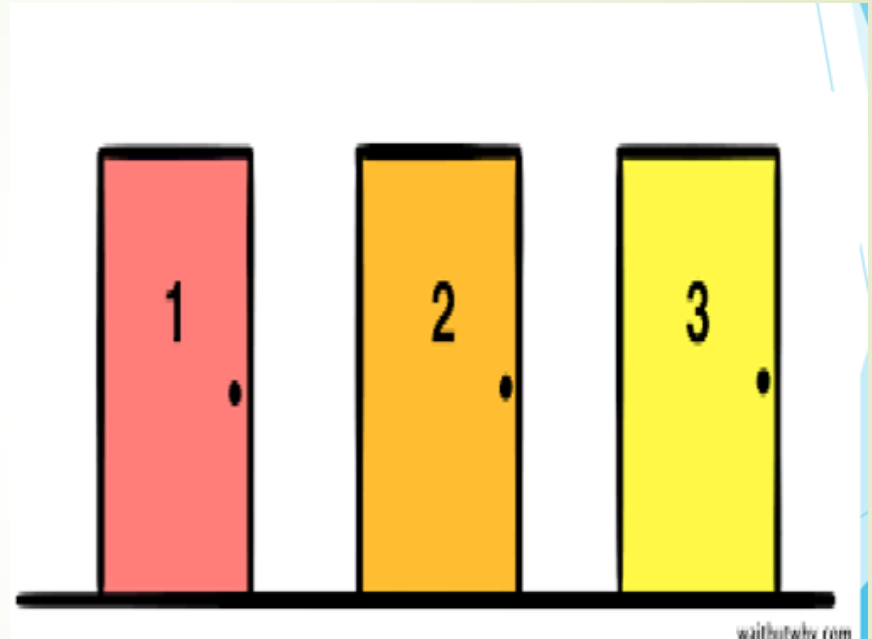You will also be sent a **change of mind** form in May.

You can change your mind **online** even if you have applied **on paper.**

The **final date** for changing my mind is **July 1st.**

BEFORE ADDING COURSES TO YOUR CAO REMEMBER TO CHECK THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Think of the entry requirements to College in Ireland like a three door system which you must meet.

1. Door one which you must have are College requirements

2. Door 2 which you must meet is Subject requirements

3. Door 3 which you must meet are the Points

College Requirements

5 O6 in Leaving Certificate for Level 6 & 7 courses.

Level 8 courses need a pass in **6** subjects with at least **2** at H5 & **4** at O6.

Faculty Requirements

The Faculty (Or Course) **Requirements**

E.g. H4 In Irish For Primary Teaching, H4 In Maths For Engineering in most universities
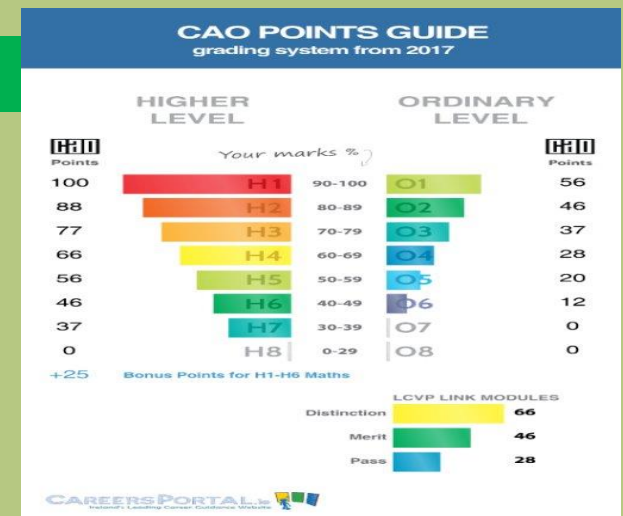
Points

Best **six** subjects in **one** sitting of the Leaving Certificate.

LCVP – can be used as 1   of the 6 subjects

Bonus points for HL Maths

CAO POINTS GUIDE
grading system from 2017

HIGHER LEVEL				ORDINARY LEVEL	
Points		Your marks %			Points
100	H1	90-100	O1		56
88	H2	80-89	O2		46
77	H3	70-79	O3		37
66	H4	60-69	O4		28
56	H5	50-59	O5		20
46	H6	40-49	O6		12
37	H7	30-39	O7		0
0	H8	0-29	O8		0

+25   Bonus Points for H1-H6 Maths

LCVP LINK MODULES	
Distinction	66
Merit	46
Pass	28

CAREERSPORTAL.ie
Ireland's Leading Career Guidance Website

You Get An Offer When You Satisfy All

College Requirements

Faculty Requirements

Points Requirements

Choosing your courses and filling out your CAO

Two Applications on One Form

You can choose up to **10** honours degree **Level 8** courses

You can choose up to **10** higher certificate / ordinary degree / **Level 6 & 7** courses

- **Level 8**

(Higher Degree Courses)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

- **Level 6 & 7**

(Higher Certificate & Ordinary Degree Course)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Genuine order of Preference is ESSENTIAL!

Level 8	
Pref	Course Code
1	CK101
2	DC111
3	AL847
4	DN650
5	TR084
6	DC115
7	MH404
8	WD134
9	WD048
10	MH101

Level 6/7	
Pref	Course Code
1	WD159
2	TU772
3	TU787
4	NC009
5	TU788
6	MT550
7	MT551
8	
9	
10	

Adding Courses:

List in genuine order of preference!

Dream Courses

Realistic courses

Safety Net Courses

ROUND ONE

CAO Computer	Course	College Requirements	Faculty Requirements	Points Requirements	Criteria Met	Offers
💻	Course 1	C				
💻	Course 2	C	F			
💻	Course 3	C	F			
💻	Course 4	C	F			
💻	Course 5	C	F	P	⭐	OFFER 1
	Course 6	C	F	P	⭐	
	Course 7	C	F			
	Course 8	C				
	Course 9					
	Course 10	C	F			

Courses Below Offer Are Deleted From CAO Computer

Order of Preference

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

Place your course choices in genuine order of preference!

To do otherwise is a grave mistake.

97% of places are filled in round one, but sometimes people don't accept offers and leave spaces so..

ROUND TWO

CAO Computer	Course	College Requirements	Faculty Requirements	Points Requirements	Criteria Met	Offers
💻	Course 1	C				
💻	Course 2	C	F	P	⭐	OFFER 2
	Course 3	C	F			Deleted
	Course 4	C	F			
💻	Course 5	C	F	P	⭐	OFFER 1
	Course 6	C	F	P	⭐	
	Course 7	C	F			
	Course 8	C				
	Course 9		F			Courses Below Offer Are Deleted From CAO Computer
	Course 10	C	F	P	⭐	

(Restricted courses are identified on the handbook with the words restricted).

Restricted Applications

Some **courses** consider more then **just points.**

Eg: **Interviews, Tests, Auditions, Portfolios or Projects.**

These are conducted around **Easter.**

These courses **can't** be added to your application after **February 1st.**

They can be **changed** or **dropped.**

The Offer Process

In the week following the release of the Leaving Certificate results **CAO will email** a communication to all applicants.

If you have not yet become entitled to an offer you will be sent a Statement of Application Record which you should check carefully as important information may be incorrect or missing.

Stage 5 & 6
The results and The Offer Process

If you are entitled to an offer, you will be sent an offer notice. You should check that all of the details on the offer notice are correct and that there are no omissions.

Offers will also be available on the CAO website.

You may check for and accept offers on the website. In fact, most applicants now record acceptances online.

The Offer Process

Your offer notice may contain an offer

| for a Level 8 course | or a Level 7/6 course | or both |

If you receive two offers at the same time you may only accept **ONE of them.**

If you wish to accept an offer of a place you must carry out the instructions on the offer notice before 5.15pm on the closing date for acceptance printed on the offer notice.
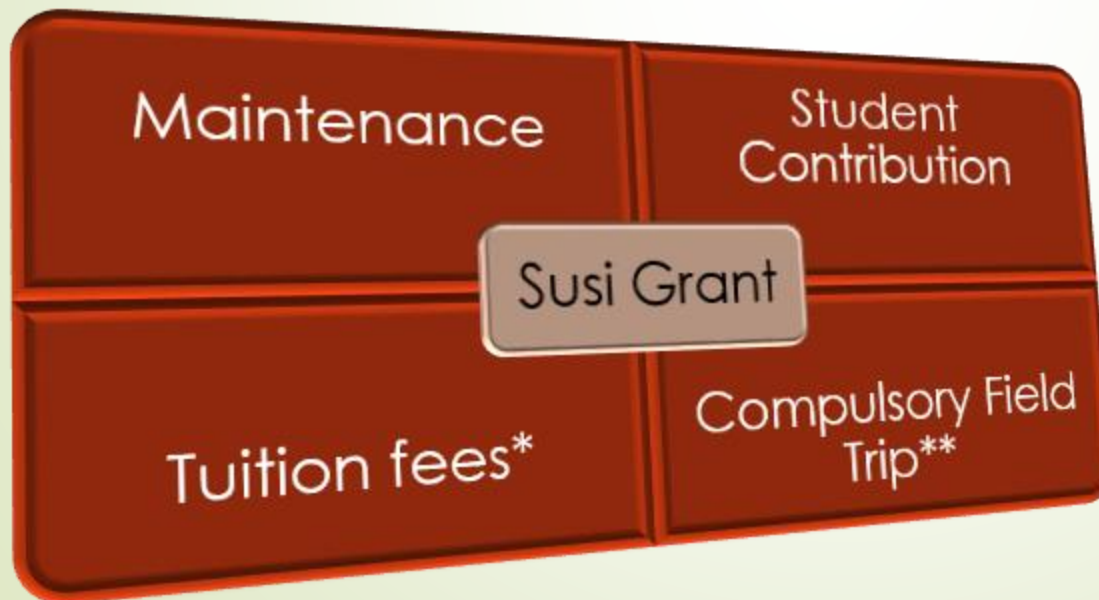
The Offer Process

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 will be offered to another applicant in the next round of offers.

Student Universal Support Ireland - SUSI

- An **on-line application** process covering all grants available to new students entering college for the first time

Maintenance | Student Contribution | Susi Grant | Tuition fees* | Compulsory Field Trip**

*Tuition Fees in cases where the Free Fee Initiative may not apply

** Field trips that are core components of the specific course. Eligibility depends on amount of support already received
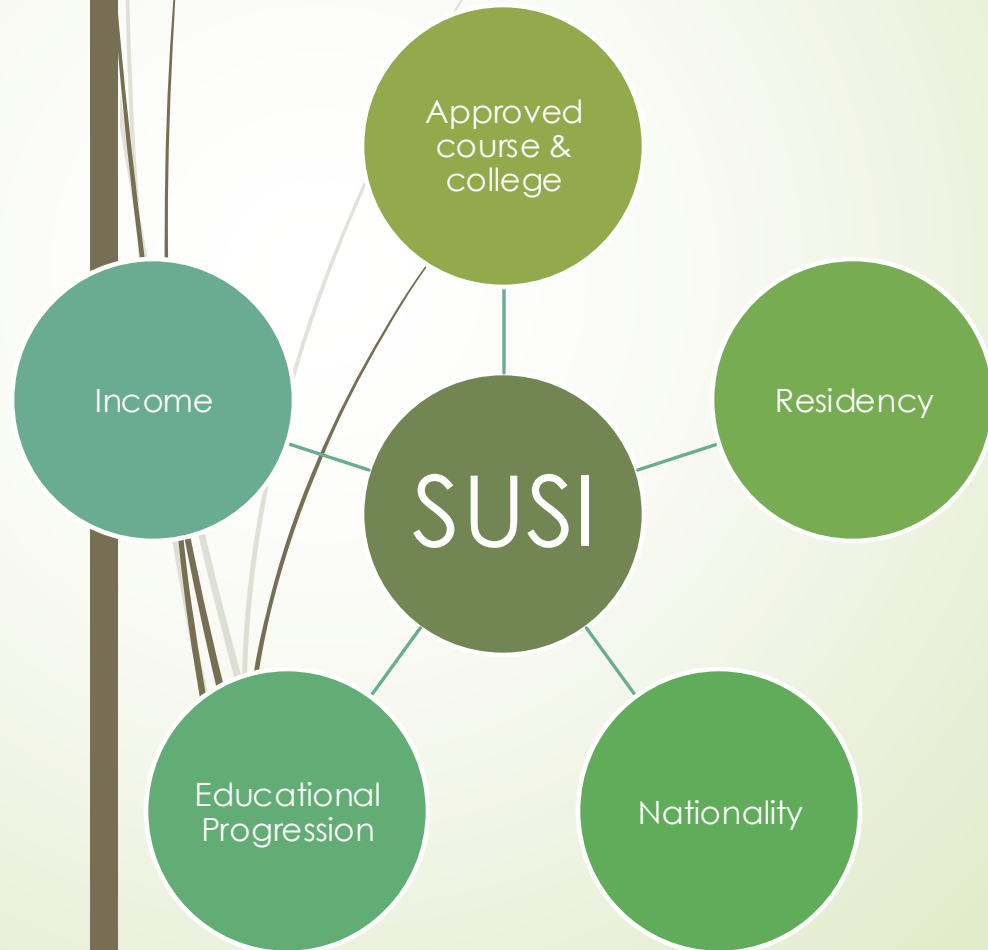
General information: Grants

- Grants are available for fulltime Higher Education and Further Education (QQI Level 5/6)

- Grants can cover:

- Maintenance: paid on a pro-rata monthly basis directly into a students' bank account over 9 months from October 2025 (payment dates will be scheduled)

- Student Contribution charge: €3000 + fee may be reduced) paid directly to college

- Tuition Fees: in cases where the Free Fees Initiative does not apply, as long as it is an approved college and course.

- Field Trip Expenses: compulsory field trips only for eligible students

Students must meet a range of eligibility criteria.

Eligibility Criteria

Approved course & college

Residency

Income

SUSI

Educational Progression

Nationality

Step 1

Click on the SUSI icon on the student grant page and register your personal details…

Register for a SUSI account

Personal Details

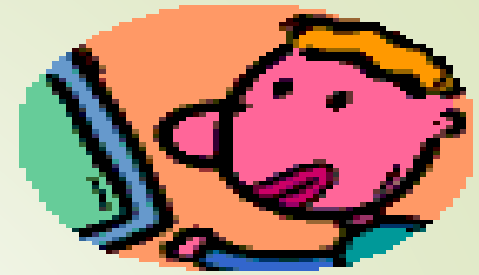|		
Your PPS no	XXXXXXX	* ?
Your surname	Student surname	*
Your first name(s)	Student first name	*
Your date of birth	00/00/0000	* 📅
Your e-mail address	studentname@provider.ie	* ?
Confirm e-mail address	studentname@provider.ie	*
Telephone Number	08xxxxxxxx	*

Previous   Next

Account Verification:

- You will be sent an email with a verification code to gain access to your SUSI your account to begin the application.

- Enter the verification code (note it expires after 20 minutes of receiving it).

- You will now be able to complete the login and security details for your account.

- Remember to have secure but easily remembered login and password as you will need to access your account regularly.
- Once registered an email will be sent to the student confirming registration.

- YOU CAN NOW BEGIN INPUTTING INFORMATION FOR YOUR GRANT APPLICATION

- You will complete all sections of the application form.

Step 2

When you're happy with your application hit the submit button on the last page...

(Once your application has been submitted you will only be able to change your contact details by using the 'Change Your Personal Details' section on the main menu. Note: you will not be able to make changes to any other section of your application. After you submit your application, the system will send you an email with a copy of your application for information purposes only.)

Step 3

SUSI will look at your application

SUSI will then send you a personalised document pack…

The pack will include:

- A schedule of the **documents** (photocopies only required) that are required from you to process your application further;

- A pers**onalised declaration** form that needs to be signed by all parties to your application;

- **Explanation notes** on the specific documents requested and guidance on where to get any documents required;

- **A pre-addressed envelope** to facilitate the return of your documents to SUSI.

Step 3 continued…

All SUSI postal correspondence will be addressed to the applicant and will display the SUSI logo on the envelope.

In the event of any difficulty or query in relation to the documents requested, contact the SUSI Support Desk for assistance.

Returning your Documents

You must return:

Your application Declaration Form signed by all parties to your application;

Your personalised document list together with photocopies of all your required documents at the same time in the pre-addressed envelope provided.

4th Step

SUSI will then assess your application with the documents provided by you and advise you if you are provisionally awarded for a student grant for the 2024-2025 academic year. You will be notified of the final step of the application process which you need to complete when you have selected your final college/course.

Payment of Student Grants

When you're registration for an approved course at an approved college has been confirmed SUSI will arrange to pay your student grant on a monthly basis directly into your Irish bank account.

SUSI Support Desk

➤ Email: support@susi.ie

☐ **Twitter:** @susihelpdesk

☐ **Facebook:** susisupport

➤ Telephone 0818 888 777 **Opening Hours:** Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.30pm

➤ Application TRACKER – progress of your grant application

Welcome to
ACCESS COLLEGE

Equity of Access to Higher Education

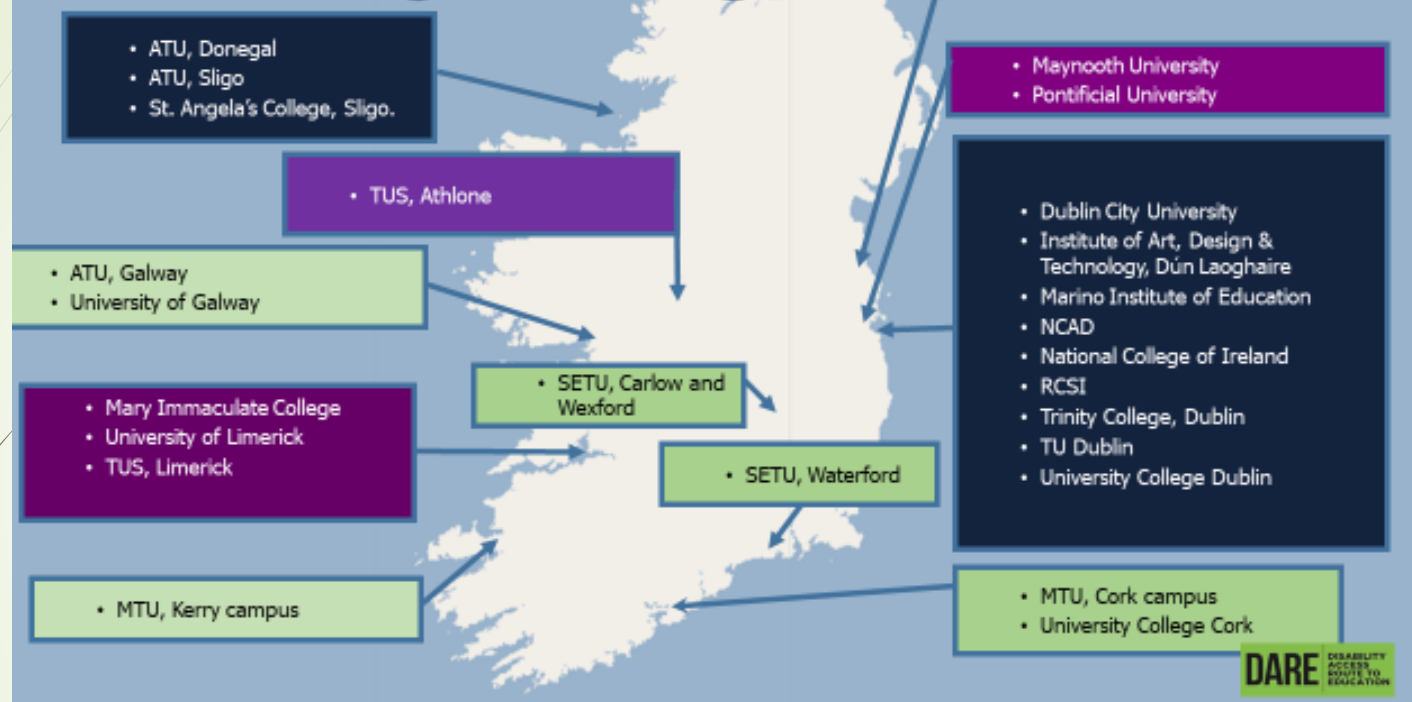*To widen access to Third Level the following 2 initiatives have been introduced:*

DARE Disability Access Route to Education

- Students with disability or any health problem are eligible to apply for the DARE scheme.

- DARE is for school leavers with a disability under the age of 23 as of 1 January 2025, who have been educationally impacted as a result of that disability.

- Offers college places on reduced points to school leavers with disabilities.

Participating Colleges in DARE

DARE

•Step 1 - Tick the box on the CAO form.
•Step 2 - Complete the supplementary information form (SIF).

http://www.accesscollege.ie/dare/includes/pdfs/section-c-evidence.pdf

•Decisions regarding eligibility will be made by Higher Education Institutions in June 2025.

DARE Application

- **Part A** must be completed online by the applicant outlining the impact of his disability on his education.

- **Part B** must be completed by a member of the academic staff, providing an academic reference and information on his education experience.

- **Part C** provides verification of condition from medical consultant or psychologist.

What are the application and closing dates for DARE?

Students must make an application to CAO by 1st of February if they wish to be considered for DARE

From November 2024	CAO applications open from **5 November 2024 at 12 noon**. 1. Review the DARE Handbook with your parent(s)/guardian(s). 2. Make a CAO application at www.cao.ie. 3. Fill in the online Supplementary Information Form (SIF) at www.cao.ie. 4. Complete your Educational Impact Statement with your school. 5. Gather your Evidence of Disability documentation.
By 1 February 2025	Apply to CAO by 17:00 on 1 February.
By 1 March 2025	**You must indicate your wish to be considered for DARE by ticking 'Yes' to Question 1 by 17:00** and complete Section A (Questions 1-5) of the Supplementary Information Form (SIF) on www.cao.ie.
By 15 March 2025	You must return the completed, signed AND stamped 1. Educational Impact Statement (Section B) 2. Evidence of Disability (Section C) or other evidence of Disability to DARE Applications 2025, CAO, Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway by 17:00. Make sure your documents are clear and can be easily read. Please number each page and write your CAO application number, name and the date on the front of each page. Faxed/emailed documents are not accepted.
April – June 2025	Assessment of DARE applications.

HEAR Higher Education Access Route

- Offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

- Step 1 - Tick the box on the CAO form.

- Step 2 - Complete the HEAR form and submit all relevant supporting information.

- For further information on DARE/HEAR please see:

- www.accesscollege.ie www.cao.ie

HEAR
Higher Education Access Route

Who is eligible to apply?

Financial Indicators

- 1. Income

- 2. Medical Card

- 3. Social Welfare Payment

Social & Cultural Indicators

- 4. Socio-economic Group

- 5. School

- 6. Area

*Applicants must meet the **Low Income** plus 2 other indicators in order to be eligible*

Timeline is the same as DARE Timeline (Slide 50)

http://www.accesscollege.ie/hear/availability.php

Remember

You can apply to both

DARE & HEAR

Applicants who are both DARE and HEAR eligible will be prioritised by colleges when allocating reduced points places.

DARE | DISABILITY ACCESS ROUTE TO EDUCATION

UCAS
(University & College Application System England,Scotland,Wales &N.Ireland)

- Early Closing Date – 16th October 2024 (Med,Dent,Vet,Oxford,Cambridge)
- General Closing Date –29th of January 2025

- Apply Online Only – c.a. £28.50 Sterling
- Choose 5 Courses,
- Write Personal Statement.
- Reference from school.

Why Consider UCAS/EUNICAS

- Insurance option for course areas where points are very high

- e.g. Medical, Paramedical, Engineering,

- Primary Teaching etc.

- European colleges have courses taught in English

++++ ALSO ******
European Universities -Eunicas

PLC Post Leaving Certificate Courses – FETAC/QQI

Apply directly to college or register to create a FET account through the pink section title 'Further Education and Training 'on www.cao.ie

1 or 2 years

Wide variety of courses

Pathway to Higher Education

Gap Year – Defer CAO Course

Lead to employment

GALWAY TECHNICAL INSTITUTE — VEC CITY OF GALWAY

MBC MOATE BUSINESS COLLEGE

Portlaoise Institute of Further Education (PLC)

New Tertiary Degrees- over 40 now Application from 1st of Feb

eMail: **info@nto.ie**

Website: www.NTO.ie

Types of Apprenticeships (Apprenticeships.ie)

Examples of Some traditional Apprenticeships are:

- Agricultural Mechanics*
- •Aircraft Mechanics*
- •Brick and Stonelaying
- •Carpentry & Joinery
- •Construction Plant Fitting*
- •Electrical*
- •Electrical Instrumentation*
- •Electronic Security Systems*
- •Farriery
- •Floor & Wall Tiling*
- •Heavy Vehicle Mechanics*

*must pass a colour – vision test approved by SOLAS.

Examples of New types of Apprenticeships include:

- **Accounting Technician**
- **Insurance Practitioner**
- **Industrial/Electrical Engineer**
- **Manufacturing Technician**
- **Manufacturing Engineer**
- **Commis Chef**
- **International Financial Services Associate**
- **International Financial Services Specialist**
- **Laboratory Analyst**

Where to find an employer?

- www.apprenticeships.ie
- Summer Work and netwroking
- State Companies and Departments
- Security Services
- Local companies (big and small)
- Looking at training abroad
- Adverts(…Indeed.ie…ESB)

Be resourceful and search!

Eligibility Criteria for Traditional apprenticeships

- Apprenticeship eligibility depends on the type of apprenticeship a student is interested in. **Most traditional apprenticeships require:**

- Apprentices must be at least 16 years of age and have a minimum of grade D in any five subjects in the Junior Certificate or equivalent. However, employers may require additional minimum qualifications.

- Or

- They satisfactorily complete an approved preparatory training course and assessment interview. For information on these courses please contact your local Employment Services Office;

- Or

- They are over 18 years of age with a minimum of three years relevant work experience and satisfactorily complete an assessment interview.

- Employment - Apprentices must be employed in their chosen occupation by an employer who has been approved by SOLAS. The employer must register the apprentice with Solas.

Eligibility Criteria for New apprenticeships

- You need a Leaving Cert with

- Grade 06 at ordinary level in 5 subjects, two of which must be Maths and a language (English or Irish) or equivalent (QQI Level 5/6).

- Some apprenticeships may have additional specific requirements. See www.careersportal.ie for more information on each individual apprenticeship.

Becoming a Craftperson

Choose an area of interest

Find an employer who is registered with SOLAS will register the apprenticeship with SOLAS

Take Responsibility for Working and Training

Attend the on and off the job training

For Information on the Defence Forces and the Garda Siochána

The Defence Forces:

(Naval service, Air Corps &Army)

Go to www.military.ie

An Garda Siochána

- You must register with publicjobs.ie

- Go to www.garda.ie for more information on eligibility, entry requirements and application process, etc.
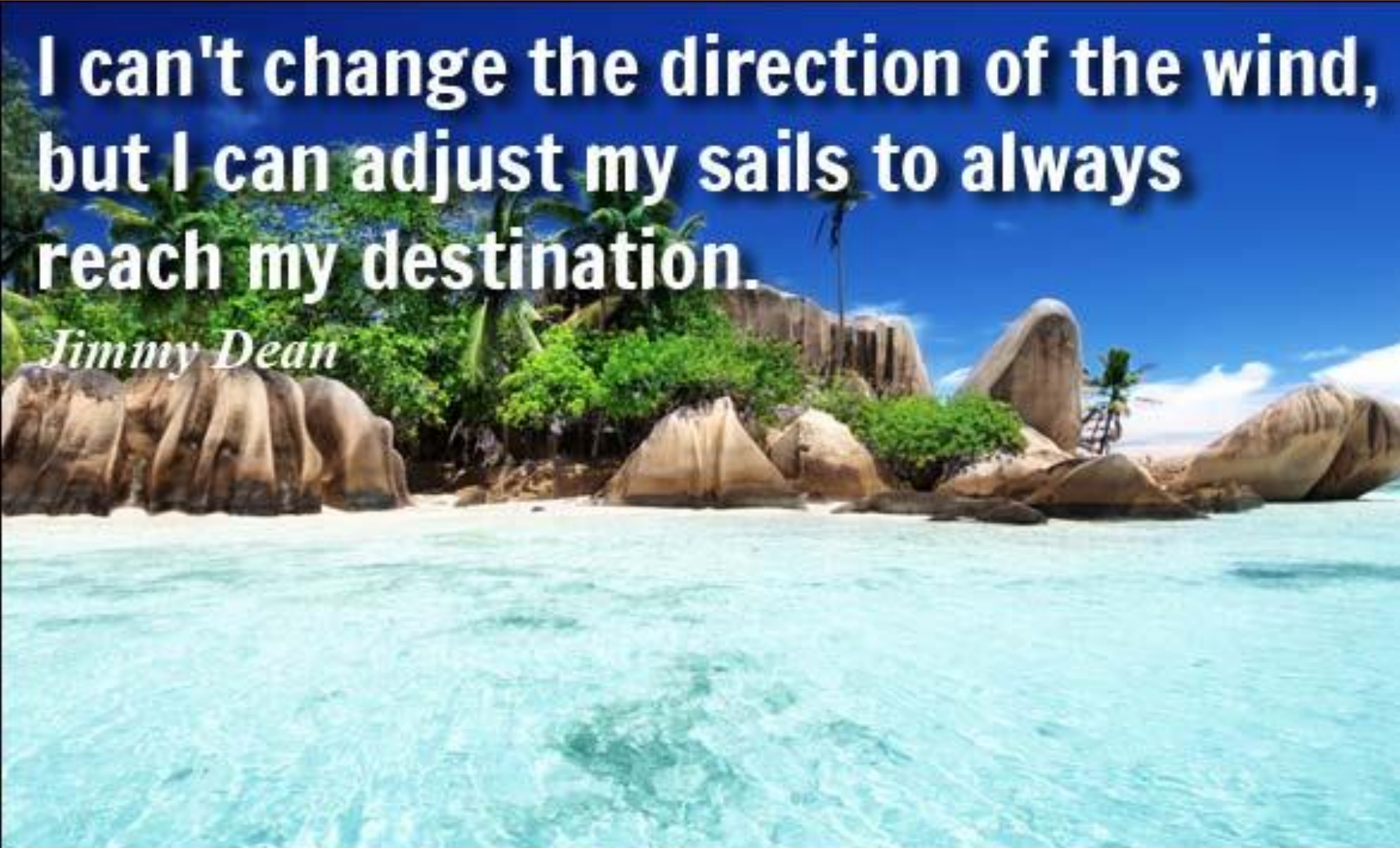
Boost your Chances

- ✓ Stay In Education

- ✓ Choose Course Wisely

- ✓ Beware : Dropout rate!!

- ✓ Reinforce skills

- ✓ Keep Positive

**Fail to Plan-
Plan to Fail**

I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination.

Jimmy Dean