

Cork Youth Information Centre

YMCA, 11/12 Marlboro Street, Cork

Tel: (021) 427 0187 Fax: (021) 427 4726 E-Mail: yiccork@iol.ie

What next for CAO Applicants?

On the release of the leaving certificate results, those who have applied for courses through the CAO will be busy calculating their points based on **their six best subjects** and turning their attention to the CAO first round offers due in the following week. If you have applied through the CAO for a third level course then whether you are entitled to an offer or not you can expect to get a notice from the CAO through the post to arrive on Monday the 18th of August. There is also a facility to view and accept offers made on the CAO website at www.cao.ie from 6am on the same day.

It's time now to re-check the course choices listed on your CAO Statement of Application Record. It is advisable to read through the relevant prospectuses to familiarise yourself thoroughly with course details, career prospects, specific course requirements and possibly even entry level points for 2006/2007 purely as an indicator of what offer(s) you may get next week. In the meantime, if you are eligible you should apply for an education grant through your Local Authority or VEC.

CAO offers may be viewed and an acceptance of an offer made directly online at the CAO web site at www.cao.ie. On entering the site, click View/Accept Offers then simply enter your 8 digit CAO Number and your date of birth. You can then specify **one** course of your choice from a list of courses available to be accepted.

If you receive an offer in the post, Parts B and C of the standard offer notice will contain the code(s) for the Level 8 and/or Level 7/ Level 6 course(s) offered. To clarify which course(s) you have been offered, course codes and titles are listed in the CAO Handbook. In the event that you have received two offers simultaneously you can only accept one offer and must disregard the other. The procedure for accepting an offer is printed on the back of the offer notice. If you wish to accept an offer, you must return the appropriate part of the notice (no fee required) to the CAO, Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway to arrive no later than 5.15pm on the Reply Date specified (which for 1st Round Offers is Tuesday the 26th of August) or the offer will lapse. Either way, the CAO will send you formal confirmation of receipt of an acceptance within 3 working days of the reply date. The Higher Education Institution concerned will send out details of registration and any subsequent payment required.

Many who have applied through the CAO may also have applied through UCAS for courses in the UK including Northern Ireland. Successful applicants who meet the requirements of their conditional offer are advised to fax their results directly to the college, quoting their UCAS reference number and specifying the course concerned. They will then receive confirmation of their offer to which they should respond. Unsuccessful or late applicants will receive a Clearing Entry Form (CEF) together with detailed instructions on how to secure one of the remaining course vacancies listed and updated daily, will be available on the UCAS website www.ucas.com from the middle of August. To secure a place through Clearing, identify the courses you are interested in and telephone the colleges concerned immediately to negotiate a place, quoting your clearing number.

Some will inevitably be disappointed with their leaving certificate results and will be considering their options which could include viewing marked scripts and possibly applying for a re-check, repeating the leaving certificate or considering suitable alternatives such as independent third level colleges or educational institutions offering post-leaving certificate courses.

Students who are unhappy with exam results can apply to view marked scripts for specific subjects prior to appealing/applying for a re-check. Students wishing to avail of this facility should complete the application form supplied with their leaving certificate results and return it to the school before the **20th of August**. Applicants will be allocated a viewing session on either **Friday the 29th of August or Saturday the 30th of August**, prior to the closing date for receipt of appeals which is the 3rd of September. Potential applicants are reminded that the percentage of those being upgraded through the appeal procedure is relatively low.

Repeating the leaving certificate is another option. Though the number of people repeating the leaving certificate has fallen in recent years, this remains a realistic option for those who have narrowly missed the number of points required for the course of their choice. In repeating for points, the idea is to take the six subjects in which you feel you can do best and score the highest points. There is no obligation to sit the same subjects, neither is there any need to re-sit subjects which are mandatory requirements for particular courses or colleges, once already obtained.

Independent Third Level Colleges many of which are outside the CAO system offer a variety of courses with recognised qualifications including HETAC qualifications identical to those obtained in state sponsored colleges. Entry requirements are very reasonable but as private colleges there is the prospect of having to pay fees. Tax relief at the standard rate can be claimed on fees paid to private colleges in respect of approved undergraduate courses of at least two years duration. Information and forms are available for the Revenue Commissioner's website www.revenue.ie or telephone the local Cork tax office on 4325000.

A wide range of Post-Leaving Certificate or PLC courses are also available primarily through Colleges of Further Education, mostly accredited by the FETAC, and designed to prepare students for direct employment or further studies. Entry requirements are very reasonable, and each applicant is interviewed early in September to assess their interest and aptitude for the course(s) they have applied for. There may be start up expenses for some courses, however there are means tested maintenance grants for PLC students which make these courses an even more attractive proposition.

The Cork Youth Information Centre is based in the YMCA Building, 11/12 Marlboro Street, Cork and are offering a student helpline at (021) 427 0187 or 427 4726 from Monday to Friday 9.30 – 5.30pm. In addition they have produced a free educational publication known as "Options 2008" and maintain an internet website with relevant educational links at www.youthinformation.ie