

Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock



Applying to University 2025–26

Welcome



**Believe you can and
you're halfway there.**

Theodore Roosevelt

Education is not a problem. Education is an opportunity.

-Lyndon B. Johnson



Kirkland Rowell Survey 2023



- ▶ 48% of our parents think their child will definitely attend university.
- ▶ 42% of our parents think their child will probably attend university.
- ▶ **NB** It is the hours of study that get the grades to win the university offers / places.

Year 14 Leavers 2024



- ▶ 83- Queen's University
- ▶ 26 - Ulster University
- ▶ 5 - Republic of Ireland
- ▶ 36 - England
- ▶ 12- Scotland
- ▶ 4 - Wales
- ▶ 4 - Teaching Colleges
- ▶ 7 - FE Institutions
- ▶ 16 - Gap Year
- ▶ 1 - Football



OLSPCK – We provide:



- ▶ Careers Advice and Guidance
- ▶ Weekly Careers class
- ▶ Work Experience Weeks
- ▶ Help with the application process
- ▶ Liaison with universities and clearing
- ▶ Time out of class for visits
- ▶ One-to-one consultations
- ▶ References
- ▶ Post-exam support



Partnership with Parents



- ▶ Parents have a central role to play
- ▶ Discuss courses, options, finance, etc.
- ▶ Use own knowledge and contacts
- ▶ Help with research
- ▶ Organise visits
- ▶ Encourage and support
- ▶ Ask about academic progress
- ▶ Consult teachers



Areas of Focus

- ▶ Careers Advice to date
- ▶ Higher Apprenticeships
- ▶ UCAS application process
- ▶ Choosing a university or course
- ▶ Personal Statements
- ▶ Other application processes
- ▶ Student Finance
- ▶ Q and A




Careers Advice to date

- ▶ University Talks
- ▶ Open Days
- ▶ UCAS Exhibition
- ▶ Work Shadowing
- ▶ Careers Lessons
- ▶ Mock Interviews



Work Shadowing



Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock


120 Gilnahirk Road, Belfast, BT5 7DL - info@knock.co.uk -
T: 02890 401 884

[Home](#) [About](#) [Pastoral](#) [Curriculum](#) [Admissions](#) [Parents](#) [Students](#) [News & Events](#) [Alumni](#)

Careers

Welcome to the OLSPCK Careers department webpage

Make your selection below by clicking on the necessary links:



CEIAG Staff	Careers/CEIAG Curriculum	Careers Events
Work Shadowing	University application resources and Student finance	
Employers	GCSE and A-Level Options Booklets	

University Fees

University Fees:

NI Universities : £4,855

GB Universities: up to £9,535

Republic of Ireland Universities: €3,000

College of Further and Higher Education:

Belfast Metropolitan: £3110

Higher Apprenticeships: Free



Higher Apprenticeship

- ▶ More companies each year are introducing Higher apprenticeship course e.g. Deloitte, Kainos, PWC, Allstate, EY and Phoenix Law.
- ▶ In summary the HLA scheme offers:
 - Permanent job;
 - Honours Degree OR equivalent qualification, completed on a part time over 4/5 years (free of charge);
 - Starting salary of over £15,000+ per year, going up to over £20,000+ after 5 years;
 - No student debt;
 - 4–5 years work experience.
- ▶ The eligibility for applications is:
 - 5 GCSEs
 - GCSE Maths: B or above
 - GCSE English Language : C or above
 - Projected 112 UCAS points (BBC) at A–Levels

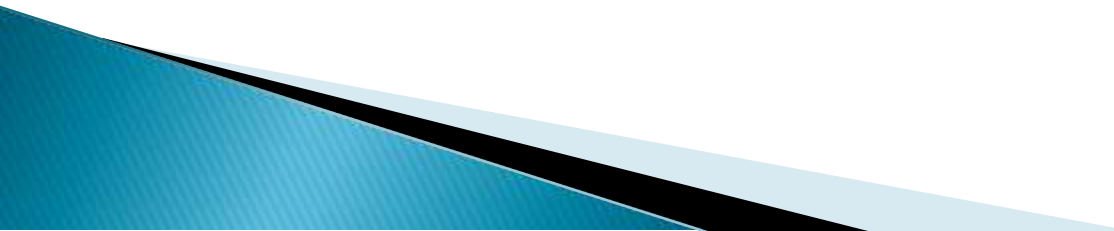
Higher Apprenticeship

- ▶ Ulster University
 - <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/apprenticeships/degree-apprenticeships>
- ▶ Deloitte
 - <https://www.deloitte.com/uk/en/careers.html>
- ▶ Allstate
 - <https://www.allstateni.com/careers/apprenticeships.aspx>
- ▶ Kainos
 - <https://www.kainos.com/careers/earn-as-you-learn>
- ▶ PWC
 - <https://www.pwc.co.uk/careers/early-careers.html>
- ▶ Engineering
 - <https://www.workplus.app/>
- ▶ EY
 - <https://ukcareers.ey.com/students/programmes/apprenticeships>
- ▶ ALMAC
 - <https://www.almacgroup.com/careers/higher-level-apprenticeships>
- ▶ Careers Service
 - <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/higher-level-apprenticeships>

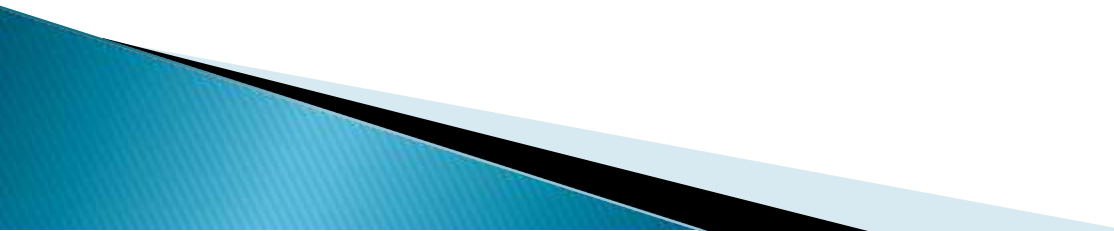
UCAS Application Process

- ▶ All students should have registered with UCAS.
- ▶ Various sections to be completed (early applicants 3rd October 2025, all other applicants 3rd November 2025):
 - Personal Details;
 - Education: including GCSE and AS results;
 - **Additional Educational Needs;**
 - Employment;
 - Courses (up to 5 max, no preference order);
 - Personal Statement;
 - Students pay and send £28.95 (Free for students receiving FSM)
 - Reference added.
- ▶ Approved and sent by the school (early December).
- ▶ Official UCAS deadline: 15th October 25 / 14th January 26.

UCAS Application Process

- ▶ UCAS process the application form and forward it to chosen universities.
 - ▶ Students maybe invited to an interview or to complete an entrance exam.
 - ▶ Universities submit decisions.
 - ▶ Students view decisions on UCAS Hub.
 - ▶ Students reply to offers on UCAS Hub (Firm / Insurance). This date depends on when students receive all their decisions.
 - ▶ Universities confirm places when results are released in August.
- 

Deferred Entry

- ▶ Deferring means applying for a course then taking a year out before going to university.
 - ▶ Some universities do not allow deferred entry for some subjects.
 - ▶ Students still need to meet the conditions of any offers in the year that they apply.
 - ▶ On UCAS application form, students need to select the deferred entry start date when adding a choice on their UCAS application.
- 

UCAS Application Process

**All Decisions Made
by Universities**

Reply to Offers By

31st March → 6th May

13th May → 3rd June

**Applicants may receive offers well before these dates and can
reply before these deadlines.**

University Decisions

- ▶ Students will receive one of three decisions:
 - Conditional Offer– depending on grades achieved
 - Unconditional Offer– grades irrelevant ✓
 - Unsuccessful ✗

- ▶ Most students will receive conditional offers based on a combination of the following:
 - AS and GCSE results;
 - Your personal statement;
 - Your reference and predicted grades;
 - Interviews or admissions tests.



Conditional Offer

- ▶ Grades (e.g. ABB with A in Maths)
- ▶ UCAS Points

Grade	A2	AS
A*	56	NA
A	48	20
B	40	16
C	32	12
D	24	10
E	16	6

- ABB = 128 points
- Levelling out? (BBB not the same as ABC)

Firm and Insurance Courses

When students have received decisions from **ALL** of their choices they will be asked to reply by a given date.

UCAS will send reminders – but if STUDENTS fail to reply by this date, their offers will be **declined by UCAS automatically**.

Students are able to hold **2** of their offers to the end of the cycle; all others must be declined.

Firm: Your first choice for where you want to go.

Insurance : Your back-up choice but nevertheless it is a commitment like the firm course you have chosen. You will be placed here if you do not meet the conditions of your firm course.

Changed your mind? 14 Days!



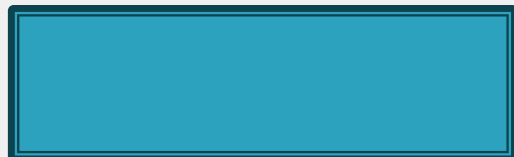
Your choices



Your confirmed place

Oxford University Q33

History and Politics LV21



Congratulations! Your place at Oxford University to study History and Politics is confirmed.

(Unconditional offer (firmly accepted))



View



Your insurance choice

Queen's University Belfast Q75

History and Politics VL12



Your place is confirmed at this university or college if you're NOT accepted at your firm choice

(Unconditional offer (held as insurance))



View



[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Please read ALL of this information

Dear [Redacted]

Congratulations! Queen's University Belfast is offering you a place for History and Politics, VL12; starting [Redacted] at point of entry 1.

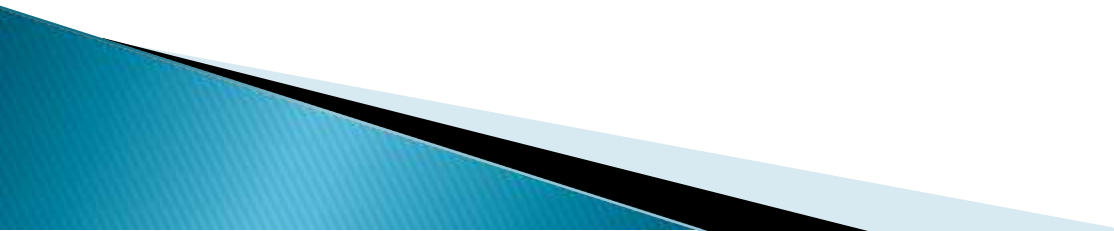
This offer is subject to your obtaining

This offer is subject to you obtaining GCE A level Grades ABB

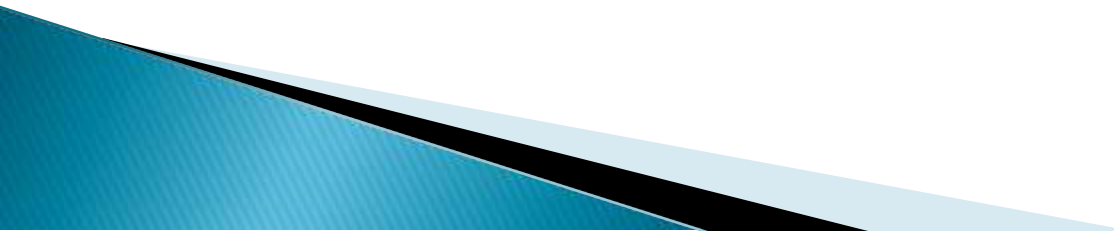
When you've heard back from all your choices

If you've now heard from every university or college you applied to, you'll need to make an informed decision about whether to accept this offer. To help you with this, the university or college is required to make information available to you under consumer protection legislation. You can find out more about what this should include on our website. You should read and understand this information before making a decision about accepting an offer, as this is likely to form the terms and conditions of the contract between yourself and the university or college if you enrol onto their course.

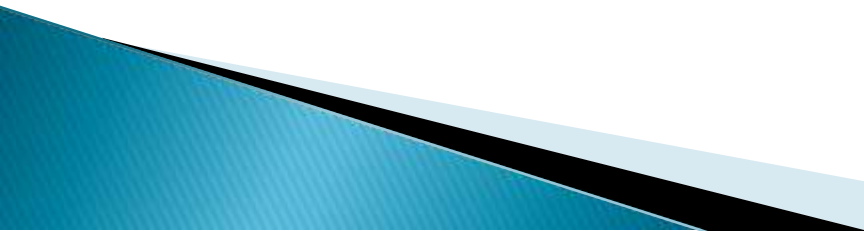
Unconditional Offers?

- ▶ Increased number in recent years.
 - ▶ A number of students may receive an Unconditional Offer.
 - ▶ Advantages:
 - Reduced exam stress
 - ▶ Disadvantages:
 - Under-performance in exams;
 - Choosing a university for the wrong reasons;
 - Difficulties receiving an offer if you need to reapply.
- 

UCAS Application Process: 'Extra'

- ▶ Open from 26th February to 1st July.
 - ▶ Allows additional single choices to be entered and considered one at a time.
 - ▶ Students eligible for Extra:
 - Used all 5 choices;
 - All choices unsuccessful, cancelled or offers declined.
 - ▶ Course vacancies listed on UCAS website.
- 

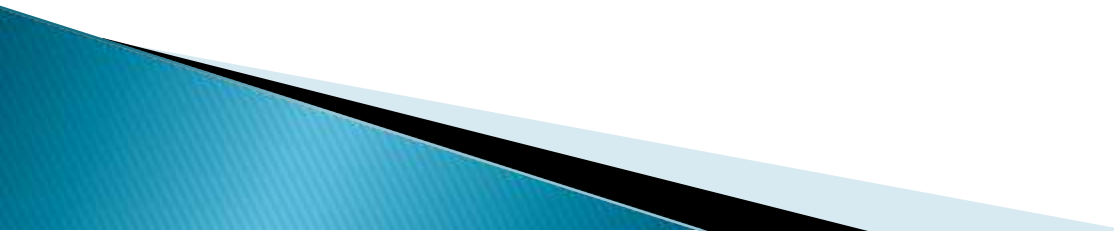
UCAS Application Process: Clearing

- ▶ Open from 2nd July to mid-September.
 - ▶ Allows additional single choices to be entered and considered one at a time.
 - ▶ Students must contact the university to discuss directly.
 - ▶ Students eligible for Clearing:
 - Paid full fee (£28.95);
 - All choices unsuccessful, cancelled or offers declined.
 - ▶ Course vacancies listed on UCAS website.
- 

Choosing University or Courses

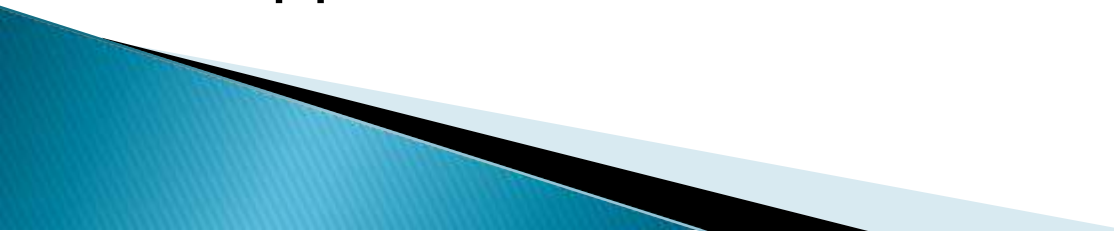
Research is vital!

Use the tools that are available to you:

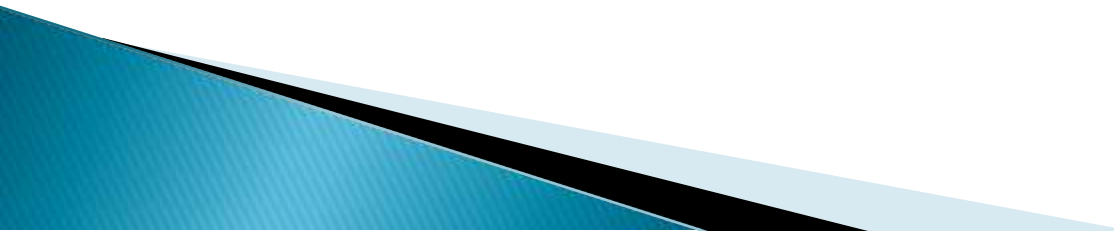
- ▶ UCAS website;
 - ▶ University prospectus / [website](#);
 - ▶ Statistics: e.g [Discover Uni](#), The Complete University Guide and Times Good University Guide;
 - ▶ Open Days.
 - ▶ 5 Courses?
- 

Choosing University or Courses

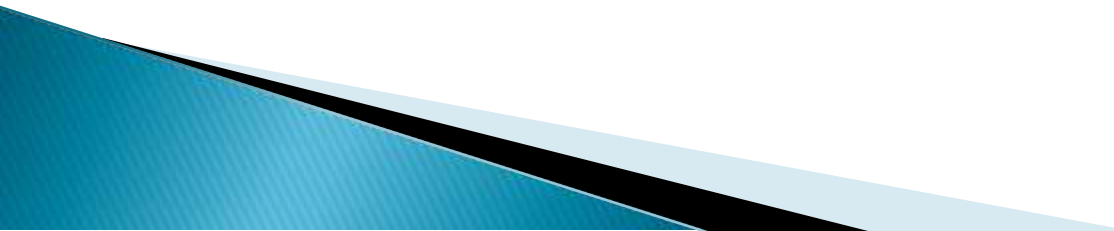
You should consider:

- ▶ Your interests;
 - ▶ Your academic strengths;
 - ▶ What you enjoy studying;
 - ▶ Course content;
 - ▶ Your desired career path;
 - ▶ Entry requirements;
 - ▶ Location;
 - ▶ Fees;
 - ▶ Facilities
 - ▶ Support Offered.
- 

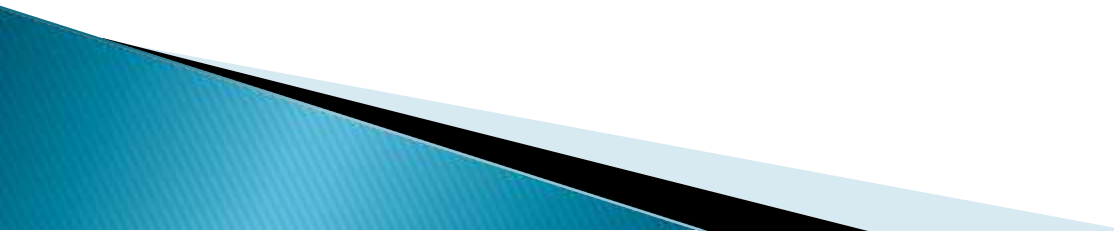
Personal Statement

1. Why do you want to study this course or subject?
 2. How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?
 3. What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?
- 


Personal Statement

- ▶ Why do you want to study this course or subject?
 - Your motivations for studying this course.
 - Your knowledge of this subject area and interests.
 - Your future plans and why this is a good fit for you.
- 

Personal Statement

- ▶ How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?
 - How your studies or training relate to your chosen course or subject area.
 - What relevant or transferable skills you have that make you a great candidate.
 - Any relevant educational achievements
- 

Personal Statement

- ▶ What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?
 - Work experience, employment, or volunteering.
 - Personal life experiences or responsibilities.
 - Hobbies and any extracurricular or outreach activities.
 - Achievements outside of school or college.
 - Post-education activities.
- 

Personal Statement


UCAS

WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

2026 ENTRY

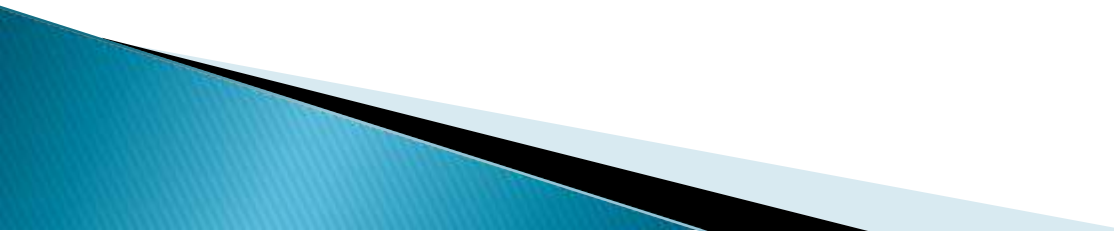


Personal Statement

- ▶ Provides students the opportunity to sell themselves
 - ▶ It will be relatively short (4000 characters).
 - ▶ Each question must be answered.
 - ▶ It should be specific to the courses to which they are applying
 - ▶ Be concise and relevant (avoid superfluous detail)
 - ▶ It must be written in formal language (e.g. 'I have' NOT 'I've' or 'Biology' NOT 'Bio')
 - ▶ It must be the student's own work (use of AI / Chat GPT).
- 


Personal Statement: Do's and Don'ts

Do:

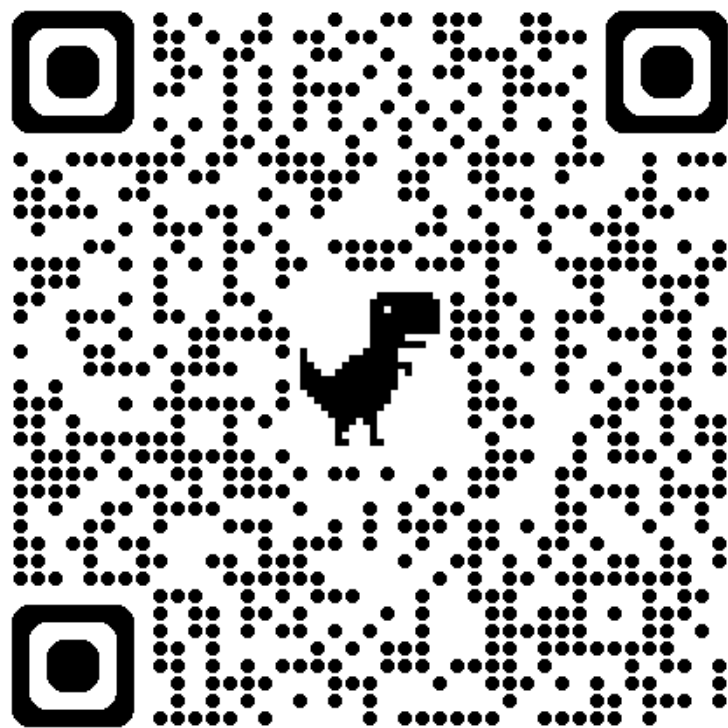
- ▶ Make it interesting and personal to you;
 - ▶ Be positive;
 - ▶ Be specific;
 - ▶ Draft and redraft;
 - ▶ Get a second opinion;
 - ▶ Redraft again;
 - ▶ Double check grammar, spelling and punctuation;
 - ▶ Submit to your Careers teacher
- 

Personal Statement: Do's and Don'ts

Don't:

- ▶ Repeat yourself (each answer to the 3 questions)
 - ▶ Be negative;
 - ▶ Mention something you would not be prepared to discuss at an interview;
 - ▶ Add superfluous detail;
 - ▶ List skills and experiences;
 - ▶ Quotes? Humour?
- 

Parent, Guardian and Carer Guide



Applying to ROI



- ▶ Application process is called CAO.
- ▶ Completed on line at www.cao.ie

- ▶ Advantages:
 - Can choose up to 10 courses;
 - No Personal Statement;
 - Results based;
 - Lower tuition fees (€3000/ year).

- ▶ Disadvantages:
 - Higher entry requirements for some similar courses in the UK;
 - Unfamiliar application process;
 - Require modern language (includes Irish).

CAO Points

Grade	A-Levels 1st-3rd	4th A-Level	AS
A*	192	24	NA
A	165	24	24
B	142	20	20
C	120	18	18
D	100	16	16
E	67	14	14

Example:

Four As at A levels $495 + 24 = 519$.

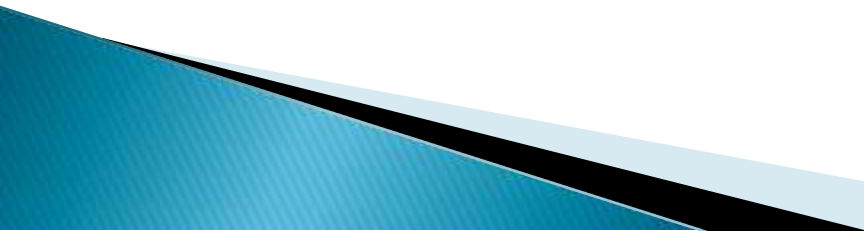
Three As at A level: 495.

25 additional points will be awarded for a grade E or better in Mathematics at A2 level.

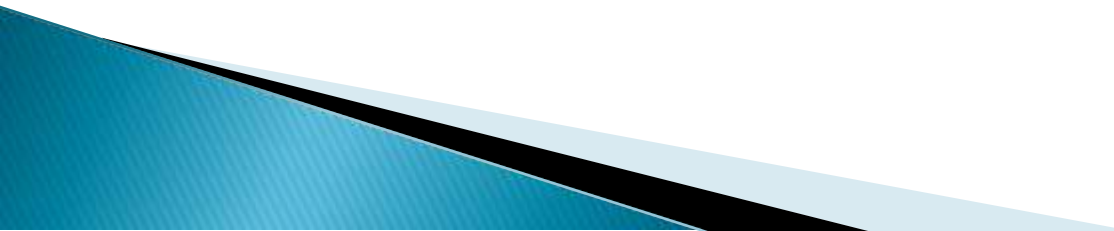
CAO Entry Requirements

- ▶ There are no entry requirements published for 2026.
- ▶ You can only view points range for the previous year e.g. UCD 2025:
 - Law: 556–625 points (A*A*A A/a)
 - History and Politics: 467 points (ABBb)
- ▶ All courses have basic entry requirement referred to as 'Matriculation'.

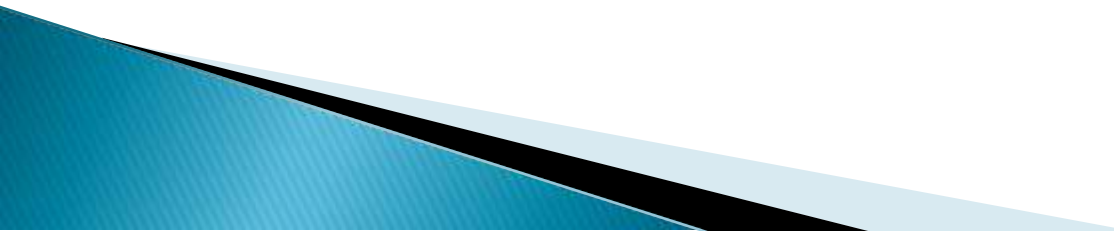
For example, Grade C or better in two subjects at A-level and passes in 4 other subjects at A-level/GCSE.



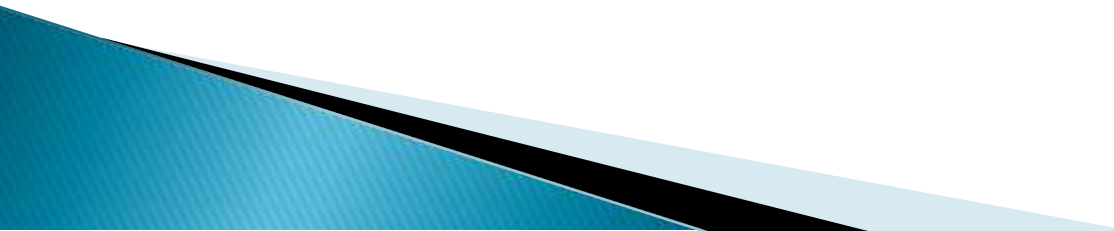
Applying to ROI

- ▶ Students must inform CAO if they are taking their Summer 2026 examinations with CCEA or with British examination boards.
 - ▶ You must inform CAO of any GCSE examinations previously taken.
 - ▶ You must provide certified copies of certificates/statements of results produced by an examining board to CAO.
 - ▶ Failure to provide this information on time can result in you losing your place.
- 

Choosing your courses

- ▶ PLACE YOUR COURSE CHOICES IN GENUINE ORDER OF PREFERENCE!
 - ▶ IT IS A MISTAKE to base your choices only on your present expectations of examination performance or the points level of previous years.
 - ▶ If you are not successful in your first choice, this will have no effect on your chances of obtaining a place in one of your lower preferences.
 - ▶ Having received an offer in any round, you may get a higher preference offer in a later round. YOU WILL NEVER BE OFFERED A LOWER PREFERENCE IN A LATER ROUND.
- 

Receiving an offer

- ▶ If the student meets the minimum entry requirements for the course, the student's points are calculated.
 - ▶ All eligible students are then placed on a list, in order of academic merit, for each course that they applied for.
 - ▶ CAO then makes offers to the required number of applicants on each course starting with the applicant with the highest points and working down until enough places have been offered.
- 

CAO Key Dates (2025/26)

5th November	CAO online application facility opens.
1st February	Normal closing date for applications.
6th May	Online Change of Mind facility becomes available
Before End of May	Statement of Application Record sent to all applicants
1st July	Change of Mind closes
27th August	Round 1 Offers
8th September	Round 2 Offers

St Mary's University College



- ▶ Application to St Mary's University is not made through UCAS.
- ▶ It must be made directly to the College.
- ▶ Application process opens 1st October and closes mid January.
- ▶ Personal Statement.
- ▶ Interviews for BEd courses are mid-February.
- ▶ Entry requirements available at:
www.smucb.ac.uk

Belfast Met



- ▶ Numerous courses available such as HNDs or Foundation Degrees in a variety of areas.
- ▶ Significantly lower entry requirements.
- ▶ May provide an alternative route to university.
- ▶ Provides a 'Plan B' if you don't meet entry requirements for your Firm or Insurance offers.
- ▶ Many courses have a direct link to QUB and UU.
- ▶ Apply directly to Belfast Met
- ▶ More information available at www.belfastmet.ac.uk

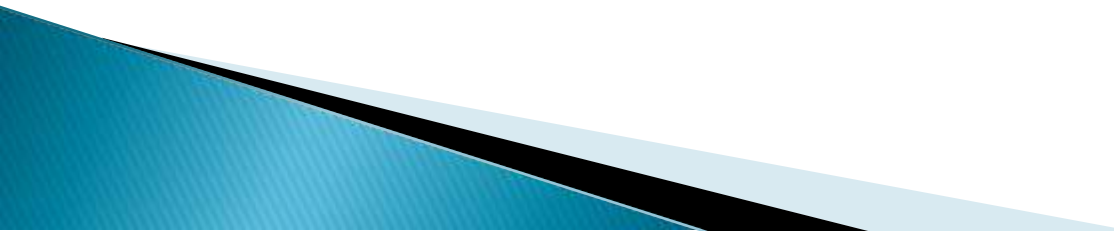
Student Finance (2025)

- ▶ Student Finance opens March 2026, complete application by 30th April.
- ▶ All students are eligible (few exceptions e.g. those applying to Nursing) providing they will be studying in the UK or ROI.
- ▶ Tuition Fee LOANS are paid directly to the university.
- ▶ Maintenance LOANS are means tested. Student can receive up to £6300 if living with parents and up to £8132 if living away from parent.
- ▶ Maintenance GRANTS are not repayable but are only available to students based on household income.
 - Full grant, income <£19203
 - Partial grant, income <£41065.

Student Finance

- ▶ If you leave your course before the of:
 - Term 1 you must pay 25% of the fee;
 - Term 2 50%;
 - Term 3 100%.
- ▶ Bursaries are available from each university and other sources such as JP McManus All Ireland Scholarship.
- ▶ More information available from www.studentfinancenl.co.uk

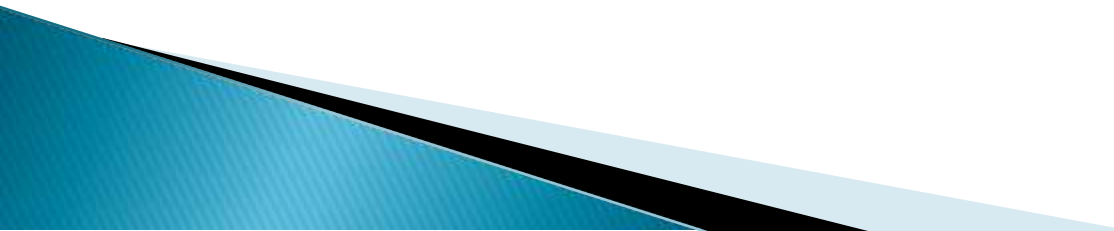
When will you start to make repayments?

- ▶ Once you earn over £26,065 a year, you will repay 9% of anything over this amount.
 - ▶ For example, if you are paid monthly and earn £2,500 before tax per month you would repay 9% of the difference between what you earn and what the threshold is:
 - $£2,500 - £2172 = £328$
 - $9\% \text{ of } £328 = £30$
 - So your student loan repayment would be £30 a month.
 - ▶ If your income is below £26,065 or drops to below that amount, you will not have to make repayments.
 - ▶ It will be cancelled 25 years after you became eligible to repay.
- 


Repayment Plan

Income Before Tax	Monthly Salary	Monthly Repayments
£26065	£2172	£0
£28000	£2333	£15
£30000	£2500	£30
£35000	£2917	£67
£40000	£3333	£105

Results Day (13/8/26)

- ▶ Confirm acceptance of Firm or Insurance Offer.
 - ▶ If students have not been successful in meeting the offer requirements, students may have to await a decision or universities may offer alternative courses.
 - ▶ Have all useful contacts and Information at hand e.g. UCAS ID, Universities, Belfast Met etc.
 - ▶ Enter Clearing:
 - Issued a clearing number;
 - Look at courses available;
 - Make contact with universities;
 - Add course on Track.
 - ▶ Careers Advice provided by school.
- 

Useful Contacts

- ▶ QUB
 - 028 9024 5133
 - ▶ UU
 - 028 9036 8760
 - ▶ Student Finance NI
 - www.studentfinancenl.co.uk
 - 0300 100 0077
 - ▶ UCAS
 - 0371 468 0 468
 - ▶ Belfast Met
 - 028 9026 5265
- 

Questions?

