

Points of Reflection and Tips Sheet for 6th years over summer 2020

Dear Student,

I hope you are all keeping well and beginning to relax and enjoy the prospect of the summer ahead. Given the challenging circumstance of your final months in 6th year there are a few points and tips which would be worthwhile considering as you transition to the next stage of your lives. For anyone who wishes to discuss any area of concern that you have relating to this transition I would be more than happy to support you in any way that I can.

*This document was written and distributed to students in May 2020. All information is correct and up to date at the time of writing. However, we are at a time of rapid change in terms of the availability of information, and you are advised to keep up to date with official websites.

<p>Transition</p>	<p>Be aware: A big transition, such as leaving post-primary school for the next stage in the journey can be exciting. But it can also cause feelings of sadness or worry.</p> <p>The transition from post-primary education to the next step is significant. Even in a 'normal' year, this transition will have its challenges.</p> <p>For 6th year students at the current time, it is important to know that life is rarely perfect. Transitions may often be characterised as turbulent. This year is no exception. Asking for help and information where you need it will help with the transition towards the next step of your journey.</p> <p>Check the link below for wellbeing information and resources:</p> <p>https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/256911-leaving-cert-2020-practical-supports/</p>
<p>Calculated Grades</p>	<p>Try not to worry about this process. Accept that this is the process that is in place. You will be offered a calculated grade in August and then you can make choices on what to do next. This is similar for all 6th years at this stage in their journey.</p> <p>There is nothing you can do at this stage regarding the calculated grade that will be offered to you.</p> <p>Accept that this is the process that is in place: you will be offered a calculated grade. This grade will be calculated after going through several processes and checks. You will have choices about whether to accept the</p>

	<p>calculated grade, to appeal, or to choose to do the Leaving Certificate examinations. This choice can be made once you have the calculated grades (and your CAO offer) to hand.</p> <p>Remember that we do not know what the CAO points for courses this year will be – in fact, we never truly know what way the CAO points will go. In any given year, we do not know what the points will be for a course until the offers come out. Things might work out very well for you!</p> <p>If things do not work out exactly as you expected, you will have choices and options.</p> <p>For now, it is important not to worry about the calculated grades (and the CAO points for courses). These processes are not within your control.</p>
<p>CAO Process</p>	<p>Make sure your CAO is in good order! This will help you have several options in August.</p> <p>For your CAO to be in good order, you should be careful to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Make sure your courses are in order of preference. (ii) Make sure you have good ‘backups’ in place <p>It is VITALLY important that your CAO application is complete and that your courses are inserted in order of preference. This cannot be changed after 1st July at 17:15.</p> <p>Remember, you can still introduce new courses onto your CAO lists until July 1^{st, 2020} (except restricted application courses).</p> <p>All other CAO dates (e.g. the first round of offers) will occur as close to the ‘normal’ dates as possible</p>
<p>Decision making in August</p>	<p>Decision-making in August is best done when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Both the calculated grades and the CAO offer are available to students (ii) Discussed with a trusted and well-informed adult <p>In any given year, a set of Leaving Certificate results is not guaranteed to grant access to a CAO course.</p> <p>Often, on results day, students can react to their leaving certificate grades e.g. <i>“oh no, I don’t have enough points for my course... what am I</i></p>

	<p><i>going to do?” or “brilliant, I have ten points more than I need for my course. I am definitely getting my first choice.”</i></p> <p>These statements are not true for students... there is no way of telling if your grades will translate into the correct number of CAO points for your course.</p> <p>For students in the examples above, the commentary shows these students have a misunderstanding of how the CAO system works.</p> <p>Points change every year and we NEVER know what the points for your chosen CAO course will be.</p> <p>It is important to remember that decisions should be made when both the Leaving Certificate grades, and the CAO offers are in hand.</p> <p>In addition, when you get your calculated grades and your CAO offer, it will be important for you to discuss your options with a well-informed adult in August. Sometimes very well-meaning individuals are quick to offer advice without fully understanding the systems that are in place. If you wish to discuss your options with me at this stage or any concerns you may have about the process I would be delighted to offer any support and help you may require. You can contact me by email or through the school.</p>
<p>Appeal Process</p>	<p>If you are not happy with one or more of your calculated grades you have been offered, you can choose to appeal.</p> <p>The appeals process is clearly explained at:</p> <p>https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2f07eb-leaving-cert-2020-information/</p> <p>(See Q 20. on the above website: ‘Can I appeal the Calculated Grades?’)</p>
<p>Opportunity to sit the Leaving Certificate Written Exams</p>	<p>If you are not happy with the calculated grade/the result of the appeals process you will have the option to sit the leaving certificate examinations as explained here</p> <p>https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2f07eb-leaving-cert-2020-information/</p> <p>(See Q 20. on the above website: ‘Can I appeal the Calculated Grades?’)</p>

	<p>If you believe that you would like to keep this as an active option, you may wish to devise a study plan for over the summer holidays.</p> <p>At the current time, it is not known exactly when you will be able to sit the examinations. As a result, it is very important that you put a sustainable study plan in place.</p>
<p>The Leaving Certificate</p>	<p>Remember that your Leaving Certificate will have the same value and status as in previous years.</p> <p>This means that you can access educational opportunities / employment opportunities with this certificate in the future in the same way as any other year group.</p> <p>Leaving Certificate results and accompanying certificate are to be issued as close to the original planned dates as possible. <i>Original date: Tuesday 11th August 2020</i></p>
<p>HEAR / DARE</p>	<p>These systems and processes are still in place.</p> <p>All aspects of the HEAR and DARE system continue to be in place this year as in previous years.</p> <p>For further information please see:</p> <p>https://accesscollege.ie/dare/</p>
<p>SUSI (Application for Grants)</p>	<p>If you think you may qualify for a grant, you can apply through SUSI at the website below.</p> <p>https://susi.ie/</p> <p>This website also has a FAQ section for Covid19 related queries:</p> <p>https://susi.ie/do-you-have-a-question-about-covid-19-and-student-grant-funding-check-out-our-covid-19-faq/</p>
<p>PLC</p>	<p>Keep an eye out on all relevant websites for information about PLC Applications and Offers.</p>

	<p>The situation with PLCs is evolving at the current time. It is expected that you will have an opportunity to apply for a PLC course if you have not done so up to now.</p> <p>For the most up to date information check in with:</p> <p>https://www.fetchcourses.ie/</p>
<p>Apprenticeships</p>	<p>The system of apprenticeships remains in place and it is expected that there will be opportunities for application, as in previous years.</p> <p>For the most up-to-date information, please see:</p> <p>www.apprenticeships.ie www.solas.ie</p>
<p>Applying for a job</p>	<p>Get your CV and cover letter into good shape. It may also be useful to ‘brush up’ on your interview skills.</p> <p>To put your ‘best foot forward’ in applying for jobs, it is important to be well prepared.</p> <p>Draft and re-draft your CV and cover letter before finalising the document. Ask a trusted family member / knowledgeable adult to read over the documents to make sure they read well.</p> <p>When applying for jobs, it is important to make a good impression. For more information see:</p> <p>https://www.ncge.ie/sites/default/files/20190826%20WSG-Applying-Jobs-Student-Resource-Sheet-EN.pdf</p>
<p>Wellbeing</p>	<p>You have some time now to reflect on how you are feeling. It is important to think about how to best look after yourself: what are you doing well and what changes could be made.</p> <p>The following definition of wellbeing has been provided by the Department of Education and Skills (2018):</p> <p>‘Wellbeing is present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community.’</p>

	<p>If you are feeling unwell or anxious, talking to a responsible and trusted adult can be helpful. Agencies that are also available if you need extra support are available in the link below:</p> <p>https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/256911-leaving-cert-2020-practical-supports/#other-supports</p>
<p>Communication with school</p>	<p>The school website may also be a source of information to you over the coming weeks and months.</p>
<p>Communication with University / College / Institution you aim to join</p>	<p>Each university / college / institution will have its own website. Keep up to date with all updates and check the website regularly.</p> <p>Some might have virtual tours and other opportunities for interested students to avail of at the current time. If you need to, you can also contact the university / college / institution as required.</p>
<p>Applications to UCAS</p>	<p>Check ucas.com on a regular basis for the most up to date information.</p> <p>The Irish Government have been in talks with other countries and have asked them to be as flexible as possible for applicants. This situation is evolving, and information will become available in due course.</p>
<p>Applications for Medicine in Ireland – HPAT results.</p>	<p>Be wise in your approach to the CAO</p> <p>This year the HPAT results will be returned to students in June – see below.</p> <p>https://hpat-ireland.acer.org/</p> <p>It is important to be wise about your CAO and to not make any reactive changes due to the HPAT result you receive. It is advisable, irrespective of your HPAT result, to complete your CAO (i) in order of preference, (ii) with good ‘backups.’</p> <p>Ideally, you should have your CAO in order prior to receiving your HPAT results.</p>

Future Guidance Counselling	Guidance Counsellors / Career Services and Supports are available to you once you leave the post-primary system. For example, third level colleges and universities will have a service available. Guidance is also provided in the FET sector through various services such as adult education services and training centres.
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Timeline of some important dates for 6th year students:

**Remember: more important dates might become available as time goes on.
Check with official websites for more information**

May:

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me to finalise all aspects of your plan, and your back up plan?

- ✓ Reflect on how you are feeling at the current time. What can you do to look after your wellbeing?
- ✓ Some students may choose to plan for a balanced approach to continue with study over the summer.
- ✓ Check all appropriate/official websites for updates on a regular basis.

June:

- ✓ HPAT students will get their results back: HPAT Ireland will be in touch with students.
- ✓ Check all appropriate/ official websites for updates on a regular basis.
- ✓ Some students may choose to continue with study over the summer months (keep a balanced, sustainable approach)
- ✓ Some students may decide to PLC colleges if applications are still open

July:

- ✓ Change of mind closes on 1st July.
- ✓ Check all appropriate/ official websites for updates on a regular basis.
- ✓ Some students may choose to continue with study over the summer months (keep a balanced, sustainable approach)

August:

- ✓ Calculated Results will be offered to students as close to the 'normal' results date as possible.
- ✓ Remember: It is advisable to have **BOTH** your calculated results **AND** your CAO offer before making choices on what to do next as outlined above.
- ✓ It may be helpful to speak to a well-informed adult prior to making any final decisions.
- ✓ School will reopen and I as Guidance Counsellor will be available for support and advice.
- ✓ Some students may choose to continue with study over the summer months (keep a balanced, sustainable approach)
- ✓ Some students may consider applying to PLC colleges.