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Some timely CAO options open new doors

Going to college

by Aoife Walsh

THIS week we look at some timely options for those interested in going to college this year.

Late Applications

Late applications for the CAO opened on March 5. This allows those who have not yet submitted an application to do so up to May 1 and while there are some restrictions, applicants will be at no other disadvantage as a result of being a late applicant. Applications are made through the CAO website and the fee is €50.

Late applicants may not apply for restricted entry courses. These are courses that may have some admission requirement beyond Leaving Cert results, for example an audition, portfolio or test.

Those who wish to apply as a mature student may find that their options are severely limited as most colleges require mature applicants to have completed their CAO form by February 1. However, there are a number of courses/institutions that will consider late applications, and anyone interested should make direct contact with colleges to check out possibilities.

Some new courses for entry in 2016 have been confirmed since the publication of the CAO handbook. The list is available on CAO.ie and may include courses that will motivate

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a potential candidate to make a late application. Anyone who applied to the CAO by February 1 may include these new courses in their CAO application during the Change of Mind period, which opens on May 5.

Maths Test

Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) will hold a Maths Competency Test on April 1. Students who achieve the required standard in this test will be eligible for DIT engineering courses even if they don't achieve the required Leaving Cert maths grade. It offers an alternative to those who may be concerned about the outcome in June, or who step down to ordinary level before the exam.

DIT is accepting applications to sit the test from those who have applied for a Level 8 engineering programme, which has a minimum requirement of a HC3 in maths. Relevant courses include Electrical/Electronic Engineering (DT021), Manufacturing & Design Engineering (DT023), Engineering (General Entry) DT066, Computer & Communications Engineering (DT081). Students should have studied the Leaving Cert higher level course to take this exam, which is set at a similar standard.

Anyone interested should register at www.dit.ie/studyatdit/undergraduate/mathscompetencytest/, where they will also find past papers. Preparation courses will take place in DIT, Kevin Street on March 30 and 31. Candidates will be emailed their results after the Leaving Cert.

Another opportunity to take this type of maths exam will be available at DIT, as well as a number of other colleges, in August.

● Aoife Walsh is a guidance counsellor at Malahide Community School, Co Dublin



IMPORTANT DATES

TODAY

- Interviews (Round 1): Ballyfermot College of Further Education
- Information Day: Carlow Institute of Further Education
- Teagasc Spring Open Day: Clonakilty Agricultural College
- Spring Open Day: Gurteen Agricultural College
- Agriculture, Food & Nutrition: Non-Standard Entry, University College Dublin

SATURDAY

- GAMSAT Ireland test: Graduate Medical School Admission

MARCH 24

- Teagasc Spring Open Day: Pallaskerry Agricultural College

MARCH 29

- Open Campus tours: University College Cork

MARCH 30

- Maths Competency Test Tutorials (2 Days): DIT
- Open Day: Maynooth University (Kilkenny Campus)
- Science Open Day: UCD

APRIL 1

- Maths Competency Test: DIT

Q I am a second-year primary teacher training student, but it may not be the career for me. Can I transfer to third year on a sports science course?

A You should discuss your concerns immediately with the college careers department or tutor. Most colleges will have some sort of support in place for students who feel as you do at different stages of their course. It may be difficult to transfer from your current course to a degree in the area of sport and exercise science, as the content of the two courses is very different.

There is a facility in place through the CAO to transfer college at the end of first year, but the end of second year may be too late. You also mentioned you would like to transfer directly to third year of a new course — I think this is unlikely given the differences between your current course of study and the area in which you are now interested. Don't be too quick to give up on your current course. A Level 8 degree will always stand to you and there are a large number of options available at postgraduate level.

I'm a Transition Year student and I think politics is a total mess

POLITICS is a mess. That's a well-known fact. The young people, generally, don't care and the adults wish they didn't have to. Career politics has most definitely taken over.

I have to question whether politicians have policies in their manifestos that they fundamentally believe in or that could change their country for the better - or policies that can get them elected.

Passion in politics seems dead, no one cares anymore and, frankly, I think that's a great shame.

I would never deny that I have a strong interest in politics, quite unusual for someone my age, and even I'm bored. What does that say about politics in this country, and in the Western world as a whole?

When the people who have a genuine interest in politics are bored, then surely something is wrong.

In my Opinion

by Emma Flanagan



And, yes, I'm not naive, I'm aware politics is not a source of entertainment. It is not a soap opera, although certain politicians might act a bit like it sometimes.

But it's hardly far-fetched to say that if these politicians really did care about doing a good job and changing this country for the better, then politics would probably be a lot more interesting.

Now, I'm not saying all politicians are bad, far from it. There are most certainly politicians out there who genuinely care deeply about their jobs.

It just seems that, these days, all that influential politicians care about is poll results and popularity. Everything seems entrenched in bureaucracy and secret deals, which, I'll admit, sounds very cynical but it can be tough not to be.

A very worrying example of Irish politicians not caring happened very recently in the Dáil: Ann Phelan, Minister of State at the Departments of Agriculture, Food and Marine, Transport, Tourism and Sport, spoke to a completely empty Dáil.

There was not a single Government or Opposition TD there. To me, this shows a complete and utter lack of conviction on the part of politicians.

How can the general public be expected to engage actively in politics when politicians themselves don't even seem to be engaged?

This problem of apathy only worsens when it comes to young people. The youth of Ireland

honestly couldn't care less about politics.

There are obviously exceptions but these are few and far between.

I don't want to force people who don't have an interest in politics to fake one, but I do wish more young people were at least aware of what is going on in their own country and how this can affect them. Although it can be hard to express this sentiment without sounding a tad like you are preaching.

I can't help but wonder if Ireland needs its own version of Russell Brand, perhaps. Say what you will about his beliefs; during the recent British general election, he managed to engage more young people than any politicians did.

Because he talked to them like they were people, in real terms, about how what was being done in politics could affect them. It was all very honest.

Maybe we should do what

Scotland recently did and lower the voting age to 16. This seems to cause young people to take more of an interest in politics because they finally have a say.

Essentially, politics has to change, and quickly. Or risk alienating people altogether. I'm unsure how many more people politics can afford to lose.

● Emma Flanagan is a Transition Year student at Our Lady's Secondary School, Drogheda, Co Louth.

This is her winning entry in the annual Press Pass awards, a newspaper-in-education initiative that seeks to improve literacy skills and awareness of news media in participating schools. It is run by NewsBrands Ireland and sponsored by the Irish League of Credit Unions. The winners are selected by a panel of newspaper editors and journalists, chaired by Professor John Horgan, the former Press Ombudsman.