

Portmarnock Community School

Guidance & Counselling Service – Frank Farrell

Most commonly asked questions and answers – Leaving Certificate 2013

When are the results available?

Leaving Certificate results will be available from the school on the morning of **Wednesday, 14 August**.

How can I get results if I am out of the country?

Results are available online and by phone. Access to the online results service, which requires the use of your examination number and unique candidate personal identification number, is through www.examinations.ie.

Students also have the option of accessing their results by telephone using their pin and examination numbers. Details of the phone service, which requires the use of a touch-tone phone, are: 1530-719290 for callers within the Republic of Ireland (calls cost 33c per minute including VAT. Calls from pay phones and mobiles may cost extra); 00353-1-6885312 for callers outside the Republic of Ireland (international call rates apply).

How do I calculate my points score?

You should log onto the points calculator facility the Qualifax website at www.qualifax.ie. All colleges use the common points system, but there are a few variations. **An extra 25 points is now awarded to all candidates who secure a D3 or higher in Higher Level Maths**. Some colleges also award points for A and B grades in foundation level Maths and Irish. Full details of the points system are on page 21 of your CAO handbook and also on its website at www.cao.ie. Remember you calculate points with your best **six results only**!

L.C. Grade	Higher Level	Ordinary Level	Bonus * Maths HL	Maths Foundation #
A1	100	60	125	20
A2	90	50	115	15
B1	85	45	110	10
B2	80	40	105	5
B3	75	35	100	
C1	70	30	95	
C2	65	25	90	
C3	60	20	85	
D1	55	15	80	
D2	50	10	75	
D3	45	5	70	

How do I accept a CAO offer?

On Monday 19 **August (expected date)** the CAO releases Round One offers. You can view your offer on line from 6 am onwards. You then have until 5:15pm on the 31st of August to accept this offer. I refer you to pages 21 & 22 of the CAO handbook, the handbook is also available online at www.cao.ie, it is imperative you follow these instructions correctly or you risk forfeiting your college place. I advise you to **accept an offer online** and print off your acceptance.

A second round of offers will be issued to fill any remaining vacancies. These offers will be issued on 28 **September (expected date)** from 6am onwards. After Round Two Offers will be issued as necessary until October to fill any vacancies which, may arise.

Guidance Counsellor's advice to students is very clear:

- If you are made an offer **then accept that offer**, even if it is not your highest preference offer. There is every possibility that you may be made a higher offer in Round Two but there is no guarantee of this. By accepting Round One offers you are ensuring your place in a third level institution. It makes great economic sense for you to further your education.
- If you are presented with two offers, a Level 8 and a level 6/7 offer, then think very carefully about which one you ought to accept. As a general rule I would encourage you to accept the highest level course i.e. level 8. However this general rule may not be right for each individual. The offer should match the area which matches closest the area of study you are most interested in. Remember that a great many students progress from level 6 and 7 qualifications to level 8 and 9 qualifications thereafter.

If you are not offered a course there is still the chance you may be offered a place in subsequent offer rounds – there are up to 13 rounds but the main ones by far are round one and two.

- You may indeed find a course through **Available Places / Vacant places** (see **page 24** of the CAO handbook & below).
- Or you may attempt to find a course in the UK via the **UCAS Clearing** system.
- Or you may seek a course in a **College of Further Education** (see separate handout below)

What is the Vacant Places Facility?

If any places remain unfilled in particular courses after all offers have been made and the waiting lists of applicants meeting minimum entry requirements have been exhausted, such vacancies will be advertised.

Where there are Available Places/Vacant Places in specific courses, HEIs will advertise these on the CAO website. Before making an “Available Place/Vacant Place” application, those matching the description “Restricted Categories of Applicant” on Page 3 of the CAO handbook should first consult with the Admissions Office of the HEI concerned.

- Persons who have not applied already may make an **Available Place** application on payment of a fee of €45.00.
- Persons who have applied already (whether placed or not) may apply for an Available Place on-line without payment of a further fee (when available).
- Applicants for Available Places/Vacant Places must meet the normal minimum entry requirements for the course(s) in question. Previously published points in an earlier round of offers should not be taken as an indication of the points required for entry to Available Places/Vacant Places.
- The Available Place facility operates on a weekly schedule of applications, offers and acceptances. Applications that arrive in CAO before 11:00 on a Monday will be processed and considered for offers on the following Thursday. An offer posted on a Thursday will be available to view on the CAO website the following day.
- Previously published points in an earlier round of offers in the current year should not be taken as being the points requirements for available place courses.
- Available/Vacant place course codes may only be inserted higher in your list of preferences than any offer which you have received to date.
- NB **If you still wish to be considered for any existing courses, you must insert all available place courses below those you wish to retain.**

- Except for courses in which available places have been advertised, you may not re-order your original course choices.
- You may only have a total of 10 course choices in any course list (Level 8 and Level 7/6). If you wish to add an available place course to a list already containing 10 entries, the course code at the bottom of the list (i.e., preference 10) will be deleted.
- Mature applicants and applicants who have qualifications other than 1985- Irish Leaving Cert and/or 2000- FETAC Level 5/6 are categorised as Non-Standard Applicants. Such applicants must contact the appropriate HEI before completing an application.
- Acceptance of an offer of an Available Place automatically cancels and supersedes any previous offer(s) and acceptance(s).

What is the UCAS Clearing system?

Clearing is used after the exam results are published in August. It becomes active from 19 August onwards. It can help people without a university or college place to find suitable vacancies on higher education courses in the UK **even if you haven't applied to the UK already**. If you are flexible and you have reasonable exam results, there is still a good chance you will find another course through Clearing. With Clearing **speed is of the essence here** the most interesting vacancies will be snapped up. Vacancies will be published in the Independent (UK) newspaper. The expected dates are: 5 August (Scottish listings – Scotland only)

19 August

20 August

21 August

2 September

9 September.

How can I view my script(s), and perhaps make an appeal?

First, you should consult the Leaving Certificate Results Appeal Process booklet that accompanies your statement of results. This will help you decide whether or not to lodge an appeal against a result. With the exception of external candidates, all applications for viewing of marked exam papers should be made through your school. Leaving Certificate students return completed application forms regarding viewing of the scripts directly to the school by **Tuesday, 20 August**.

When will the viewing of exam papers take place?

Viewing will be in your school on **Friday and Saturday, August 30 and 31**. You **must** be present to view a script and you may bring a person of your choice with you. (You cannot have somebody view the script for you)!

You may ask a parent, or possibly a teacher, to view your script with you. There is no obligation on teachers to make themselves available, but most are only too happy to help although some will simply not be in a position to do so due to prior commitments.

Will I have a copy of the marking scheme while viewing my script?

When you are viewing your script, along with your nominated other person, you can compare your script against the marking scheme to see whether a recheck request might be appropriate.

Can I see the marking schemes before I view my scripts?

You can access the marking scheme on the State exams website at *www.examinations.ie* and your school will also have copies of the marking schemes available during the review days.

How do I appeal a grade in any subject?

The fee per standard subject, refundable in the case of a successful appeal, is €40. All appeal applications must be with the State Examinations Commission by **5pm on**

Wednesday, September 4 . Results of appeals will be issued in mid October. Be

careful though: many candidates return their appeal form without proof of payment; either the stamped personalised bank giro, if paid at the bank, or the internet confirmation record if paid online by credit card. Such incomplete applications can invalidate the appeal request.

How do I apply for a student charge/maintenance grant?

First of all go to www.studentfinances.ie and register with SUSI. Application facility opened on 20 May, 2013. Just above New Grant Applications for 2013-14 you will see Student Grant written in blue – click on this ad it will bring you to the on-line application form. Please apply ASAP.

Quick guide to the SUSI grant process

Background

Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) is the single awarding authority for all student grant applications since the 2012/13 academic year. If you are a new student or changing course you should apply to SUSI through this website.

The student grant application system is an “Online application system” and is accessed here at studentfinance.ie. To assist all applicants there is a SUSI Support Desk which will provide extended opening hours for email queries and telephone queries. Contact details are in the SUSI Support Desk section.

SUSI has a Nationwide Mentoring Network in place to assist applicants who might have access issues using the online system. You should contact the SUSI Support Desk for additional information on this network.

Remember you do not have to have confirmed your final choice of college or course to apply for a student grant.

Who should apply to SUSI

If you held a student grant **prior** to 2012/2013, and are continuing your studies on this course in the 2013-14 academic year, the renewal or re-assessment of your grant for 2013-14 will be carried out by your current local authority or VEC: you should not apply to SUSI.

The following students should submit an online application to SUSI:

- a student who completed the Leaving Certificate in 2013;
- a student who never previously pursued a Post Leaving Certificate course (PLC), an approved undergraduate course or an approved postgraduate course;

- a student who completed an approved course in 2012-13, or a previous academic year, and hopes to pursue a further course in 2013-14, including those pursuing an “add-on” course in 2013-14;
- a student who attended but did not complete a course in 2012-13, or a previous academic year, and hopes to pursue an approved course in 2013-14;

The deadline to apply for a grant is **August 31, 2013** so apply early!

The City of Dublin VEC handle all applications now for higher education grants operated through SUSI.

SUSI SUPPORT DESK

- Available 9.00am - 8.00 Mon/Fri
- Available 10.00am - 1.00pm Saturdays
- Email: support@susi.cdvec.ie
- Telephone 0761 08 7874
- [Facebook.com/susisupport](https://www.facebook.com/susisupport)

I’m thinking of repeating the Leaving Certificate?

See handout below.

How do I survive the first few weeks of college?

- Attend orientating or induction this is vital !
- Say hello to someone - Everybody will be in the same boat!
- Join clubs and societies they are a great way to meet people
- You are expected to be an independent learner
- Don’t skip lectures and attend all tutorials

- Be a critical listener and don't be afraid to ask questions afterwards
- Become familiar with new terminology and concepts
- Develop your own shorthand system key words points check your notes at the end of each class

- Read books critically scan chapters for key words and concepts develop relevant questions as you read the chapter with a view to answering the question write it all down
- Take breaks between study – study is a year round affair not just a cramming session a few weeks prior to exams.
- Reward yourself when you have completed a task and try and make sure that you manage your time effectively.

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Colleges of Further Education

Colleges of Further Education Also known as the Further Education Sector, offer over one thousand courses in more than two hundred centres nation-wide, with 24,700 students taking part annually in these one and two year programmes. Courses include everything from Dance to Professional Computer courses, as well as the more familiar such as Business, Marketing, Childcare, Fashion Design, Art and Design, Teleservices, Computer Applications, Law, Fitness and Leisure Management, Beauty Therapy & Pre-nursing.

If you are offered a college place by the C.A.O. I highly recommend you consider this alternative. These courses are F.E.T.A.C. accredited (see www.fetac.ie) and are considered level 4 or 5 and in some cases level 6 in terms of the National Qualification framework (see www.nfq.ie)

Unlike CAO courses, places are not awarded on the **basis of points** - entry to all courses is by direct application to the college, usually followed by an interview. PLC courses are of one and two years duration and generally entail a Resource contribution fee of approx 250/350 euro per year (beauty therapy courses are slightly more expensive as students need to purchase their own equipment) together with a Government charge of 200 euro introduced by the DES in 2011. There may also be a small charge for examination purposes. If you have been approved for a student grant you will be **exempt** from paying this Government levy.

Local V.E.C.'s (Vocational Education Committees) and some second level schools offer PLC courses. As of yet there is no central application system for P.L.C. courses so students must apply individually to each college; most colleges require an interview. At interview, colleges attempt to match students to courses and to ensure that students understand the nature of the courses for which they have

applied. We are blessed that living in Dublin we are within easy reach of the following Colleges of Further Education operated by the City of Dublin VEC;

[Ballsbridge College of Further Education](#)
[Ballyfermot College of Further Education](#)
[Kylemore College](#)
[Whitehall College of Further Education](#)
[St. Kevin's College](#)
[Colaiste Dhulaigh - College of Further Education](#)
[Crumlin College of Further Education](#)
[Inchicore College of Further Education](#)
[Colaiste Ide - College of Further Educaiton](#)
[Killester College of Further Education](#)
[Liberties College](#)
[Marino College of Further Education](#)
[Plunket College](#)
[Rathmines College](#)
[Ringsend Technical Institute](#)
[Pearse College of Further Education](#)

A list of colleges operated by the County Dublin V.E.C. can be found below:

[College of Further Education Dundrum](#)
[Collinstown Park Community College](#)
[Deansrath Community College](#)
[Dundrum College](#)
[Grange Community College](#)
[Greenhills College](#)
[Stillorgan College of Further Education](#)

In most cases application forms can be completed online from the individual colleges websites and completed forms may be returned throughout the year. However, popular courses tend to fill up as early as April. Some colleges hold interviews in May but interviews are also held in September and in some cases places are offered right up to the start of the courses. Each college has its own procedures - some require a non-refundable deposit with the application form while others do not require a deposit unless they are actually offering a place.

By using qualifax.ie – the national learners database website (www.qualifax.ie) and following the links – Students - course finder & post leaving cert you will be able to

view all available courses. Finally, it is important to check out the quality and suitability of a course to ensure it is right for you.

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Repeating the Leaving Certificate, a possible option.

Repeating the Leaving Certificate is a decision that requires careful consideration, it can be an expensive option and there are the emotional implications of remaining behind while friends and peers embark on an exciting new life in college. Having said that, the majority of students who repeat do improve upon their original performance.

It is possible to take a dedicated Repeat Leaving Certificate course at VEC schools and Further Education Colleges. These courses tend to have a mixture of repeat students and mature students who might have left school early. The advantage of these dedicated courses is that everyone is at the same stage, taking a one-year course, and teachers realise that you will not have covered certain areas before. A number of schools, particularly in Dublin, offer dedicated repeat classes, where students are treated as second level plus. VEC schools are a good bet for repeat classes and, in Dublin, classes are offered at Plunket College, Whitehall College, Pearse College, Crumlin College of Further Education; Rathmines College; Ringsend and, Greenhills College, Walkinstown. Among the traditional Dublin schools with a good track record of repeat years are Marian College, Ballsbridge, and, on the Northside St Joseph's CBS, Marino, and O'Connell Schools.

A popular alternative are private institutions or 'grind' schools, which concentrate solely on the fifth and/or sixth year. Students enter a dedicated repeat class or into the college's sixth year. (If you do enter into sixth year, don't worry about being left behind. These colleges are well aware of the challenges facing repeat students and will make sure that you are quickly incorporated into the learning process.) Many of these colleges are very focused and offer students additional services, such as flexible timetables, examination techniques and study skills seminars, to give students a good opportunity to improve their results and CAO opportunities.

There are a number of factors to consider when you are deciding where to repeat the Leaving Certificate. Cost is an issue – courses at Further Education institutions average at around €200, whereas private institutions can charge in excess of €5,000. There is also the cost of spending an extra year in education to consider. Whatever choice you make, it is important to do plenty of research beforehand. If possible, talk to past pupils about their experiences. Ask them relevant questions about classes and study aids. If taking the college route, you should also pay a visit to the college itself to satisfy any queries you might have. It is also a good idea to make an appointment to talk to the principal or a guidance counsellor if this is possible. They should be able answer any queries you may have to assist you in your decision, such as information on class sizes, subjects on offer and the average points increase for repeating students at their institution.

A number of contacting details can be found below:

Plunket College of Further Education

Swords Road
Whitehall
Dublin 9
Tel: 01 8371689 / 8371680
<http://www.plunket.cdvec.ie/>

Rathmines College of Further Education

Town Hall
Rathmines
Dublin 6. Phone: 01 497 5334 Fax: 01 4979678
info@rathminescollege.ie

Pearse College

Clogher Road
Crumlin
Dublin 12
Tel 4536661/454
www.pearsecollege.ie

Whitehall College of Further Education

Swords Road
Dublin 9
Tel: 01 8376011 or 01 8376012 fax: 01 8377717
info@whitehallCFE.cdvec.ie

O'Connell Secondary School

North Richmond St
Dublin 1
01 8748307 sandraocs@eirocm.net
www.oconnellsecondaryschool.com

Institute of Education

Address: 82-85 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2
Telephone: 01-6613511
Fax: 01-6619050

E-mail: info@ioe.ie

www.ioe.ie

Private Fee Paying College

Dublin Tutorial Centre

Address: 19 Mount Street Upper, Dublin 2

Telephone: 01-6612209

Fax: 01-6618362

E-mail: info@dublintonline.com

www.dublintonline.com

Private Fee Paying College

Ashfield College

Templeogue, Dublin 6W

Telephone: 01-4900866

Fax: 01-4900871

E-mail: info@ashfield-college.com

www.ashfield-college.com

Private Fee Paying College

Good luck all!!

Go n-éirí libh go léir !!

Bonne route et bonne continuation!!

F. Farrell