



Waterford Institute of Technology



HOW TO RESEARCH YOUR

CAO

OPTIONS

The steps involved in research

1

Understand the CAO process

Potential applicants are advised to read the CAO Handbook and to become familiar with the various guides available in the Student Resources section of the CAO website, including the demo application facility and the video guides explaining the application process. See www.cao.ie

2

Know yourself

Where do your interests lie in both academic terms and in your personal life? We have put together worksheets to help CAO applicants figure out what areas they're interested in so they can then start researching related courses.

3

Research courses you have an interest in

Once you know yourself and your interests you are better placed to start researching in detail the right courses for you. Research can include online searches, visiting careers websites, college websites and reading through handbooks and prospectuses. Compare courses and make lists of questions to ask about them.

4

Research colleges, campuses and cities/towns

See if the colleges that run courses you are interested in have an open day or facilitate campus tours. There's nothing like visiting a place in person to get a feel for it. You can also do research online about the characteristics and strengths of various institutes.

5

Talk to people

As part of your research put together a list of questions to ask lecturers, students or graduates. Can your family or a college help you contact someone working in an area or studying a course you're interested in?

The truth about jobs and careers



If you're wondering where the jobs will be in four or five years' time when you graduate, here are a few things to consider:

- It is difficult to predict where the jobs will be long-term
- Careers are constantly changing, some disappearing totally, while new ones are coming on stream
- It is predicted that a person will have more than one career over a lifespan, the average is now about three
- You can continue to upskill or re-train throughout your life
- There are often many routes into a wide variety of career areas

The most important factor in planning your future is that you love the subjects, topics and activities that will be at the centre of your studies and what you hope to work at. Even if jobs are guaranteed in a certain discipline and you have no interest, it will be difficult to stick with it and be happy in that role for the rest of your life.

Why doing what you love is the best decision for you

Find something you love to do and you'll never have to work a day in your life is a popular saying. If you study an area that interests and excites you, it will help you out of bed and into college. It also means you'll look forward to work every day when you start your career.

Fill out our worksheets to see if there is a trend in your answers which may direct you to researching courses in a certain discipline or that would lead to a career you'd love.



Find out what you love



My favourite subjects at school

Subject name:

My favourite part of this class or this subject is:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

List what parts of the subjects you enjoy. Is it the practical demonstrations? Team work? Problem solving? Writing essays? Helping others? Do you find anything particularly interesting or enjoyable?

My likes and dislikes

I am good at:

I don't like:



_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Do you know what are you good at? Have a shot at admitting what you know you can do well. Or even list what you're bad at (so it doesn't make it to your CAO list).

Find out what you love



My favourite activities outside of school

Name of activity:

What I liked about it:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Look back at transition year, work experience, volunteer work, summer camps, Irish college, sports and hobbies you are involved in outside of school. What did you enjoy the most?

Write down what you are interested in – write anything that comes to mind from school subjects to things you have read about, what stuff takes your interest on social media, to activities with friends or family.



Once I have completed my studies, I see myself:

What's important to you about how you would like to spend your days inside and outside of work? Is it working outdoors? Is it physical work? Is it working in a lab? Is it working in an office? Is it having opportunities to work abroad? Is it being organised? Do you work shift hours? A 9-5 job? Your answers will help give you an idea of the setting or career you see yourself in.

Keep these words close to hand when reading about careers and courses, because if the things that interest you keep cropping up in course descriptions you're definitely on the right path.

Find out what you love

How to turn your interests into course choices

What I love

Related Courses

Related Careers

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Once you have found where your interests lie it's time to see what courses you can do in these areas or that can give you the skillsets you enjoy or help you find work in the type of working environment you would do well in. There are many websites you can use to research courses and careers apart from individual college websites.

As part of your research put together a list of questions to ask lecturers, students or graduates. You can talk to people at open days, school visits, during online Q&A sessions, by sending an email to a course leader. WIT also has a facility to ask questions on each course page.

You will find a list of Open Days on the CAO website.



Compare courses

Course Name	College	Entry Requirements	Work placement/ Study Abroad?	Class size	Length of course	Level 6/7/8	Questions you have

Money

	COLLEGE 1	COLLEGE 2	COLLEGE 3
COLLEGE NAME			
ESTIMATED GRANT <i>Fill out the eligibility reckoner on SUSI.ie (List the correct campus as this can impact the distance/eligibility)</i>			
Grant (under 45km)			
Grant (over 45km)			
ESTIMATED EXPENSES			
Student contribution			
Transport			
Public transport			
Cost of bike			
Lift share cost			
Car cost for year			
Car repayments			
Tax			
Insurance			
Fuel			
Upkeep			
College parking			
Living expenses			
Accommodation Rent			
Broadband			
Gas/Electricity/Heating			
Food shopping			
Mobile phone			
Other expenses			
Total for 9 months			
Total for 12 months			
Positive points about this institute <i>Your comparison could include: Student body size, class size, league table place, accommodation choices, transport links, facilities, etc. It's important to visit a campus and get a feel for a city if you're moving away from home, so this might play a part in what you like or dislike about certain places.</i>			

Progression routes

While the focus of many students is to research and apply for level 8 courses, there are other options that can lead to the same outcome for many students.

Level 6/7 progression

Research the courses you are interested at levels 6, 7 and 8. And fill out both lists. Check if a level 6 or 7 course you are interested in will allow you to progress on to a level 7 or 8 you are interested in (eg the level 8 course you really wanted) once you meet the required grades and there are places available. You may find yourself ending up with the same qualification, having taken a different route.

Further Education (FE) progression routes

WIT has partnerships with a number of colleges of further education, meaning a set number of students undertaking a relevant course in an FE college can apply for direct entry, via the CAO, onto specific WIT courses.

A full list of partner FE colleges can be viewed at www.wit.ie/FEprogression

Please note that participation on a related FE course does not guarantee entry onto a course, so as part of your research contact both institutions to find out if this option is the right one for you.

Additional points and reserved places

Applicants may be eligible for extra points for certain courses or for previous third-level education. There are also agreements in place with certain schools. These include:

Additional points

Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) Level 8

Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Sports Coaching & Performance Level 8

Reserved places

Bachelor of Business in Recreation & Sport Management Level 7

Read the full details at: www.wit.ie/admissionspolicies



Help from the helpline

We've put together some of the common queries we hear every year around CAO offers time when people call our helpline.

"I have received an offer for a course but I really want the course I listed below it."

Tips to avoid it happening to you: Find the time well in advance of the Leaving Cert to do your thinking, talking and thorough research, and list your courses in order of preference – don't put anything down that you don't really want or like.

Possible causes:

- 1) You have provided incorrect information to the CAO
- 2) You don't have the minimum entry requirements for that course

"I have more than enough points for my first choice but I don't have an offer."

Tips to avoid it happening to you:

Double check the information you have provided the CAO is correct – do this with plenty of time before the 1 February deadline. Check the entry requirements for each course both in the physical handbook and on the website. You might need a Science subject, or to achieve a certain grade in Maths or to have a number of subjects at Higher Level, for example.

"I didn't get enough points for what I really want to do at Level 8 and I didn't fill out my Level 6/7 list."

Tips to avoid it happening to you: You have 20 spaces to fill on the CAO form. Our advice is to use them and make use of both your level 8 and your level 6/7 list.

Possible causes:

You didn't discuss it with your family, visit the city/town/campus, research the costs of living, or haven't fully considered implications of moving out of home.

"I've been offered my first choice which is far away, and I realise I'd like to study close to home."

Tips to avoid it happening to you:

Get your family to bring you to the college to check it out and see if you would like to live there. Put a course you would like in a college close to home on your 6/7 list so you have options if you have a last-minute change of heart.

Students have their say

We asked WIT students their advice for CAO applicants.

Don't follow your friends

"Take the time to consider what course you want to study. Pick something that you want to study and don't pick a course in a college because that's where your friends are going. If you are really interested in a course find out more about it."

Lauren Hayde, Legal Studies

Study what you love

"Don't worry about where you're going to college, it's your results at the end of it all that will speak volumes, and if you study what you genuinely love, it won't feel like hard work."

Denise Brophy,
Retail Management

Choose your own path

"My career guidance teacher introduced me to a quote which every student coming out of secondary school should abide by: 'Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail' – Ralph Waldo Emerson."

P.J. Doyle, Architectural & Building Information
Modelling Technology

Research courses in detail

"You need to figure out if you like the modules of the courses you're looking at, as there's no point attempting a course as it's disheartening and an expensive mistake if you have decided it's not for you after paying fees and other expenses."

Isaac Allen,
Applied Computing

Work out your finances

"Talk to your family and friends, work out your finances, find out what you are entitled to (grants etc.) You are doing this for yourself, that must be a key to your thinking, you are improving your knowledge so you can achieve more."

Ken Clancy,
Information Technology

Know your interests

"Don't panic, take your time and never put anything down for the sake of it. Sit down and think, 'Okay what am I interested in?' Once you do that, think is this an area that you could see yourself working in for the future."

Donnchadh Fahey,
Applied Healthcare

We'll help make up your mind



Before 1 February

WIT Schools' Open Day January 2017

10am-2pm, 20 January 2017

WIT Arena, West Campus,

Carriganore, Waterford

This day will include presentations, information on undergraduate study, campus tours, meet and talk to lecturers and experience the world of WIT

www.wit.ie/januaryopenday

#studyatWIT Open Day 2017

11am-3pm, 21 January 2017

WIT Arena, West Campus,

Carriganore, Waterford

The day will include presentations, information on undergraduate, postgraduate, part-time or full-time study, campus tours, meet and talk to lecturers, and experience the world of WIT

www.wit.ie/studyatWITevent

1 Feb CAO Deadline Events

30 January to 1 February 2017

Events over this period include campus tours, drop in clinic, live chat and increased phone line support.

www.wit.ie/events

CAO Information Session for Mature Applicants

11-12pm or 7-8pm 12 January 2017

www.wit.ie/matureinformationevent

Before 1 July

CAO Applicant Evening

Tuesday, 4 April 2017

WIT Main Campus

Similar to our January Open Day, the evening will include presentations, information on undergraduate study, campus tours, meet and talk to lecturers and experience the world of WIT

www.wit.ie/CAOinfoevening

1 July CAO Change of Mind Events

Date: 28th – 30th June 2017

These CAO Change of Mind events are for CAO applicants who are changing their CAO form. Events over this period include campus tours, drop in clinic, live chat and increased phone line support.

www.wit.ie/events

CAO Offers Events

21 to 23 August 2017

(beginning at 6am on 21st)

Campus tours, a drop in clinic, live chat and increased phone lines will be available to help you with your third level CAO offer

www.wit.ie/events

Campus Tours

Outside of our open events, there are other ways to experience the world of WIT.

A one-hour Campus Tour provides a great opportunity to see the Institute, and help you get a feel for campus life. Bookable online year round.

www.wit.ie/campustour