



Admission Guidelines and Procedures for Mature Applicants

New Entrants – Mature Applicants

Mature applicants must be 23 years of age or over on the 1st January of the year of entry to their programme of study. There is no upper age limit. The normal minimum entry requirements do not apply to mature applicants, however, the criteria for determining eligibility for the 'Free Fees Initiative' apply. Further details are available in [Fees and Refunds Policy](#).

In order to make an application as a mature learner the following procedures must be adhered to:

1. Application to the Central Applications Office (CAO)

Mature applicants must apply through the CAO. Application forms are available from the CAO directly (Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway) and online at www.cao.ie. The closing date for receipt of applications (with a fee) is the 1st February each year. The closing date for receipt of late applications (with a fee) is the 1st May each year. The full application procedure is detailed in the CAO Handbook.

It should be noted that Carlow College, St. Patrick's (hereafter Carlow College) will not receive information from the CAO until later in the summer on any mature applicants who apply to CAO after the 1st February deadline. Therefore, late mature applicants should contact the Admissions Office once an application has been made to the CAO to ensure that they are invited to interviews.

2. Application to Carlow College

Each mature applicant is considered on the basis of an application form, an interview and a written assessment. Immediately on receipt of their details from CAO, the applicant will receive an email providing them with a link to the Mature Student Application Form, which can be found at: <https://carlowcollege.ie/mature-student-application-form/>. Completed application forms are usually required in advance of the interviews. Once the application form is completed, interview details are issued by email / post to applicants. Interviews are generally held in February and May / June of each year. At present Carlow College does not apply a quota to the numbers of mature applicant places available on its programmes.

'Positive ratings' will only be given to applicants who achieve at least the minimum programme requirement for mature entrants on the combined application process and demonstrate that the applicant has the skills and experience required to undertake the relevant programme of study. The CAO is subsequently notified by the Admissions Office of applicants who have received a positive rating in the selection process.

Successful applicants are notified by the CAO in early July of the relevant year via Round A offers.

Advanced Entry – Mature Applicants

Applications for Advanced Entry to programmes of study should be made directly to the Admissions Office, Carlow College. Each applicant is considered on the basis of an application form and an interview. Supporting documentation (certified examination transcripts, [English language qualification and tests](#) (if applicable), module descriptors of completed courses and academic references) is also required. Consideration of an application is subject to availability of places on the programme. Applicants are notified of the outcome of their application directly by the Admissions Office in July (see also [Admission Guidelines and Procedures for Recognition Prior Learning](#)).

Applicants with Disabilities / Learning Differences / Long-Term Health Conditions

Where an applicant has a disability, learning difference or long-term health condition and requires accommodations to the interview / assessment process, the applicant must indicate this on their application form. Accommodations cannot be guaranteed once the application deadline has passed.

Garda Vetting

Carlow College offers a number of programmes that require learners to undertake placements with external agencies. In such placements, learners will assume positions of trust and be in contact with the public. To ensure the protection of the public, and justify public trust and confidence, the College is committed to ensuring that only suitable candidates are allowed to undertake these programmes. Garda Vetting takes place after learners have registered. Programmes for which Garda Vetting is required are:

PC404 B.A. in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care);

PC405 B.A. (Honours) in Social, Political and Community Studies;

PC402 B.A. in Arts and Humanities (if enrolled in the Catechetics & Placement Module); and

PC410 B.A. (Honours) in Arts and Humanities (if enrolled in the Catechetics & Placement Module).

PC411 B.A. (Honours) in English and History (if enrolled in the Career Practice Module).

The list of programmes are reviewed on an annual basis and may be updated to include new and / or existing programmes. In addition, any learners conducting research wherein they are engaging with children and / or vulnerable adults will require Garda Vetting.

Carlow College uses the Garda Síochána National Vetting Bureau (GSNVB) which, where applicable, may liaise with the Police Service of Northern Ireland Vetting Service to assess the suitability of applicants for admission to such programmes. Garda Vetting includes Police Vetting in respect of other jurisdictions. For more information on Garda Vetting, see the Carlow College [Garda Vetting Policy](#).

Research Ethics

Learners undertaking research where they are engaging with other humans and/or animals may require full approval from the Carlow College Research Advisory Ethics Committee for their research. For further details on obtaining research approval, see the Carlow College [*Research Ethics Advisory Policy*](#).

Enquiries and Queries

The Admissions Office welcomes enquires from prospective learners on any aspect of the admissions process and will respond to queries from the public via phone, fax, email and in person. The Admissions Office is located in the Front Hall of the College and the contact details are: 059 9153243 or 059 9153268 (Phone); 059 9140258 (Fax) and admissionscc@carlowcollege.ie (Email).

Mature applicants who wish to review their interview and / or assessment performance, should contact the Admissions Office for an appointment with the relevant Programme Director.

Appeals Procedures

For the College's documented procedures governing decisions pertaining to admissions, please see the [*Appeals Procedures for Admissions Decision*](#) (Appendix 10).

Appendix 3.1: Mature Learner Application Guidelines



MATURE LEARNER APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Application Process

Once you have applied through the CAO, a file will be sent by the CAO to Carlow College, St. Patrick's indicating that you have applied as a Mature Applicant.

- Our Admissions Office will then send formal correspondence to all Mature Applicants. This correspondence will include a link to a more detailed application form and an invite to a telephone interview assessment.
- Your application will be assessed on the completion of your application form, written exercise and telephone interview. It is important to complete all sections of this form where appropriate.
- It is at the discretion of the College whether you are recommended to CAO to receive an offer. If you are successful, you will receive an offer from Carlow College, St. Patrick's through the CAO in early July.
- Carlow College, St. Patrick's does NOT have a limit on the number of places offered to mature students.
- Non – EU Applicants will be required to provide further documentation and will be processed through Carlow College, St. Patrick's International Office, after the Mature Student Assessment.

Data Protection

- Carlow College, St Patrick's takes every appropriate measure to protect and manage personal data appropriately.
- Mature Student Application Forms and other records generated during the application process, for example, the written exercise that you are requested to complete, are shared only with Carlow College, St Patrick's staff who require them for their duties.
- Information on how Carlow College, St Patrick's manages your personal data and your Data Protection rights is detailed in our [Privacy Notice for Learners](#).
- Your consent is requested on the Application Form for use of disability, learning difference and long-term health condition data. The College offers supports during the application process.
- If you go on to accept a place with us, the Academic Resource Office will contact you in respect of its services and to invite you to a Needs Assessment.

Appendix 3.2: Mature Learner Application Form Assessment



Mature Learner Application Form Assessment

APPLICANT'S NAME:

CAO NUMBER:

PROGRAMME THE APPLICANT HAS SELECTED ON THE CAO:

FOR EACH SECTION UP TO 20 MARKS, TOTAL MARKS AVAILABLE
NOT TO EXCEED 40

Educational Experience, Level and Relevance: _____ / 20

Relevant Life Experience: _____ / 20

TOTAL: _____ / 40

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____
Programme Director

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____
Office of the Registrar

Appendix 3.3: Mature Learner Written Assessment



Mature Learner Written Assessment

APPLICANT'S NAME:
DATE:
PROGRAMME THE APPLICANT HAS SELECTED ON THE CAO:

TOTAL SCORE OBTAINABLE THROUGH THE ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT IS 20 MARKS

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent; please rate this assessment piece under the following headings by circling the relevant score (please see score descriptors overleaf):

(i) Structure

1 2 3 4 5

(ii) Sentence Construction / Grammar & Punctuation / Spelling

1 2 3 4 5

(iii) Relationship of content to the questions asked

1 2 3 4 5

(iv) Evident of intent of purpose of taking the programme, applied for.

1 2 3 4 5

Examiner: _____

Overall Score: _____
(Out of 20 marks)

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT SCORE DESCRIPTORS



1 = Fail:

Extremely poor attempt, questions not addressed appropriately/adequately, significant errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence construction and spelling.

2 = Bare Pass:

Adequate attempt, questions addressed some major errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence construction and spelling.

3 = Solid Pass:

Above average attempt, questions addressed some errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence construction and spelling.

4 = High Pass:

Above average attempts, question addressed with clarity and clear structure

5 = Excellent Pass:

Extremely high competence demonstrated, questions addressed appropriately with evidence of reflection.

Appendix 3.4: Mature Learner Overall Assessment



Mature Learner Overall Assessment

APPLICANT'S NAME:	
CAO NUMBER:	
PROGRAMME THE APPLICANT HAS SELECTED ON THE CAO:	
Application Form:	_____ / 40
Interview:	_____ / 40
Written Exercise:	_____ / 20
Overall Score (<i>positive rating = 40+</i>):	_____ / 100
Positive / Negative Rating to CAO: _____	
If rated negatively, please provide some constructive feedback for the applicant: 	

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____
Programme Director

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____
Office of the Registrar