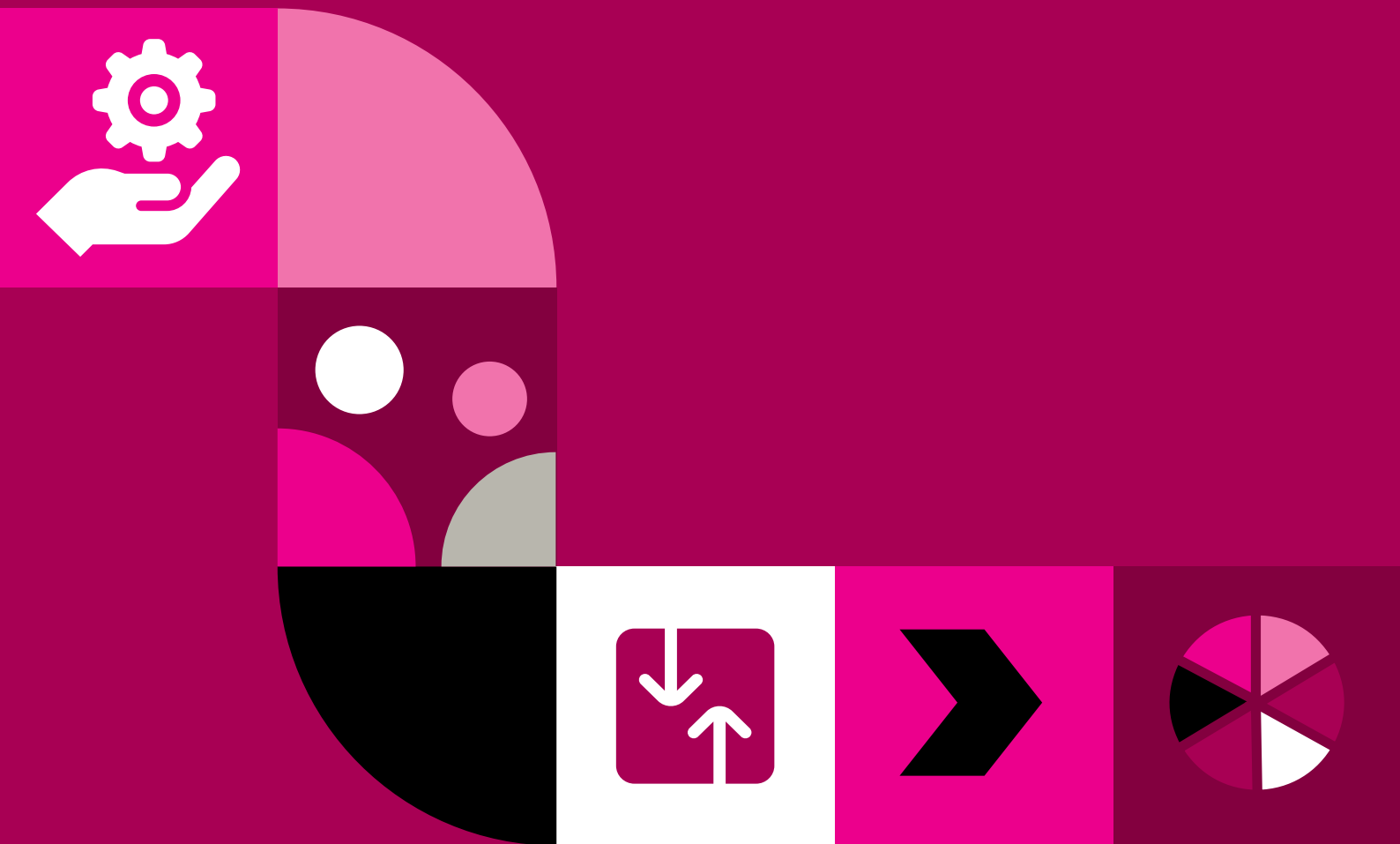




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OF GALWAY

University of Galway Supports for Care Experienced Students

Your Guide



Top Tips



Finance

Being realistic with finances and expenses e.g. leisure activities

Applying for and opening a savings account/Credit Union account, budgeting aftercare allowance.

Applying for available bursaries and scholarships



Reaching out to available supports

Student support officers

Course co-ordinators

Counselling

Lecturers

Tutors

Student Advisor for Care Experienced Students

Hi, I am Betty! I am the Student Advisor for Care Experienced Students.

I understand that navigating the application process and adjusting to life at university can be particularly challenging for care experienced students and my role is to support you and ensure your time at university is as stress free and successful as possible.

University of Galway offers a wide range of wellbeing, academic, and financial support for its students. As the named contact person for people who are care experienced, I am your first point of contact to help you with any questions or queries both before you arrive and during your studies.

University of Galway defines 'care experienced' as any person who has lived in the care of the state for any period before the age of 18 years old. This can include kinship care, foster care, residential care, special care and/or anyone who has been adopted.

This role aims to provide comprehensive support to care experienced individuals as they transition to and through higher education. It takes into consideration the fact that as a care experienced individual, your story will be unique, and this means that the challenges you face might also require tailored support and resources. You will be treated with confidentiality and respect; you will never be asked to share details about your care experience.

I can offer support at any stage in your educational journey:

Application stage

I can support you to navigate through the various stages of applying to University of Galway, including looking at alternative entry routes and financial aid options.

Enrolment stage

I can point you towards the appropriate supports on offer across the University.



Examples of the types of situations I can help support:

A student might find it difficult to stay on top of their coursework.

Some students who find it stressful to stay on top of their course work like to have a quick regular accountability check-in during which we work together to set goals for the coming week. When a student has fallen behind, I may reach out to the lecturers on the student's behalf or show the student how to correctly email lecturers.

Other students may benefit from a quick session to develop a workplan based on their time table and workload for the coming semester. During this session, I am happy to show students how to strategically approach each of their modules, particularly by developing good note-taking skills and learning how to access past exam papers.

Another student might have failed their year and felt too anxious to tell anyone. They could even be struggling to pay repeat year fees and register for classes without financial supports like SUSI or their aftercare allowance.

I am happy to meet with these students, liaise with registration and fees, and make sure all financial support options have been explored (liaise with the Financial Aid Fund and TUSLA when applicable and make sure they are aware of any bursaries or scholarships that become available).

A student experiencing a bereavement or illness might struggle to engage in university life while grieving their loss/recovering. This may result in them finding it difficult to attend classes or feeling overwhelmed because they



During your studies at University of Galway – I can support you to thrive in your studies and make the most of your experience at the University.

are behind on their coursework. They also might feel guilty about this.

I regularly meet with students to help them figure out which coursework is outstanding and help them create a realistic work plan to catch up. I can also help advise on how to contact their lecturers to explain their situation and request extensions. Most lecturers will be understanding and accommodating if students reach out to them.

Some students will drop in to me to learn about what opportunities may be available for them to strategically develop their employment opportunities during their time in university. We can discuss university supports for placements, career development, volunteering, and the ways to build experience and community, such as getting involved in clubs and societies in a leadership capacity.

“



Please email
betty.attwood@universityofgalway.ie
or call **086 074 7943** if you or your supporters have any questions.



Pre-Entry

Entry Routes

Students with care experience come to University of Galway through various pathways. Most new entrance college students apply through the CAO. Some will have completed a QQI/FET/FETAC course first and apply through the CAO selecting that entry route. Other students may check the Mature Entry route option on the CAO or the HEAR and/or DARE, or Access entry routes when completing the CAO.



February

The deadline for applying through the **CAO**

Early March

All elements of the **HEAR** Application must be completed

Mid March

All supporting documents must be submitted to CAO, Tower House, Eglington Street Galway



For more information please visit:
www.accesscollege.ie

Follow Your Path



HEAR Entry Route

Students who are under the age of 23, residents in the Republic of Ireland (have resided here 3 of the last 5 years) and who have been in the care of the state (TUSLA) for any amount of time are eligible for the HEAR entry route.

HEAR is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school leavers, resident in the Republic of Ireland, who are underrepresented at Higher Education due to their financial, social, or cultural background. Students who apply through HEAR can be considered for a reduced points place and extra college support (support, induction and access to Financial Aid Fund).

Important Note:

If you are or were a foster/separated child or in the Care of the Health Services Executive/TUSLA, you must supply a letter from TUSLA that details that you are currently in the Care of TUSLA or you had previously been in the Care of the State/HSE. You are **not required** to meet the other financial, social and cultural indicators (sections 5-7) or to provide proof of being under the income limit. (For further details, see page 10 and page 25 of the HEAR Handbook 2025).

More information of HEAR:

www.accesscollege.ie/hear/

www2.cao.ie/downloads/documents/2024/HEAR2024.pdf

TIP

Applying to HEAR provides access to additional financial supports, even if you don't need reduced points.

DARE Entry Route

DARE is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school-leavers whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education. Please allow adequate time to get your evidence of disability, as you may not immediately hear back from your appropriate specialist (e.g. CAMHS specialist register, neurologist, etc). You and your school will also need to complete Section B: The educational impact statement.

For more information see:

www.accesscollege.ie/dare

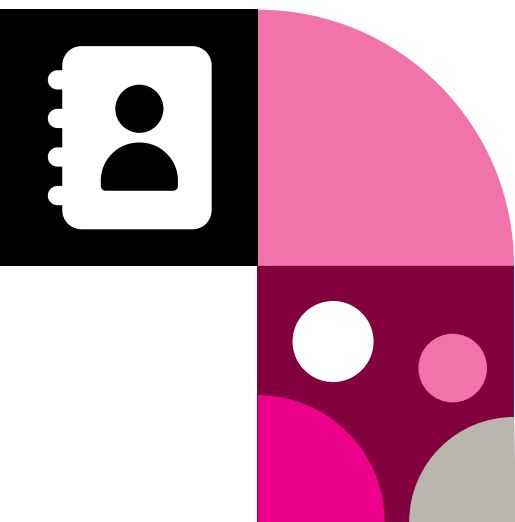
If you have any questions about DARE or Disability Support at University of Galway, we are happy to chat with you.

Email: access@universityofgalway.ie

Note: You can select both DARE and HEAR if they both apply to you – this can benefit you if you are competing for reduced points places.

Note: even if you do not qualify or apply through DARE, you may still be eligible for support from University of Galway's Disability Support Service (DSS). The Disability Support Service is available to University of Galway students who need supports or reasonable accommodations due to the impact of a disability, ongoing physical or mental health condition, or a specific learning difficulty. Receiving exam accommodations and supports at third level is easier to access than at second level. Reasonable Accommodations might include in-class supports like notetaking/recording software, exam supports like a smaller venue and additional time, and specialist support like Assistive Technology. All disability supports are free and confidential. More information on Disability Support Service is available here:

www.universityofgalway.ie/disability/





Access Programmes

Some people with care experience may not feel ready to go straight into their undergraduate studies or may not have received the required points to get into their chosen course. The Access Diploma Programmes are designed to provide a supportive educational environment which prepare students academically and personally for an undergraduate programme at third level. University of Galway currently deliver a number of Access Diploma Programmes for school leavers (22 or under) and mature students (23 or above) on campus in University of Galway. Students who successfully complete the one-year course can pursue a university degree at either the University of Galway or ATU. For more information about these programmes please see [Access-Foundation-Programme-2024.pdf](#) or reach out to the Access Centre for further information, call 091 493553 or email access@universityofgalway.ie.



Accommodation

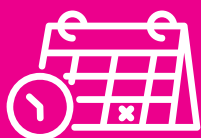
Campus Accommodation

Campus Accommodation allocations are drawn through a general lottery with applications opening in February and closing a few weeks afterwards.

Care experienced students who need housing close to campus should submit a general lottery application and contact Betty Attwood betty.attwood@universityofgalway.ie or the Accommodation Advisory Service to highlight their situation promptly. A number of rooms have been reserved for first year care experienced students.

Campus accommodation has approved some care experienced students staying over the summer when necessary. This needs to be arranged at the time of signing the lease.

For students who do not get allocated student accommodation, the Accommodation Advisory service will also look for local hosts for students. We recommend applying for housing in private student villages. The Westwood and The Swuite, Dunaras, Gort na Coiribe and Galway Central, and Menlo Park Apartments. Atlantis Apartments and Donegan Court take group bookings for 3,4 and 5 students.* Please see their websites for more information. Other students/carers may choose to look at other housing options such as Daft.ie and Facebook groups.



*Private student villages prioritize current residents, making them a great long-term housing option after first year.

TIP

Begin exploring accommodation options in mid-February or early March, as many waitlists close by mid-March. Private student villages wait lists may fill up in a day; apply the day they open



Accommodation Advisory Service

Call to the Accommodation Advisory office on the 1st Floor of Áras Uí Chathail where they can advise and support you in your search for housing.

They are open from 10.00 – 12.30 and 14.00 – 16.00

Join the online website, Studentpad to get property alerts emailed directly to you whenever accommodation becomes available that matches what you are looking for.

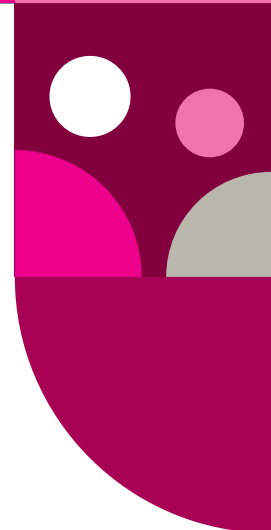
Contact Information

T: 353 91 493540

E: accommodation@universityofgalway.ie

W: Accommodation Advisory Service - University of Galway

Links: www.campusaccommodation.ie/students



Student Supports

University of Galway offers a range of student supports to enable you to participate fully and successfully in your studies. Linking in with supports is a great way to participate fully in university life, make connections, and improve your academic skills.

Financial Supports

Financial Aid Fund – The FAF provides a further source of funding for higher education students in addition to the (SUSI) Student Grant. Students who came through the HEAR or Access Entry Routes can apply for the HEAR|Access Fund. There is also a Means Tested Fund, and International Student Emergency Fund and an Emergency Hardship Fund (Irish and EU).

For more information on SUSI please see: www.susi.ie/. For more information about Financial Aid at University of Galway please see: www.universityofgalway.ie/financialaidfund/

The 1916 Bursary is a grant for first time entrants of an undergraduate programme, full or part time, with a household income that meets the criteria for the SUSI Special Rate of Maintenance Grant in the year ending 31 December. One of the priority groups the 1916 Bursary seeks to support is care experienced students.

Students can make the initial application only during their first year of their undergraduate programme. Please closely watch the website and your student email for opening and closing dates. The 1916 Bursary is not counted as income by SUSI. If student receives a Tier 1 or Tier 2 bursary, they can receive it in the subsequent years of study.

Applicants who are or were in the care of the state will be asked to upload a letter from TUSLA or official associated agency confirming the dates the applicant was in the care of State.

For more information see: www.1916bursary.ie/

SUMS: SUMS is a FREE service providing informal mathematics support to first and second year students across all colleges and courses as well as to students engaged in Access/Foundation courses. SUMS offer a drop-in service with both in person and bookable online support option.

www.universityofgalway.ie/public-sites/s-u-m-s/

Academic Writing Centre: The Academic Writing Centre (AWC) provides one-on-one tutorials and email consultations on essay writing. These are free and available to everyone, regardless of experience or grade average. This is a great way to develop your academic writing skills.

www.library.universityofgalway.ie/studying/awc/

Academic Skills Hub: Online study skills resource—covers key academics skills such as research writing, critical thinking, to more practical topics like how to write an email to a lecturer or how to prepare for exams.

www.universityofgalway.ie/academic-skills/



You can view the full list of Student Supports at: www.universityofgalway.ie/student-supports

Student Supports

Academic Supports

Student Support Officers: The role of the Student Support Officer is to provide confidential, non-judgmental support and an empathetic space for students to share their concerns. In addition, a student advisor can offer personal support and advice on topics such as study planning, time management and any personal challenges that may compromise their ability to study. Student Advisors are available to meet in person and online and can give advice tailored to your specific college/school of study.

For more information please see:
www.universityofgalway.ie/student-advisors/

Library Workshops & Events: The library host in person and online workshops on various topics. First Year In covers how to use the library for academic research and tells you about the many resources available to you through the library catalogue. They also organise workshops on topics such as referencing the software EndNote and how to efficiently search for research articles and journals.

For more information please see:
www.universityofgalway.ie/library/

The Students Voice

Advice from current care experienced students

“My favourite place to hang out would have to be the library, I think it’s a very convenient and suitable spot on campus to hang out for a while. It’s a peaceful and quiet environment with a very wide variety of books of every kind for any genre or subject.”

1st Year Bachelor of Arts (Global Experience)

“In my personal experience societies were a great way of helping me transition into university life as it helped me to meet many new people both from close to home and from abroad. It’s a good social past-time and has a lot of benefits to being a part of. Joining societies and trying a few different ones out would definitely be my piece of advice for a new student. There’s a society for everyone!”

3rd Year Bachelor of Science Student

Student Supports

Mental Health and Well-being Support



The Student Support Wheel (above): detailed resource list with information about types of support available and how to contact the support. For more information please visit

www.universityofgalway.ie/health-wellbeing/student-services/supportwheel/

Student Health Unit: free or low cost on-campus GP care for students. For more information please visit:

www.universityofgalway.ie/health_unit

Counselling: Provide a free hybrid service of in-person, one-to-one counselling, and online counselling. They also provide group counselling and workshops. Please note, due to limited capacity, counselling sessions are limited but exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis or counselling can help connect you with other options in the community. For more information please visit:

www.universityofgalway.ie/counsellors

Chaplaincy: For students of all faiths or no faith, the Chaplaincy team offer a wide range of services including on-to-one support. Chaplaincy often organises activities/meet ups for students who are on campus during the holidays. For more information please visit:

www.universityofgalway.ie/chaplains

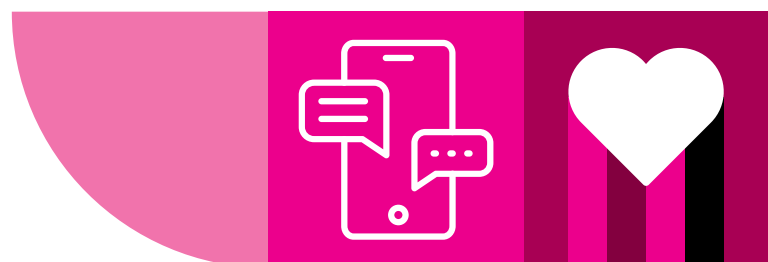
Taking Action for Whole Health and Wellbeing:

Coordinated by the Student Health Unit in collaboration with The Copeland Centre, this is a co-facilitated group process that supports individuals in creating a personalised system for recovering, sustaining, and/or improving their whole health outcomes and enhancing their lifestyle. Students interested in a two day weekend course can contact Betty Attwood or Noirin Mannion (noirin.mannion@universityofgalway.ie) for more information about the next availability.

SafeZone App: Mobile app designed to help keep you safe and give you extra peace of mind across our campuses. Free to download and connects with University of Galway security team. For more information please visit:

www.universityofgalway.ie/media/student-services/files/SAFEZONE-DOCUMENT.pdf.

Text 'Galway' to 50808 to access free and confidential 24/7 crisis support.



Community & Careers

University learning is so much more than the knowledge you gain in the classroom. Equally important is making connections, networking, building communication skills, and finding what interests you. Here are some ways to develop your sense of community on campus as well as build skills and experience that will benefit you when you join the work force:

Career Development Centre: Provide a quality career guidance and information service. CV support, Career Days, Placement Support and more. For more information please visit:

www.universityofgalway.ie/career-development-centre

Student Success Coaches: For Arts & Science students, Success Coaches Success Coaches can support you to 'Design your Life', in order to achieve your unique academic, personal and life goals during your time in University of Galway. For more information please visit:

www.universityofgalway.ie/successcoaching/

CÉIM 1st Year Peer Learning Support: Weekly CÉIM peer learning sessions are student led and are about working collaboratively in small groups to develop independent learning skills, discuss new topics on the course, prepare for upcoming assignments and exams, and have some fun! For more information please visit:

www.ceim.su.universityofgalway.ie/

ALIVE Volunteering: dedicated programme to connect students with volunteering opportunities. For more information please visit:

www.universityofgalway.ie/community-engagement/studentvolunteeringsymposium/symposiumsupporters/alive/

Clubs & Societies: One of the best ways to get connected by meeting new people over interests and commonalities that you share—from Swiftie Soc to Mountaineering to Neurodivergent Society. This is also a great opportunity to grow your CV by taking up positions on the Committee, such as Treasurer, Secretary, or Auditor. It is also a great way to meet others and have some craic. For more information please visit:

www.socs.universityofgalway.ie/societies/



External Organisations

EPIC - Empowering People In Care (EPIC)

EPIC Youth Council is made up of young people aged 18-26 with care experience. EPIC gives a platform to the voices of young people in care or with care experience. This panel consider and contribute to a range of issues, including:

- advising EPIC directly on their work.
- working with other relevant organisations.
- running campaigns.
- lobby to improve outcomes for children in care.
- help EPIC address issues that affect young people with care experience.

If you are interested in joining the Youth Council or would like more information contact Suzanne O'Brien: suzanneobrien@epiconline.ie Ph: 087 143 2832 or visit www.epiconline.ie/epic-youth-council/

EPIC Advocacy

An EPIC Advocate's job is to provide independent advocacy to children and young people in care or with care experience. A big part of their role as an Advocate is to make sure that the children and young people they work with and for understand their rights, and that their voices and opinions are heard and taken into consideration in matters relating to their care, aftercare service, and other related issues. They also provide support, advice, and information.

You can request to meet with an advocate by filling out a form on their website.
www.epiconline.ie/request-an-advocate

TUSLA Aftercare Drop In Service

Drop in service clinics are there to give you guidance, advice, support and signposting whenever you think you need it. Any person that has been in care in the past can use the service and there is no age limit or fee.

There is a drop in service in walking distance of campus, call 087 – 361 0736 to set up a time to drop by and get directions to the centre.

Kinship Care Ireland (KCI)

KCI, in partnership with kinship families and key stakeholders, promotes the recognition, rights, and entitlements of children, young people, and families in kinship care, through the provision of information, supports, services and advocacy, for systems and legislative change.

Email: info@kinshipcare.ie
Phone: 087 1487124

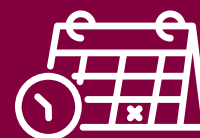
No 4 Youth Service

No 4 Youth Service provides a wide range of supports for young people aged 13 – 25 years, all of which are based on a youth work approach, ensuring that young people aid their own personal development.

Address: 4 St Augustine St Galway H91 H992
Phone: (091) 568 483
Email: youthservice@no4.ie



Timeline of events for CAO, HEAR/ DARE, and Access Routes



The CAO opens

If you have a disability, mental health condition, specific learning difficulty or significant ongoing illness review the DARE handbook. If eligible, it can take time to gather documentation from your health care provider and get the educational impact statement from your school.

November

Apply to CAO.

February

Look at student accommodation on and off campus options and join waitlists.

Contact the Access office or the dedicated support person for care experienced students to ask for information about the university, supports, accommodation, etc.

**Mid
February
- Mid March**



March

Complete all elements of online HEAR application; Gather all supporting documentation.

You must indicate you wish to be considered for DARE by ticking 'Yes' to Question 1 by 5PM and complete Section A (Questions 1-5) of the Supplementary Information Form on CAO.

Submit copies of supporting documents to HEAR by certified post.

Submit completed, signed, and stamped Educational Impact Statement, and evidence of disability by certified post.

April

Access Programmes Applications Open via the university website.

	
June	Applicants are notified of HEAR Application. Applicants are notified of outcome of DARE Application. DARE review and appeals application.
End June/ Early July	HEAR review and appeals application.
August	Leaving Certificate exam results. CAO offers. Successful HEAR applicants notified. Eligible DARE applicants compete for reduced points places. CAO offers to eligible DARE applicants. Accept CAO offer. Accept HEAR offer of extra college supports.
Late August/ Early September	Attend HEAR orientation. Attend Disability Support Service Orientation and register with Disability Support Services.
Mid September	Access Programmes Applications Close.
	*See HEAR handbook for detailed instructions www.accesscollege.ie/hear/ ** See DARE handbook for detailed instructions www.accesscollege.ie/dare/ ***See Access Programmes for application information www.universityofgalway.ie/access/

Please note this is a guide, please see the CAO, HEAR, and DARE websites for detailed information about requirements and timelines.



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