

Careers newsletter Christmas 2019



'I always knew I loved writing': 8 graduates share how they found a course they loved

Take the pressure out of your CAO choices with these handy tips.

DECIDING THE FIRST steps towards your career path is no easy feat at any age, let alone at 18. So if you or the Leaving Cert. student in your life aren't sure of the best choice, you're definitely not alone in that – fortunately there is support out there.

One of the best ground rules can be to study something that you know you'll be interested in – what do you love reading or watching TV shows about? Which classes do you enjoy going to in school? If you did work experience, was there something you'd really like (or hate) to do in your future job? These questions can all help in the process.

Now that the CAO online application is officially open, we wanted to hear from the people who managed to find their perfect course, all while gearing up for the Leaving Cert (spoiler: you will survive and if you do your CAO form right, the chances are that you'll love college).

Here's what they said...

1. Be guided by the type of assignments you enjoy

I always knew I loved English and writing – particularly 'discussion' type essays, rather than short stories. I thought going the creative writing route would be too hard but I knew I wanted to study something that would allow me to write for a living and studying Journalism seemed like an obvious choice.

I did a taster course over the summer when I was in fourth year and really loved the assignments they gave us – such as my first ever feature interview. I checked out all of the journalism courses in

Dublin and read up on the modules they offered and eventually settled on mine. (*Hannah, Journalism*)

2. Visit the college you're thinking of to check out their facilities

I found out about Fashion Design at Griffith College through my career guidance counsellor. But it was only after I visited did I really learn about what made it different, such as the variety of modules they did (hand design, computer-aided design, business and marketing), all designed to prepare you for the industry. From visiting the fashion rooms at the college and realising they were small class sizes, I knew I wanted to study there.

My advice would be to consider a PLC course first (which I did) as it's a taster for what a degree can be like, without the three or four year commitment. If you don't like it, you can change. It also means you already have some skills to prepare yourself for the degree course. (*Naoise Journalism*)

3. Think about the hobbies you love and let that feed your choice

I actually studied Urban Planning originally but I realised it wasn't something I wanted to do. But I started working as a freelance graphic designer while I was in college to earn some extra money. I met a client who was working as a developer at Google and he introduced me to Interaction Design (designing interactive digital products).

I started looking into it online and learnt a few things that I had to use for his project and from there, I found my interest. I did some research, started looking at colleges that offered it and found one that was the most convenient option for me. Honestly it was one of the best learning experiences I ever had. (*Palash Design*)

4. Meet one of the lecturers for a chat to find out what you'll be studying

I first found my course by doing some research into Film Production courses in Ireland. Thankfully the lecturers and course director were happy enough to sit down with me in person and discuss exactly what I would be studying in the course throughout the three years. After speaking to them, I knew straight away I would end up loving the course.

For anyone doing the Leaving Cert who is struggling to make a choice, start with researching what you think might interest you and email course directors and lecturers from those courses – they are generally more than happy to have a coffee with you and discuss what you'll learn and gain from the course, which will help you to decide. (*Luke Film Productions*)

5. If you're going to travel, do consider how 'hireable' the degree will be

I found out about my college through a friend of mine who studied in the language school. I knew I had an interest in Marketing and Communications, so I decided to go ahead and choose a BA in Marketing. One of my priorities being an international student was that even if I moved, I could find a job in the sector.

It wasn't until my second year that I realised I really liked the degree – once we started the marketing-specific modules, I really enjoyed it and could see myself working in it. My advice would be not to rush a decision, there isn't a right age or a "right" course to study if you've no interest in it. Take a gap year or give your mind a break if you're not ready – it'll give you time to pick a degree from a more objective perspective. *(Ana Marketing)*

6. Don't worry if you're not ready for college – there are other routes

When I finished my Leaving Cert, I did not go through the usual CAO application process. I always knew I wanted to study Law, but I wanted to take some time off first to work and travel. When I was ready, I heard about Griffith College's Diploma in Legal Studies and Practice - it mixed the academic side of Law with the practical.

When I finished that, I was able to go straight into second year at the LLB (Hons) Programme. I knew I would love the course as not only is the law something I'm passionate about, the faculty there are incredible and helped me every step of the way. I'd advise students not to stress too much about it – taking time off before college was the best decision for me. Sometimes it allows you to figure out what you want from life! *(Amy Law)*

7. If your course isn't a common choice in your school, don't be put off

Ever since I was in school, I was always interested in technology and computers, but being at an all girls school, they did not have much information in regards to Computer Science courses as it wasn't as popular with female students. When I was in sixth year, I went to Griffith College's open day, where I spoke to the head of computing. I was excited to be a part of Ireland's future technology industry – that was very exciting for me.

Don't panic if you're not sure what you want to do straight away, we're all still quite young in my opinion to know what career we want to do. I would recommend attending college open days and talking to guidance counsellors. I'd also advise having a back up plan such as PLC courses to get a feel for a course you're unsure about. *(Chloe Computer Science)*

8. Try to picture the job you’d like if you’re not sure of the course you want

I didn’t give it much thought about which college I chose, I just always knew I wanted to go to college. I really liked the idea of small classes and one-on-one lectures so that helped me decide – I’m not from Ireland so I wanted a small college for that sense of family. I did a bit of research and found International Hospitality Management – I knew I would love it as it involves people and talking 24/7, and it used my language skills.

The Leaving Cert is stressful enough as it is, never mind choosing the study path that will determine your career. If you don’t know what you want to study, imagine yourself in certain positions, question yourself, write down the negatives and the positives and if there is something that stands out to you, research it. It’s important to have an overview of the course you’re standing up for. *(Marissa International Hospitality Management)*

CAO:

20th January (17:15)	Apply online by this date to avail of the discounted application fee of €30.
1st February (17:15)	Normal closing date for applications.
5th February (12:00)	Online facility to amend course choices becomes available (€10 Fee)
22nd February	HPAT Test - Undergraduate Entry to Medicine
1st March (17:15)	Closing date for amending course choices Closing date for completion of mature section of application form Closing date for final completion of online HEAR/DARE forms
15th March (17:15)	Latest date for HEAR/DARE supporting documentation to arrive in CAO

2020 DARE & HEAR Application Information Day:

Saturday 11 January 2020 from 10am – 2pm In AIT Coffee Dock (Drop in)

