

CAREER GUIDANCE NEWSLETTER

for parents

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Contents

- Student Research
- Visiting Speakers
- Student Careers Interview
- Centigrade
- Upcoming Careers Events
- College Open Days
- Sources of Career/Course Information
- Careers Textbook
- UCAS Applications
- Careers Classes

Student Research

During this 1st term all 6th years should now be conducting their own very important personal careers research. Completing many of the Course Investigation Forms, which have been developed for them, using the various sources of information mentioned below under ‘Sources of Career/Course Information’ is one way of structuring this research in a simple but effective way.

It is vital that this research be undertaken as it is impossible for students to make decisions about where they intend to go after their L.C. unless they have correct, up to date and structured information regarding the various options. ‘Career Planning’ just like any other subject, must be given time in a student’s weekly schedule in order to allow careers/courses to be investigated in a comprehensive and structured way. Otherwise, students are in danger of making very important decisions based on mis-information, no information or indeed rumour and hearsay. This of course can lead to much heartache later.

For those who are particularly unsure about the direction they wish to go after their Leaving Certificate, this research is even more important. If they try to deal with their uncertainty by avoiding the issue or hoping that somebody, somewhere, is suddenly going to tell them what they should do, they are only delaying and making more difficult, the decisions they will ultimately have to make. Now is the time to address these issues while they have some time. After Christmas, other important issues such as study, mocks, oral exams, practical exams, etc. will come to the fore, leaving little time for anything else. Every assistance will be given to students to help them with their research but needless to say we cannot do it for them, nor would it be beneficial to them if we did.

Visiting Speakers

Over the course of the next few months a number of visiting speakers will present information on a range of areas to our 6th year students. Examples of such areas include the following:

- Faculty of Business, DIT
- Quinn School of Business UCD
- Faculty of Engineering, DIT
- Waterford Institute of Technology
- Post Leaving Certificate Courses
- NUI Maynooth
- Shannon College of Hotel Mgmt.
- National College of Ireland
- Trinity College Dublin
- Dublin City University

Many past pupils have said that it was listening to some of our guest speakers that provided the trigger which led them into the courses/careers they pursued after Newbridge. **Please encourage your sons/daughters to attend some of these talks with open minds, even in areas where they feel they don’t currently have huge interest.**



Centigrade

All 6th years have now taken part in the Centigrade programme and their individual reports have now returned. Centigrade is basically a version of an interest inventory which we have used successfully here in the college with previous 6th year students. Centigrade matches student's strongest interests and talents to the courses most suitable to them. These courses are then listed in a professionally produced report which:

- highlights the courses where the student seems to be particularly well matched
- challenges their choices where they may not be soundly based
- presents the facts clearly so good decisions can be made
- makes students more aware of their wider potential

Initial Careers Interviews

Currently, the initial 6th year careers interviews are taking place. These are scheduled, short interviews of approximately half an hour in which each student's individual *Centigrade* report will be discussed. In particular, their 'profile of course areas' will be analysed with a view to students starting their own research into a shortlist of possible courses which they may wish to study after the L.C. A number of documents will be given to them to help them begin this important research:



1. Their Centigrade report.
2. A copy of this year's 'Newbridge College Calendar of Career Events'
3. Full listing of last years cut off points for honours degrees (level 8), ordinary degrees (level 7) and higher certificate (level 6) courses in the CAO system.
4. A photocopyable *Course Investigation Form*.

Upcoming Career Events

I have placed a copy of the 'Newbridge College Calendar of Career Events' on the College website for your reference. Should you have any queries regarding any of

the events/dates, a contact name and telephone number is included for each one.

College Open Days

Attending college open days is a great way to get a feel for a college and to get first hand information about the college and the courses on offer. However, 6th years will have many demands on their time this year, not least of all the need to get their study done. For this reason students should be selective and give careful consideration to the events they travel to and what they wish to get from their visit. You will notice from the calendar that an increasing number of colleges are now opting to have their Open Days on a Saturday to prevent loss of school time and indeed it will be up to students to make their own way to these events. For Open Days held during a school day we may run a bus, if there is sufficient student demand. If we are not organising a bus, students who wish to attend should discuss travelling to the Open Day with their parents, make their own way there – preferably with a parent, and then bring in a note the following day to explain their absence from school. **Please bear in mind our school policy in this area; other than in exceptional circumstances students should attend no more than three open days on school days.** In addition to bringing a number of Course Investigation Forms to complete while visiting the college, they should also investigate:

- Ease of travel to college
- Accommodation options
- Library/study facilities.
- Non-academic facilities, sports, societies, etc.
- Views of current students in the college – about staff/courses/facilities.
- Contact name and number for particular courses.

Sources of Careers/Course Information Publications

- '2010 Entry College prospectuses – students should have their own personal copy of the prospectus (free) of the colleges they are interested in and study it carefully.
- **Jobfile Ireland**– Careers Handbook

- **Engineering as a Career** – a guide to the Engineering Profession in Ireland.
 - **CAO Handbook 2010**
 - **Student Yearbook and Career Directory – part 2,** 2010 Edition
 - **‘Career Choice’** 2010 Edition
 - **The Irish Times** - Tuesdays
- (Some of the above are available on loan from the careers office)

Information Technology

- **www.qualifax.ie** – National database of Irish Courses. An essential website for 6th years to become familiar with, containing valuable information on all CAO and PLC courses, plus lots of other useful contents.
- **www.careerdirections.ie** Useful online database of many Irish careers with details of the key aspects of each career.
- **College websites.** These are the best accessed through the CAO course search facility on the site below.
- **www.cao.ie** This is the official CAO site which contains (a) full details about the application system, (b) links to all the colleges’ websites and (c) the online application form.
- **www.careersportal.ie** A new careers and education website.



Other Sources

- Family/Friends who have been through the system.
- College admissions/academic staff
- School past pupils

Careers Classes

All 6th years have been allocated one careers class per week. These classes are a critical component of our guidance programme where we cover a vast amount of material, which is essential in assisting students to make informed decisions. Both classroom and one-to-one guidance sessions complement each other in the process of trying to provide students with up-to-date and factual

information and indeed helping them to make sense of this information.

Examples of the material covered in these classes include:

- Careers Research – who, what, where, why, when.
- 3rd level education in Britain
- 3rd level education in Ireland, including:
 - types of institutions
 - types of awards
 - entry requirements/points system
- CAO System, including:
 - Overview of the system
 - how to complete an application successfully
 - online system
 - important events after submitting an application
 - accepting/deferring offers of places
- Post Leaving Certificate/FETAC courses, including the Higher Education Links Scheme
- Interview skills
- Careers in Tourism
- Apprenticeships
- Employment

Careers Notice Boards

A lot of careers related information comes into my office on a daily basis. If this information is particularly urgent and applies to a large group of students I will endeavour to have it included in the morning notices. However, one of the most effective ways of getting general information to students is via the careers notice boards outside my office in Senior House. I would be very grateful if you could impress upon your son/daughter in 6th year, the importance of consulting these notice boards on a very regular basis as the information which I receive will be displayed here. **This is particularly important during the months of October, November, December and January.**

Careers Textbook

'Career Choice'

The careers textbook which I have recommended for 6th years is 'Career Choice'. The book is available in most reputable bookshop and is an invaluable resource to have, not only for the students but also for yourselves as parents. The book contains information on a host of career areas and profiles many colleges and courses in Ireland.



UCAS Applications

Each year a number of 6th year students submit applications to the British colleges and universities through the Universities and Colleges Admissions System (UCAS). I have given all 6th years an overview of what is involved in submitting an application and some of the issues involved in studying in the UK. Those 6th years who feel they may be interested in submitting an application have been asked to discuss these issues with you at home before proceeding with their application. For those who subsequently wish to proceed, I will take these students through the application process in detail. All UCAS applications must be made online using the online 'apply' system. The closing date for the majority of courses is January 15th 2010, however the earlier an application is made the better. From 2006 entry, colleges in England and Northern Ireland may charge 'top up' tuition fees of up to £3225 per year and roughly half this in Wales. This is a huge development and will add considerably to the expense of travelling to these places for courses. Scottish colleges do not charging fees. For more information on UCAS and courses in Britain visit their website at www.ucas.com. There is a very informative section of this site for parents of prospective applicants.

Study

Good study habits are essential for examination success. Some important points to consider include:

- By this time 6th year students should have experimented with different study times, locations,

organisation, methods, etc., and should now have discovered the conditions which allow them to get the optimum results for their study efforts.

- When they have discovered the study conditions/methodologies which best suit themselves, they should develop a study plan around these conditions and this should become their new **ROUTINE**. A study routine can improve motivation to study, especially on days when there is temptation to do little work.
- They should ideally study in a fixed location with good lightening, average temperature and fresh air circulating.
- Their study location should have a proper chair, a desk with ample space to work on and all study materials should be within easy reach before the study session begins.
- Average homework/revision time per day for 6th years is 3.5 – 4 hours per day. Weekends and holiday periods should be used for more intensive revision and review, especially for students taking many honours subjects.
- Time management is essential for success in examinations. This skill should be applied and practised during study and homework sessions. Each study/homework block should be given a certain amount of time and this should be adhered to. This is very effective for focusing students who tend to drift.
- If a student finds they are very tired and concentration is poor by the time they get to do some revision after their homework, they should consider sometimes doing some revision first and homework later.
- At least two subjects should be revised each night with specific targets set before the subject revision session begins.
- Students should become very familiar with the structure of each subject exam paper and should always have a past exam question beside them on the topic that they are revising.

- Throughout the year students will naturally have good days and bad days with their revision. It is important, however, that a bad day doesn't become a bad week! Put it down as a bad day and get back into action the next day.

Guidance Contact Details:

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