



February 2010

Dear HSE Staff Member,

Re: Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) 2010 - Dependent over 18

I am writing in relation to the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) HSE form.

HEAR is a third level admissions scheme for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. It offers places on a reduced points basis to students who do not traditionally go on to third-level. The scheme was established because clear evidence shows that where students live, go to school, what their parents do for a living and how much they earn can impact on their educational attainment and on their progression to higher education.

Students applying through HEAR do so as part of their overall application through the CAO. However, HEAR applicants must provide the CAO with additional information. This information is used as a means of identifying educational disadvantage. This information relates to: income, Social Welfare payments, Medical/GP Visit Card, socio-economic group, school and area.

Applicants or applicants whose parents/guardians hold a Medical Card or a GP Visit Card valid on 31 December 2009 must provide evidence of such. For the purposes of the scheme we would appreciate if your office could sign and stamp the form for applicants who are 'dependent on a parent/guardian who holds a Medical Card or GP Visit Card valid on 31 December 2009'.

**For the purposes of assessment for the HEAR scheme an applicant is said to be 'dependent' on their parent/guardian if he/she is under 23 of age on the 1 January of the year of entry or re-entry to an approved course in one of the participating HEIs. We acknowledge that this definition is different from the one the HSE uses.**

We appreciate your work on processing the forms thus far and apologise for any confusion our form has caused. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further queries on this matter.

Yours faithfully,

*Fiona Sweeney*

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Chair of HEAR