



MTU

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Mumhan
Munster Technological University

HEAR and DARE Procedure

03 June 2022

Version: 1.0

www.mtu.ie/policies

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1. Purpose

MTU participates in the national DARE and HEAR college admissions schemes. This HEAR and DARE Procedure supports the University's commitment to social inclusion and equity of access and participation in all interactions throughout the educational lifecycle of the student. The University welcomes students from all backgrounds, preparing and supporting them to participate in activities related to higher education from pre-entry through to graduation and beyond. Central to this commitment is the understanding of the importance of cultivating a sense of belonging among all students and alumni. Promoting access to higher education for under-represented groups is a priority.

The University is guided by the goals and objectives of the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education (2015-2021)¹, as well as the HEA Strategic Dialogue Process. The University also acknowledges its legal obligations under the Technological Universities Act (2018), the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act (2014), the Disability Act (2005), Equal Status Acts (2000-2015), the Employment Equality Acts (1998-2015) and the Education Act (1998) in this regard. This procedure document affirms MTU as a non-discriminatory and inclusive University, protecting the human rights of its prospective applicants, registered students and alumni. MTU embraces diversity, encourages each person to reach their potential, and fosters social inclusion and equality. All members of the University community should have the opportunity to excel and to be respected and valued for their unique perspectives, traditions, and contributions².

The University reaffirms its commitment to collaboration with internal and external communities, in order to advance social inclusion, equity of access, participation and progression. This procedure complements other MTU policies pertaining to areas such as dignity and respect, equality, diversity and inclusion and student engagement. This procedure is informed by MTU Admissions Policy.

2. Scope

MTU is committed to a culture of equity of access and participation and recognises that this commitment is the remit of all MTU departments and services. The University aims to deliver on this commitment in with all aspects of the student experience including supporting early engagement, transitions and cultivating belonging. This procedure is relevant to prospective students, who have been deemed HEAR and/or DARE eligible, current MTU students, MTU staff, external partnerships, external contractors, wider community, state agencies, other formal and non-formal educational partners and NGOs.

3. Definitions

It is necessary to be familiar many relevant definitions in order to understand this document. These are outlined in Appendix 1

¹ The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education (2015-2021) - at the time of writing, a new document for 2022-2026 is under development

² MTU Dignity and Respect Policy

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Responsible Office/Person(s)	Role
Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs and Registrars, Assistant Registrars and the Academic Administration and Student Affairs Managers.	The executive oversight of this procedure rests with the Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs and Registrars, Assistant Registrars and the Academic Administration and Student Affairs Managers.
MTU's Admissions Office MTU's Access Service MTU's Disability Support Service	MTU recognises that responsibilities in relation to the implementation of this procedure is the remit of MTU's Admissions Office, Access Service and Disability Support Service.
MTU Applicants MTU Students	MTU recognises that responsibilities in relation to the implementation of this procedure is the remit of all MTU applicants and students.
MTU staff, functions and departments throughout the University	MTU recognises that responsibilities in relation to the implementation of this procedure is the remit of all MTU staff, functions and departments throughout the University.

5. Procedure

5.1 Introduction

MTU participates in the DARE and HEAR college admissions schemes.

The **DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) scheme** is for school-leavers who as a result of having a learning difference, health condition or disability have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education (<https://accesscollege.ie/dare/>).

The HEAR (Higher Education Access Route) Scheme is for school leavers who experience socio-economic disadvantage (<https://accesscollege.ie/hear/>).

These admissions schemes offer reduced points places to eligible applicants, and additional college support during their studies. MTU Access Service and Admissions Office implement both the DARE and HEAR schemes.

Applicants apply for the schemes through the Central Applications Office (CAO) via an online application process. This includes providing documentation to support their application. Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions of making a

DARE or HEAR application. For further information or to make contact in relation to DARE or HEAR please visit <http://accesscollege.ie>.

Separate admissions routes are in place for Mature and Further Educational Training (FET) students. Mature and FET applicants should contact MTU's Admissions Office for more information.

A minimum quota of 5% reduced points DARE places and 5% reduced points HEAR places are reserved on all first year full-time undergraduate programmes³ in MTU.

In order to be considered for a reduced points DARE and/or HEAR offer, applicants must meet the criteria set out below.

5.2 Admissions Criteria for DARE and HEAR

Applicants must be deemed eligible for DARE and/or HEAR and are notified of their eligibility by the CAO. Eligibility does not guarantee an offer of an MTU place, it means that an applicant is eligible to **compete** for a reduced points place.

Applicants must matriculate, i.e. they must meet the minimum entry requirements for each programme, including minimum scores in portfolio/entrance tests, maths and/or language requirements, number of subjects, medical examinations, and any other relevant programme requirements that all applicants must meet. These are listed on each individual programme descriptor.

Minimum CAO points:

DARE

MTU will consider applicants up to 50 points below the CAO cut-off points for the relevant programme. For a Level 8 programmes the applicant must achieve a minimum of 200 CAO points. For a Level 7/6 programme the applicant must achieve a minimum of 160 CAO points. The CAO points are based on Leaving Certificate results, A Levels and/or other EU qualifications.

HEAR

MTU will consider applicants up to 50 points below the CAO cut-off points for the relevant programme. For a Level 8 programme the applicant must achieve a minimum of 200 CAO points. For a Level 7/6 programme the applicant must achieve a minimum of 160 CAO points. The CAO points are based on Leaving Certificate results.

³ National documentation refer to courses or programmes interchangeably

5.3 Offers procedure

DARE and HEAR offers are made through the CAO by the Admissions Office. These offers are typically made in Round 1.

There are two types of offers namely **reduced points offers** and **merit offers**.

Reduced points offers refer to offers made to DARE and HEAR eligible applicants who have met the Admissions criteria listed above but who have not met the CAO cut-off points for their chosen programme.

Merit offers refer to offers made to DARE and HEAR eligible applicants who have met the minimum entry requirements and the CAO cut-off points for their chosen programme.

Applicants who matriculate following the 'MTU second chance maths' exam and/or applicants who have had corrections to their CAO points/minimum entry requirements may be considered for offers in subsequent rounds.

Reduced Points Offers

Based on the quota of reserved places, reduced points offers are considered by the MTU Access Service for approval by the Admissions Officer.

To be considered for reduced points offers eligible applicants who meet the above criteria are ranked by points. They are required to be within a band of 50 points below the CAO cut-off points on the date the DARE and HEAR offers are made. The position of a particular programme in an applicant's order of preference should have no bearing on the allocation of places.

The following groups as identified by the DARE and HEAR schemes, are considered for **priority ranking** for quota places:

- Eligible DARE applicants under the categories of Blind / Vision Impaired, Deaf / Hard of Hearing, or Physical Disability are considered for priority reduced DARE places, if they meet all the above criteria for a chosen programme.
- Eligible applicants who applied for both HEAR and DARE are considered for priority reduced HEAR places if they meet all the above criteria for a chosen programme. This will enable them to avail of HEAR supports which includes a bursary, in addition to DARE supports (where relevant).

Following the priority ranking process the remaining quota places are allocated in rank order according to points.

In cases where the quota for DARE reduced points places has not been filled, these places may be offered to eligible HEAR applicants, and vice versa.

All DARE and HEAR eligible applicants who are offered places are contacted by MTU's Access Service to inform them of any supports and/or conditions relating to accepting their offers.

5.4 Acceptance Procedures

Conditions of accepting DARE places

If a DARE place is accepted a condition of acceptance is that a student is required to engage with MTU's Disability Support Service.

Conditions of accepting HEAR places

If a HEAR place is accepted a condition of acceptance is that a student is required to engage with MTU's Access Service. The student is required to attend the mandatory HEAR Orientation Programme in MTU and engage with MTU's Access Service to avail of post entry supports.

Post Entry Supports

Any HEAR/DARE eligible student who accepts a CAO Offer at MTU will be offered all relevant HEAR/DARE post-entry supports. HEAR and DARE eligible students, who are offered places in MTU using their QQI points, can also avail of post-entry supports through MTU's Access Service.

Deferrals

Any student who wishes to defer their DARE or HEAR place to the next academic year should contact MTU's Admissions Office for details of the procedure.

The student deferring their place is advised to also apply to carry forward their DARE and/or HEAR eligibility for the next year, and to do so by following the necessary steps outlined at www.accesscollege.ie . This will ensure that MTU is aware of their DARE or HEAR status for the deferred place.

6. Compliance

MTU Applicants, Students and Staff are required to comply with this procedure and associated policies.

Appendix 1

Term/Acronym	Definition
All Qualified Applicants (AQA)	All students who met the minimum entry requirements for the programmes are offered places.
Disability	<p>The legal definition of disability stipulated in the Employment Equality Act (1998) and Equal Status Acts (2000) as amended, defines disability as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “the total or partial absence of a person’s bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person’s body, 2. the presence in the body of organisms causing or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness, 3. the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person’s body, 4. a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction, or 5. a condition, illness or disease which affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour.” <p>and shall be taken to include a disability which exists at present, or which previously existed but no longer exists, or which may exist in the future or which is imputed to a person.”</p> <p>Another definition of a disability is found in the Disability Act 2005. This Act defines a “disability”, in relation to a person, means a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the State or to participate in social or cultural life in the State by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment.” Substantial restriction means a restriction that is permanent (or likely to be permanent) which results in significant difficulty in communication, learning or mobility and means that the person has a need for services to be provided on a continuous basis.</p>

	MTU embraces the broadest interpretation of disability as outlined in the above Acts, which attempts to encompass all conditions that can amount to a disability
Diversity	In the context of MTU, diversity means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing their individual differences. The University understands that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing.
Inclusion	In the Higher Education context, inclusion refers to the provision of supports and opportunities for learning to all; recognising the needs of vulnerable learners and the most marginalised; and assistance to people in accessing and progressing through higher and further education and training; so as to grow prosperity across communities and build social cohesion ⁴ .
Students from identified socio-economic groups	You belong to a group that is underrepresented in higher education based on the occupation and employment status of your parent(s) or guardian(s). The underrepresented groups are the Non-Manual Workers Group and the Semi and Unskilled Manual Workers Group.

⁴ Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Statement of Strategy, 2021-2023

Document Control

A. Document Details

Title:	HEAR and DARE Procedures
Owner(s):	Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs and Registrars
Author(s):	HEAR and DARE Working group
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Note: If the 'Status' of this document reads 'Draft', it has not been finalised and should not be relied upon. An existing approved procedure is deemed relevant until such time as an updated procedure has been approved by the relevant approval authority and becomes the new binding procedure.

B. Revision History

Version Number	Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Changes tracked?	Proposed Revision Date
0.1	09/05/2022	Admissions and Student Affairs I&D Committee Updated made for clarification	Yes	

C. Relevant/Related Existing Internal/External Documents

The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education (2015-2021) MTU Dignity and Respect Policy Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Statement of Strategy, 2021-2023
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Note: Any existing approved documents that require referencing must be listed above.

D. Consultation History

This document has been prepared in consultation with the following bodies:

MTU Students Union

E. Approvals

This document requires following approvals (in order where applicable):

Name	Date	Details of Approval Required
Academic Council	03 June 2022	Version 1.0

F. Responsible for Communication and Implementation

The Manager/Functional Area responsible for communication and implementation:

Title	Functional Area	Date Implemented
Academic and Student Affairs Manages	Student Services	03 June 2022