



From FET2HE - Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning

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Outline of Presentation

- Background to FET to HE Progression
 - FET2HE Project
 - Where to from here?
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History of FET to HE Progression

- ▶ 1990s Design of a National Qualifications System and a National Qualifications Framework a major topic of debate
- ▶ 1992 NCVA Proposals for a National Framework of Vocational Qualifications
 - ▶ 5 Levels – 3 for NCVA and 3 for NCEA
- ▶ 1992 Green paper, 1995 White Paper, TEASTAS. 1999 Qualifications Act
- ▶ Access Transfer and Progression a major driver of NFQ – equality of opportunity
- ▶ FET Sector a major driver of the NFQ
 - ▶ “the requirements and needs of people outside of higher education are the things that make the difference” (Granville, 2003)
- ▶ 1992 CDVEC/DIT Points Enhancement Scheme (LC AND NCVA Result)
- ▶ 1998 NCVA Higher Education Links Scheme (HELs) (LC OR NCVA Result)



History of FET to HE Progression

- ▶ 2001 FETAC Higher Education Links Scheme (HELS)
 - ▶ 4 legacy certification process – HELS only apply to former NCVA providers
- ▶ 2003 NFQ Launched – two sets of awards at level 6
 - ▶ FET and HE speaking the same “language”
- ▶ IoT Points Scheme & University Quota System
- ▶ FETAC Common Awards System – single system for all FET
- ▶ 2012 QQI Higher Education Links Scheme (HELS)
 - ▶ QQI HELS – “A key purpose of the NFQ is to enable access and progression opportunities within education and training”
- ▶ 2013 Minister’s letter to the Higher Education Authority – national priorities
 - ▶ Promote access for disadvantaged groups and to put in place coherent pathways...from further education and other non-traditional entry routes
 - ▶ Regionally Coordinated Approach

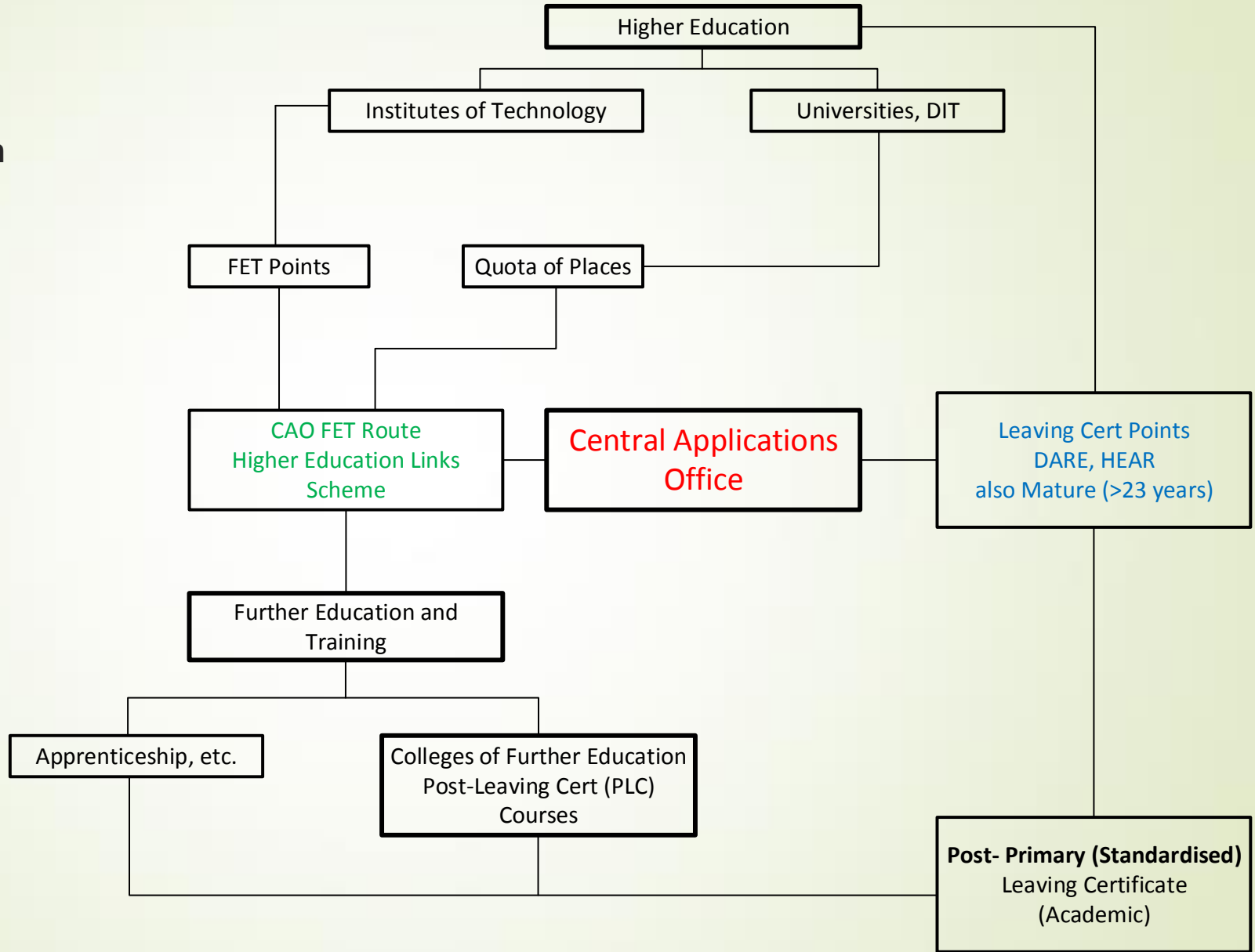


Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012

- ▶ 2(5) A reference to **access, transfer and progression**, in relation to learners, is a reference to—
 - ▶ (a) **access** by learners to programmes of education and training, including recognition for knowledge, skill or competence previously acquired,
 - ▶ (b) **transfer** of learners from one programme to another having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence previously acquired, and
 - ▶ (c) **progression** of learners from a programme to another programme of a higher level.

- ▶ QQI Policy on Access, Transfer and Progression (2015)
 - ▶ “Entry arrangements are clear, decisions on allocation of places on programmes are transparent, and all applicants are treated in a fair, equal and consistent manner”


**Progression to
Higher
Education**
- **Current System**





Key Issues

- ▶ Dominance of Leaving Cert in HE Progression
- ▶ High demand for Post-Secondary Education and Training
 - ▶ 2016 School-leavers 52.3% to HE, 23.5% to FET (DES)
- ▶ Moving from siloed, fragmented system to greater integration
- ▶ Current system of FET to HE progression developed from a bottom-up
- ▶ FET to HE – 2 pathways
- ▶ Taking a national top-down view of the FET to HE system – anomalies!
- ▶ A student with the correct Award and all 8 distinctions risks getting no CAO offer in the courses where a small quota of places are reserved for QQI.



Current Anomalies – some examples

- ▶ Not all HE Courses on CAO list have QQI entry route – Recruitment?
- ▶ Variation in entry requirements – 3-5 distinctions, multiple or single sitting
- ▶ Quota system – reserved places left unfilled
- ▶ Specific requirements too prescriptive
- ▶ The current points system into IoTs is an informational barrier
 - 3.25 for a Distinction, 2.16 for a Merit, 1.08 for a Pass
 - = Max. 390 points for Level 5 award – same NFQ level as LC
- ▶ Conclusion = current system not working properly for either FET or HE



FET2HE Project - Initial Meeting June 2014

- 4 HEIs – Athlone IT, Dublin City University, Dundalk IT, Maynooth University (MEND Cluster)
 - Higher Education Authority (SIDF) funded
 - One of the Actions of the Project was to : *establish a network of FET and HE providers within the region*
 - 8 of 16 ETBs – CMETB, CDETБ, DDLETB, GRETB, KWETB, LOETB, LWETB, LMETB were invited to join
 - SOLAS and QQI were invited to join the project
- MoU Signed in Dundalk IT – May 2015



FET2HE Network - Research Subgroup


- Scoping Paper

- Issues for HE

- Perceived inconsistency of standards between FET Centres
- Approx. 40-50% of FET students accept CAO offers
- High administrative cost of HELS

- Issues for FET

- Not all CAO courses have QQI entry route
- Unnecessarily complicated
- Lack of progression for non-PLC Level 5 and Level 6 provision
- 390 points cap for IoTs inequitable
- Two systems lack transparency
- FET route through CAO can be a "lottery"
- Lack of clarity on progression from Level 6



FET2HE Project Conference – Helix, DCU

October 2016

- ▶ Irish Times – FET students “face significant barriers” – “lack of transparency”
- ▶ Conference outcomes related to ATP:
- ▶ FET2HE pathway should include:
 - ▶ QQI pathway into year 1 of all courses on CAO list
 - ▶ Within domain progression, e.g. from FET Business to HE Business
 - ▶ Consistent entry requirements – common matriculation requirements
 - ▶ Eliminate unnecessary specific subject requirements
 - ▶ Greater coordination within Guidance



Current Policy Landscape

- FET and HE converging – now a single division in DES
- FET to HE progression on Policy agenda
- QQI QA Governance for ETB same as IoTs
- Target to increase “FE Award holders to HE” to 10% by 2019

- DES – Action Plan for Education 2016-2019
- DES – Higher Education System Performance Framework 2018-2020
- HEA – National Plan for Equity of Access 2015-2019
- SOLAS - FET Strategy 2014-2019
- SOLAS - ETB Strategic Performance Agreements & Planning Framework 2018 to 2020

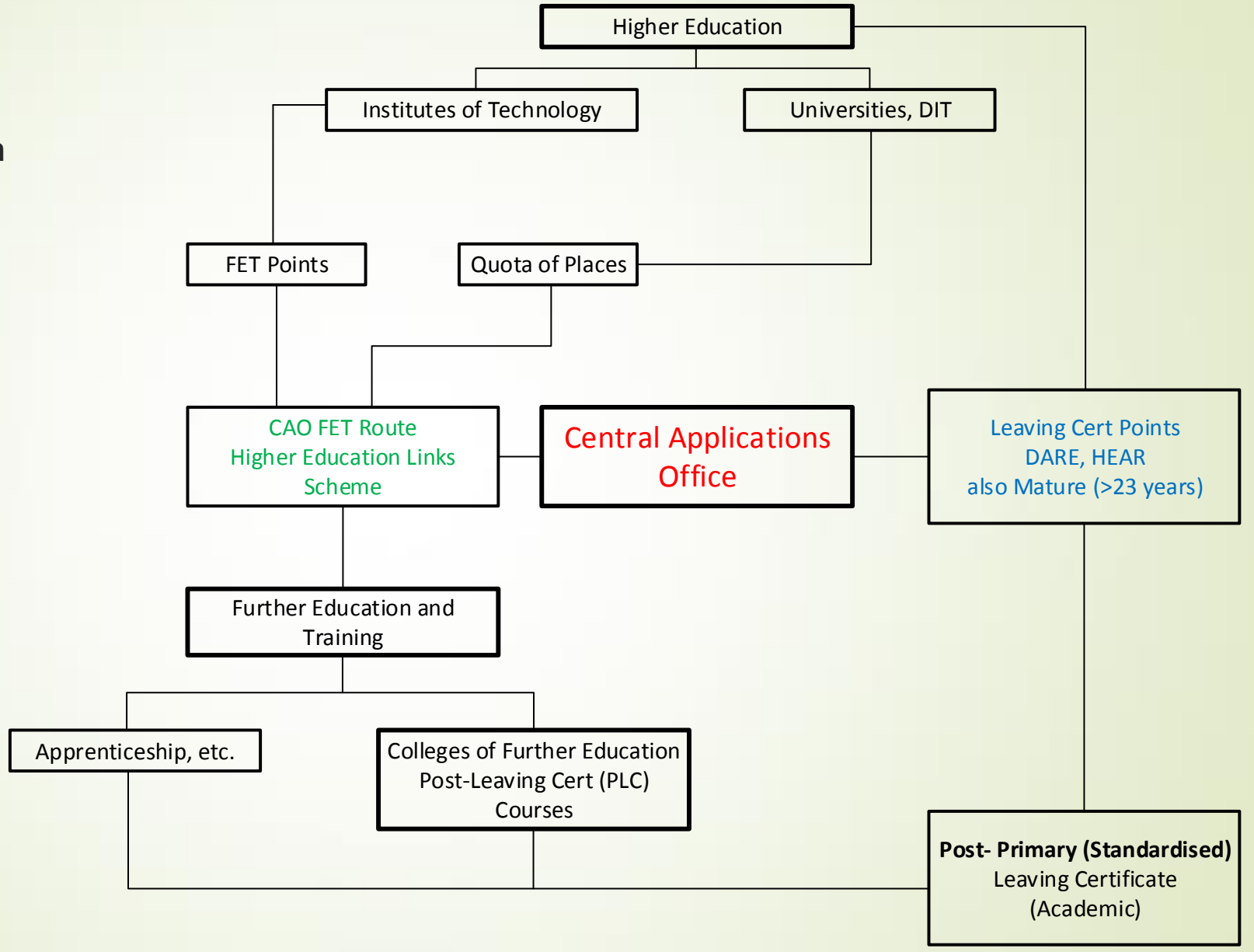


Vision – a Single Unified Points System

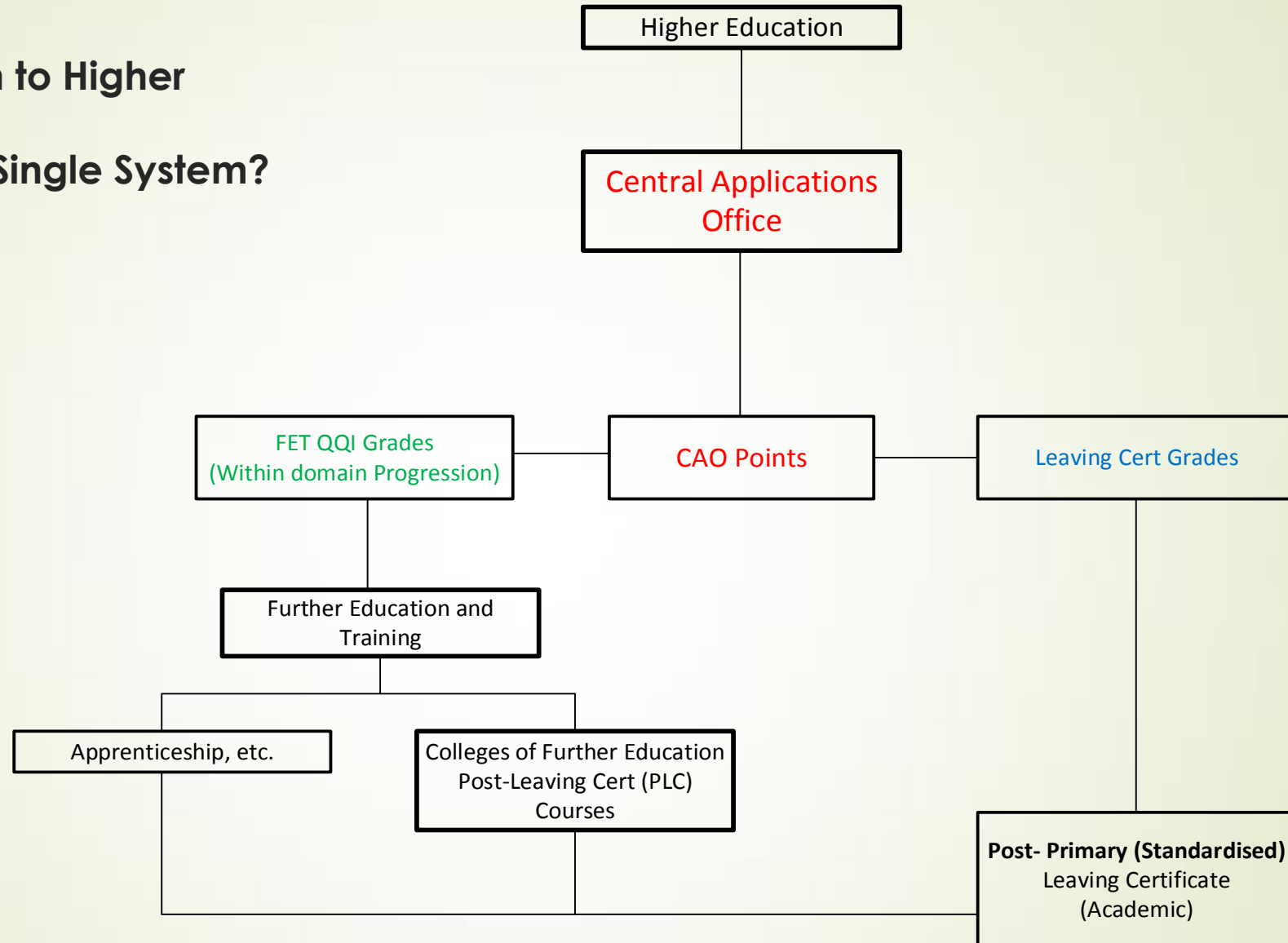
- Conference Conclusions focus on “Administrative” dimension of FET to HE
- QQI pathway into year 1 of all courses on CAO list
- Within domain progression, e.g. from FET Business to HE Business
- Consistent entry requirements – common matriculation requirements

- Next, the “Competitive” dimension! – The Points!
- Would a single CAO points system for all HE applications (LC, FET, other) be attainable?
- New thinking is required.
- Local arrangements and “Foundation/Access” Courses are restrictive – contrary to NFQ
- Using the NFQ as the national infrastructure for progression
- CAO points equivalence for QQI grades with LC grades
- Are the three current QQI grades enough? Are more needed?

**Progression to
Higher
Education
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Progression to Higher Education - a Future Single System?





Universal CAO Points System

Higher Level Grade	Points	QQI Level Grade	Points
H1 (90 - 100)	100	D1 (90 - 100)	75
H2 (80 < 90)	88	D2 (80 < 90)	66
H3 (70 < 80)	77	M1 (70 < 80)	58
H4 (60 < 70)	66	M2 (60 < 70)	50
H5 (50 < 60)	56	P (50 < 60)	42
H6 (40 < 50)	46		
H7 (30 < 40)	37		
H8 (0 < 30)	0		



Thank You