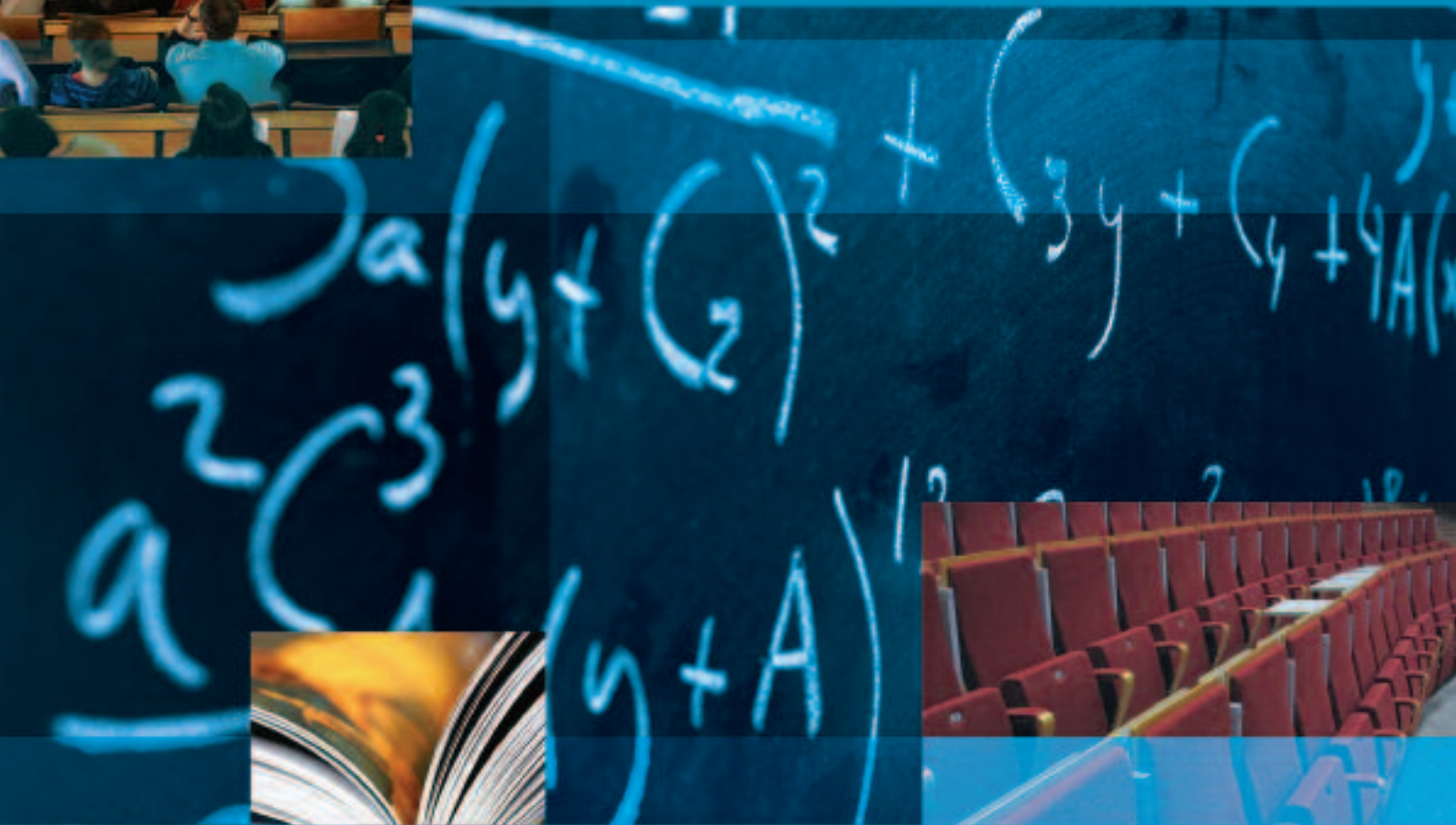


Higher Education Authority
An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas



Discipline Choices and Trends
for High Points CAO Acceptors

2006

Discipline Choices and Trends for High Points CAO Acceptors 2006

A report by the Statistics Section of the Higher Education Authority

June 2007

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Acknowledgements

The Authority wishes to thank Mr. Ivor Gleeson, General Manager/Secretary, Central Applications Office, for his co-operation throughout this project.

Foreword

Examining the third level discipline choices and in effect the career choices of our Leaving Certificate students provides important indicators for the development of a knowledge economy. This report “Discipline Choices and Trends for High Points CAO Acceptors, 2006” examines these choices for a particular group of those students, i.e. those achieving 450 – 600 points in their Leaving Certificate and accepting CAO places in 2006 and illustrates some trends in their choices since 1998.

These “high-point” students are more likely to receive their first or a high preference course and have the highest range of choices in the points admission system. In fact, in 2005 66% were offered and accepted their first choice through the CAO. Their choice of discipline and career therefore affects the choices of their contemporaries.

The retention of our high achieving students in the Irish higher education system is a vital contributory factor to Ireland’s continuing and long-term economic success. It is very encouraging to see that an overwhelming majority of high-point students chose to accept places in higher education institutions in the Republic of Ireland in 2006. This indicates that the quality of our higher education institutions is respected by the public.

Places on Healthcare, Law and Architecture programmes are mainly offered to and accepted by those achieving 450+ points. The strong competition for Medicine is clearly shown with the majority (92.4%) of acceptors achieving 550+ points.

Comparative under-achievement by males is also having an affect on the numbers of high achievers. Females account for more than 60% of level 8 honours bachelor degree high point acceptors. The comparatively lower level of school completion at second level by boys contributes to this under-achievement.

An improvement in the overall performance of under-represented socio-economic groups has the potential to increase the number of high-point acceptors. Presently high levels of educational attainment are positively linked to the parent’s socio-economic groups’. Greater proportions of higher and lower professional’s children achieve at least five honours in their Leaving Certificate.

I wish to thank the Central Applications Office for providing this acceptance data. An analysis of this dataset will be produced on a biannual basis by the Higher Education Authority to allow us to monitor any changes.

On behalf of the Authority, I welcome this report and look forward to future publications.



Michael Kelly
Chairman
June 2007

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Discipline Choices and Trends for High Points CAO Acceptors 2006, is a report produced by the Statistics Section of the Higher Education Authority.

The objective of this report is to examine the discipline choices – and some trends in those choices – of high point level 8 (honours bachelor degree) CAO place acceptors in 2006. It also examines changing trends in such discipline choices in the previous eight years. The report breaks down high performance higher education entrants by gender and social class.

It is interesting to assess the career choices of our higher performing school leavers.

High point students are defined as those achieving 450+ points in their Leaving Certificate. This paper defines high-points further into three groups:

- 450-495 points
- 500-545 points
- 550-600 points

Students are scored on their best six subjects which allows for a maximum score of 600 points. Some colleges award extra points for high achievement in Mathematics or portfolios. Some high point students accept level 6/7 higher certificate/ordinary bachelor degree courses (329), although the number is small. This paper therefore concentrates on level 8 honours bachelor degree acceptors.

In 2006, level 8 (honours bachelor degree) high point acceptors formed the following numbers and proportions of all 450+ level 8 acceptors.

High Point Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree Acceptors 2006

	No. of CAO Acceptors 2006	% of Total Acceptors 2006
550+	1,579	6.0%
500-545	2,886	11.0%
450-495	4,753	18.0%
Total 450+	9,218	35.0%

Source CAO

The high-point level 8 acceptors formed 34.8% of all level 8 honours bachelor degree acceptors in 2006. In 2006, 38.6% of high-point acceptors were male. However amongst all level 8 acceptors 41.5% were male. Male under-representation is therefore more pronounced in the higher-point ranges.

Discipline Choices

The disciplines accepted by high point students are analysed under the following broad discipline ranges:

Education:	(all teacher training)
Arts:	includes Humanities and Social Sciences
Technology:	(includes Science (non health related), Computing, Engineering/Construction, Architecture)
Medical and Related:	(Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy Radiology etc. Nursing included in the level 8 list since 2003 is distinguished for that reason)
Law:	(includes Law, Law and another subject e.g. Law and French)
Business:	(Business Information Systems, Finance, Commerce, Marketing, Tourism etc)

The broad disciplines groups Technology, Medical and Related and Business and Law are examined more closely in sub-discipline detail. Discipline acceptances in the three high-point ranges are given below.

Disciplines Accepted by High-Point (450+) Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree CAO Acceptors, 2006

	550+ (%)	500-545 (%)	450-495 (%)	All 450+ (%)
Education	61 (3.9)	306 (10.6)	795 (16.7)	1,162 (12.6)
Arts	178 (11.3)	563 (19.5)	1,032 (21.7)	1,773 (19.2)
Technology	248 (15.7)	781 (27.1)	1,157 (24.3)	2,186 (23.7)
Medical and Related	778 (49.3)	352 (12.2)	199 (4.2)	1,329 (14.4)
Nursing	4 (0.25)	43 (1.5)	196 (4.1)	243 (2.6)
Law	128 (8.1)	300 (10.4)	208 (4.4)	636 (6.9)
Business	182 (11.5)	541 (18.8)	1,166 (24.5)	1,889 (20.5)
Total	1,579 (100.0)	2,886 (100.0)	4,753 (100.0)	9,218 (100.0)

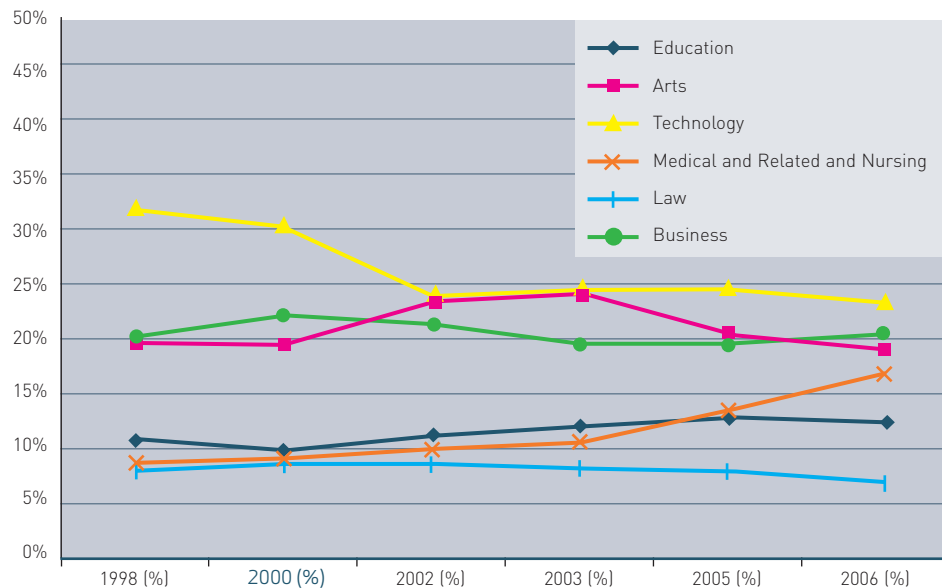
Source CAO

The table clearly shows how the discipline pattern changes as one moves across the high-point groups in 2006.

- Medical and Related courses strongly affect the 550+ points range with 49.3% of the acceptors. Medical faculties almost fill in this points range
- All Science-based courses (technology and medically related) attracted 65.2% of the 550+ point acceptors. This declines to 32.6% in the range 450-495
- Technology attracted a quarter of all high-point acceptors. These accounted for 38.5% of all level 8 Technology acceptors
- Arts accounted for one fifth of high-point acceptors and 22.2% of all level 8 acceptors. Business accounted for 20.5% of all level 8 450+ acceptors and 38% of all level 8 acceptors in 2006
- Law features strongly above 500 points where high-demand Law courses mostly fill
- Education attracted 12.6% of high-point acceptors drawing strongly in the 450-545 ranges. These accounted for 57.2% of all Education acceptors in 2006

Discipline choices have changed in recent years. The graph below outlines changes in discipline patterns for all 450+ point acceptors from 1998 to 2006.

Disciplines Accepted by High Point (450+) Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree CAO Acceptors, 1998 – 2006.



Source CAO

- The number of high-point acceptors increased from 7,545 in 1998 to 9,218 in 2006
- Education has strengthened its proportion from 10.8% in 1998 to 12.6% in 2006. However this has declined from 13.1% in 2005
- Arts, which increased its proportion in 2002 and 2003, reverted in 2006 to 19.2%
- Technology high point acceptances hovered around the 25% mark since 2002. However it declined in 2006 to 23.7%. Between 1998 and 2002 high-point acceptors declined from 32.4% to 24.4%. A major reason for this decline in Technology was the decline in high-point Computing course acceptors. Science however remained fairly constant in that time period
- Medically related courses increased their acceptors and proportions. Increased places in Para-Medical courses and, since 2003, the inclusion of Nursing courses at level 8 have contributed to this. 17.1% of all high-point acceptors in 2006 were to medical and related courses. This proportion drops to 14.4% in 2006 if we exclude Nursing acceptors from the medical and related category. This was an increase of 2.7 percentage points from the 2005 figure
- Law high-point acceptor numbers declined to 6.9% in 2006 from 7.8% in 2005. Business high point acceptors remained stable over the time period

Technology Disciplines

Technology courses attracted almost a quarter of all high point acceptors in 2006. The table below shows the proportions of all 450+ acceptors by Technology sub discipline from 1998-2006.

450+ Points Technology Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree Acceptors 1998 - 2006 (% of all 450+ Point Acceptors)

	1998 (%)	2000 (%)	2003 (%)	2005 (%)	2006 (%)
Science	1,056 (14.0)	1,001 (12.5)	1,049 (12.2)	1,155 (12.8)	1,039 (11.3)
Computing	434 (5.7)	464 (5.8)	57 (0.7)	61 (0.7)	72 (0.8)
Engineering/ Construction	875 (11.6)	894 (11.2)	909 (10.6)	915 (10.1)	929 (10.0)
Architecture	80 (1.1)	94 (1.2)	93 (1.1)	134 (1.5)	146 (1.6)
Total Technology	2,445 (32.4)	2,453 (30.7)	2,153 (24.6)	2,265 (25.1)	2,186 (23.7)

Source CAO

- Technology acceptors decreased their proportion of high-point acceptors in 2006 to 23.7%. This is a decline of 8.7 percentage points since 1998
- Computing attracted 5.7% of high-point acceptors in 1998. This decreased to 0.8% in 2006. In absolute numbers the number of acceptors declined from 434 in 1998 to 72 in 2006. This decline was the major factor in the decline of Technology acceptors between 2000 and 2006
- Architecture, with increased places, increased its proportion of high-point acceptors in 2006 to 1.6% of all high-point acceptors
- Engineering/Construction has declined in popularity from 11.6% in 1998 to 10.0% in 2006. However in absolute numbers there was an increase from 875 to 929 acceptors
- Science high-point acceptors declined from 14.0% in 1998 to 11.3% in 2006

Medical and Related Disciplines

Medical and related courses attracted 17.1% of all 450+ point level 8 acceptors in 2006. The majority of these acceptors, 49.5%, accepted places in the 550-600 point group. The table shows the proportions of all 550+ point acceptors by medical and related sub-discipline from 1998-2006.

High-Point (550+) Acceptors: Medically Related Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree Courses, 1998 - 2006 (% of all 550+ acceptors)

	1998 (%)	2000 (%)	2003 (%)	2005 (%)	2006 (%)
Medicine	208 (23.1)	284 (25.7)	274 (20.9)	256 (18.4)	331 (20.9)
Physiotherapy	19 (2.1)	30 (2.7)	45 (3.4)	65 (4.6)	101 (6.4)
Radiology	2 (0.2)	0	5 (0.4)	5 (0.36)	7 (0.44)
Veterinary	54 (6.0)	42 (3.8)	65 (5.0)	59 (4.2)	55 (3.5)
Dentistry	18 (2.0)	28 (2.5)	42 (3.2)	52 (3.7)	52 (3.3)
Pharmacy	66 (7.3)	54 (4.9)	96 (7.3)	130 (9.4)	143 (9.1)
Nursing	-	-	-	1 (0.1)	4 (0.25)
Other Healthcare	5 (0.56)	4 (0.4)	22 (1.7)	45 (3.2)	89 (5.6)
Total Medical Related	372 (41.3)	442 (40.0)	549 (42.0)	613 (44.1)	782 (49.5)

Source CAO

- Almost 50% of those acceptors with 550+ points in 2006 accepted places on Medical and Related courses up from 44.1% in 2005
- Human Medicine at 331 constituted 20.9% of all 550+ acceptances in 2006 down from 25.7% in

2000 although in absolute numbers it increased from 256 to 331. Medical faculties largely filled at this level in 2003, in contrast in 1998 76 students entered Medical Faculties from the 500-545 points range group. In 2006, 14 acceptors entered from the 500-545 points range and 13 from the 450-495 points range

- Dentistry largely filled at this points range in 2006. In contrast, in 1998 and 2000, 27 and 26 acceptors respectively entered from the 500-545 points range
- The numbers accepting Pharmacy and Physiotherapy at this point level increased in 2006. Some of this increase may be due to an increase in provision of these courses between 2003 and 2006. In 2005, 130 and 65 applicants accepted Pharmacy and Physiotherapy places compared to 143 and 101 in 2003

A number of Republic of Ireland domiciled students are still travelling to the United Kingdom to enrol on Medical and Related courses. Subjects allied to Medicine attracted the highest number of UCAS acceptances in 2006 with 22.8% of all acceptances. However it should be noted that acceptances are not the same as registrations as not all acceptors take up their place. These subjects include the therapies, Nursing and Pharmacy. Places available for all of these courses with the exception of Nursing were almost all filled in the 500-600 points range in 2006 in Republic of Ireland higher education institutions.

Business and Law Disciplines

Overall Business and Law courses attracted 27.4% of all 450+ point acceptors in 2006.

High-Point (450+) Acceptors: Business and Law Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree Courses, 2006 (% of all 450+ acceptors)

	2006 (%)
Finance and Accounting	429 (4.7)
General Business/Commerce	1,170 (12.7)
General Business/Commerce with a Language	254 (2.8)
Law	636 (6.9)
Business Information Systems	31 (0.3)
Marketing	5 (0.05)
Total	2,525 (27.4)

Source CAO

Although these disciplines constitute the highest proportion of 450+ point acceptors, the majority (54.4%) of these acceptors have between 450-495 points. This is also the case with the Technology disciplines. This compares to just 25.3% of Medical and related acceptors in this points range.

Gender Comparisons

Strong gender differences in high-point level 8 acceptors by discipline were identified in 2006.

% High-Point (450+) CAO Acceptors, 2006, By Sex and Discipline

Discipline	Male %	Female %
Science	42.6%	57.4%
Computing	69.4%	30.6%
Engineering	78.7%	21.3%
Construction	81.1%	18.9%
Architecture	52.7%	47.3%
All Technology	59.8%	40.2%
Medically-Related	23.0%	77.0%
Arts/Social Science	28.9%	71.1%
Education	19.4%	80.6%
Law	36.8%	63.2%
Business	47.9%	52.1%
All 450+	38.6%	61.4%

Source CAO

- In 2006, of all CAO level 8 (honours bachelor degree) acceptors, 41.5% were male and 58.5% female. Of these acceptors with 450+ points, 38.6% were male and 61.4% were female
- Females are less likely to choose Construction, Engineering and Computing courses
- Females are more likely to choose Science comprising 57.4% of all high-point Science acceptors in 2006. However if Science is broken into Physical and Life Sciences, males comprised 60.6% of high-point Physical Science acceptors in 2006
- Architecture is more balanced by sex in its intake
- Overall a lower proportion of high-point females accepted Technology courses in 2006 than in the previous year
- In Medically related courses in 2006 for every male acceptor over 3 females accepted a place. The proportion of females accepting remained the same as in 2005
- High-point student acceptors in Arts and Education were strongly likely to be female
- Three out of every five high-point students entering Law degrees are female while Business related courses were balanced in their high-point intake with 47.9% male and 52.1% female

Social Class Issues

Lower socio-economic groups are under-represented in these high-point acceptors. Therefore professions such as Medicine and Dentistry who draw almost exclusively from these high point acceptors will be comprised almost entirely from students whose father has a high socio-economic group. Achieving the full potential of all students with high ability regardless of their socio-economic background is a major priority.

Introduction

It is interesting to examine the third level discipline choices of our higher performing Leaving Certificate students. The discipline choices they make have an affect on their contemporaries as the vast majority, 66% in 2005, are offered and accept their first preference choice of course. High performing higher education entrants have a vast number of options available to them. The national agenda of the promotion of equality in access to higher education should enable such access by all young people who are potentially high achievers.

Document structure: The document is structured as follows: Section 1 outlines the general trends in level 8 honours bachelor degree high-point acceptors; Section 2 examines the broad discipline choices of high-point acceptors; Section 3 looks at Technology acceptors by sub-discipline; Section 4 examines Medical and Related acceptors by sub-discipline; Section 5 gives an overview of Business and Law acceptors by sub-discipline; Section 6 gives some gender difference in high-point acceptors; Section 7 examines Republic of Ireland UCAS acceptor patterns; Section 8 outlines the social class of high-point acceptors.

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Section 1

Trends in Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree High Point Acceptors

High-points for the purpose of this report are defined as 450+ points. Points are an inexact measure of ability, however, they must include a high proportion of students of high ability. These students are more likely to receive their first or a high preference course and have the highest range of choices in the points admission system. In 2006, these high point acceptors accounted for 34.8% of all level 8 honours bachelor degree CAO acceptors.

The main method of selection of entrants to higher education in Ireland is through the points system. This system is based on the grades achieved in the Leaving Certificate. Some courses consider additional points for portfolios and a number of courses add bonus points for particular subjects e.g. Higher Level Mathematics.

This paper examines students who accept level 8 honours bachelor degree places through the CAO in higher education, measured on a standard points scale based on the points achieved in the best six subjects in their Leaving Certificate.

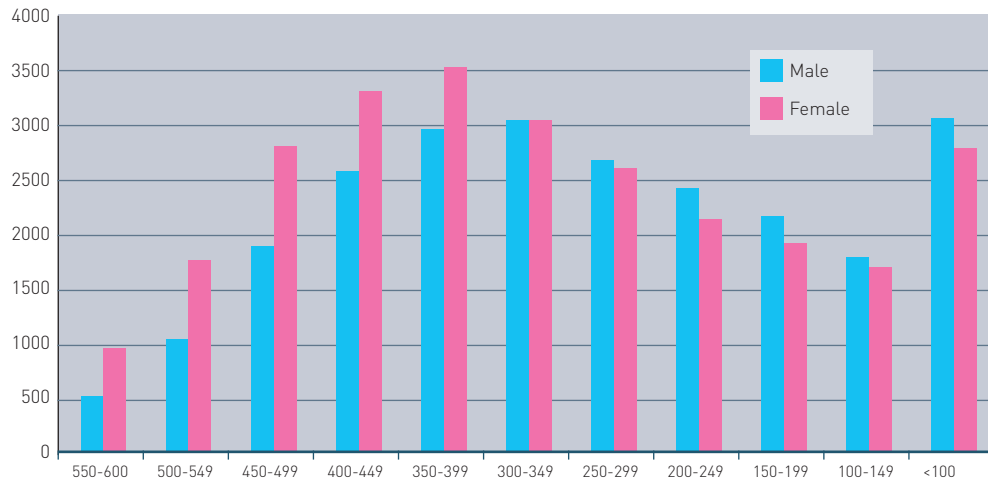
Table 1 outlines points assigned to grades achieved in the Leaving Certificate examination.

Table 1. Leaving Certificate Grade Points

Grade	Higher	Ordinary
A1	100	60
A2	90	50
B1	85	45
B2	80	40
B3	75	35
C1	70	30
C2	65	25
C3	60	20
D1	55	15
D2	50	10
D3	45	5

Points are gained from the six best subjects in the Leaving Certificate and eligible applicants are admitted, on the basis of points gained, to their highest preference to which their points entitle them. Figure 1 shows the distribution of points gained by male and female candidates in the Leaving Certificate of 2006.

Figure 1. Leaving Certificate Points 2006 by Gender



Source: Central Applications Office

The statistical distributions of the male and female points gained are different with clearly different medians and skews. More females gain 399 – 600 points while more males gain 100 to 299 points. The number of males and females gaining 300-349 points is equal. This report examines the upper 450+ end of the histogram only.

Table 2 compares the numbers receiving high-points in the 2006 Leaving Certificate with high point acceptors of CAO places in 2006 (some of whom may, of course, have sat the Leaving Certificate in earlier years.)

Table 2: High-Point (450+) Students/Acceptors, 2006

	Leaving Certificate 2006		CAO Acceptors 2006	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
550-600 points	520	968	556	1,027
500-545 points	1,070	1,794	1,097	1,842
450-495 points	1,911	2,823	2,036	2,989
Total 450+ points	3,501	5,585	3,689 (38.6%)	5,858 (61.4%)

*This table includes 329 Level 7/6 high point acceptors in 2006.

The table shows that almost all, if not all, students achieving high-points in their Leaving Certificate accept a place in higher education institutions in the Republic of Ireland. In 2005, 14.5% of females achieving 450-600 points scored 550-600 points in their Leaving Certificate. This increased to 17.3% in 2006. In contrast the proportion of males achieving the highest points range of those achieving high points remained the same at 14.8%.

Table 3 shows that high-point acceptors constituted 35% of all level 8 honours bachelor degree acceptors in 2006. Although data is not available for 2006 the table illustrates that for previous years, the higher the points achieved by an applicant the more likely they were to receive his/her first preference. 54.6% of all CAO level 8 honours bachelor degree acceptors accepted their first preference in 2005 compared to 66% of high-point acceptors.

Table 3: High-Point Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree CAO Acceptors 2003-2006

	No. of CAO Acceptors 2003	% of Total Acceptors 2003	% on 1st Preference Courses 2003	No. of CAO Acceptors 2005	% of Total Acceptors 2005	% on 1st Preference Courses 2005	No. of CAO Acceptors 2006	% of Total Acceptors 2006
550+	1,309	5.9%	85.1%	1,389	5.6%	10.0%	1,579	6.0%
500-545	2,734	12.3%	69.3%	2,880	11.5%	21.0%	2,886	11.0%
450-495	4,527	20.4%	59.1%	4,747	19.0%	35.0%	4,753	18.0%
Total 450+	8,570	38.7%	66.2%	9,016	36%	66.0%	9,218	35.0%

Source CAO

The rate of increase of overall level 8 honours bachelor degree acceptors was higher than that of high-point level 8 honours bachelor degree acceptors between 2003 and 2006. Therefore the proportion of high-point level 8 acceptances of all level 8 acceptances decreased from 38.7% in 2003 to 34.8% in 2006.

In 2006 male acceptors of all level 8 courses constituted 41.5% of such acceptors and female acceptors 58.5%. Table 4 shows the pattern by sex amongst high point acceptors in 2006. The table shows that an even higher proportion of females (61.4%) are high-point acceptors than males (38.6%).

Table 4: CAO High-Point Honours Bachelor Degree Acceptors by Gender, 2006

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total
550+	556 (35.2)	1,023 (64.8)	1,579
500-545	1,083 (37.5)	1,803 (62.5)	2,886
450-495	1,921 (40.5)	2,832 (59.5)	4,753
Total 450+	3,560 (38.6)	5,658 (61.4)	9,218

Source CAO

Table 5 shows that universities were the major destination for high-point acceptors in 2006. Institutes of Technology have increased their share of high-point acceptors since 2003 increasing from 6.2% to 6.6% in 2006.

Table 5: High-Point (450+) Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree Acceptors by Sector, 2003-2006, (%)

Sector	% 2006	% 2005	% 2003
Universities	80.90%	81.20%	82.10%
Institutes of Technology	6.60%	6.60%	6.20%
Teacher Training Colleges	10.60%	11.60%	10.00%
Private Colleges	1.90%	0.90%	1.60%

Source CAO

Since 2005 the teacher training colleges proportion of high-point acceptors has declined as has universities. Institutes of Technology have remained the same with Private Colleges doubling their proportion over 2005. In terms of numbers, all sectors showed an increase in the number of high-point acceptors. The Private Colleges increased their numbers by the highest proportion although the numbers were small.

In addition to the level 8 honours bachelor degree high-point acceptors a further 329 persons with high-points accepted level 7/6 ordinary bachelor degree/higher certificate offers in 2006. Over 80 accepted Healthcare and Construction related courses, over 65 chose Arts and Humanities courses.

Section 1 Key Points

- In 2006, the proportion of females scoring 550-600 points in their Leaving Certificate increased. Males in contrast remained the same as in 2005
- Overall 61.5% of female acceptors in 2006 received 450+
- A very high proportion of high-point applicants accept places in Republic of Ireland higher education institutions
- Female acceptors of Level 8 honours bachelor degree courses in 2006 constituted 58.5% of all acceptors while females constituted 61.4% of high-point acceptors
- The majority of high-point acceptors, 80.9%, accepted places in universities in 2006 and 10.6% accepted places in Teacher Training colleges

Section 2

Overall Discipline Choice of High-Point Acceptors

In examining the discipline choices of high-point students the following broad discipline groupings are considered.

Education:	(all teacher training)
Arts:	includes Humanities and Social Sciences
Technology:	(includes Science (non health related), Computing, Engineering/Construction, Architecture)
Medical and Related:	(Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy Radiology etc. Nursing included in the level 8 list since 2003 is distinguished for that reason)
Law:	(includes Law, Law and another subject e.g. Law and French)
Business:	(Finance, Commerce, Marketing, Tourism etc)

Table 6 outlines the broad discipline acceptances of level 8 high-point CAO acceptors in 2006.

Table 6: Disciplines Accepted by Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree High-Point (450+) CAO Acceptors, 2006

	550+ (%)	500-545 (%)	450-495 (%)	All 450+ (%)
Education	61 (3.9)	306 (10.6)	795 (16.7)	1,162 (12.6)
Arts	178 (11.3)	563 (19.5)	1,032 (21.7)	1,773 (19.2)
Technology	248 (15.7)	781 (27.1)	1,157 (24.3)	2,186 (23.7)
Medical and Related	778 (49.3)	352 (12.2)	199 (4.2)	1,329 (14.4)
Nursing	4 (0.25)	43 (1.5)	196 (4.1)	243 (2.6)
Law	128 (8.1)	300 (10.4)	208 (4.4)	636 (6.9)
Business	182 (11.5)	541 (18.8)	1,166 (24.5)	1,889 (20.5)
Total	1,579 (100.0)	2,886 (100.0)	4,753 (100.0)	9,218 (100.0)

Source CAO

The table clearly shows how the discipline pattern changes as one moves across the high-point groups in 2006.

- Medical and Related courses strongly affect the 550+ points range with 49.3% of the acceptors. Medical faculties almost fill in this points range
- All Science-based courses (technology and medically related) attracted 65.2% of the 550+ point acceptors. This declines to 32.6% in the range 450-495
- Technology attracted a quarter of all high-point acceptors. These accounted for 38.5% of all level 8 Technology acceptors
- Arts accounted for one fifth of high-point acceptors and 22.2% of all level 8 acceptors. Business accounted for 20.5% of all level 8 450+ acceptors and 38% of all level 8 acceptors in 2006
- Law features strongly above 500 points where high-demand Law courses mostly fill
- Education attracted 12.6% of high-point acceptors drawing strongly in the 450-545 ranges. These accounted for 57.2% of all Education acceptors in 2006

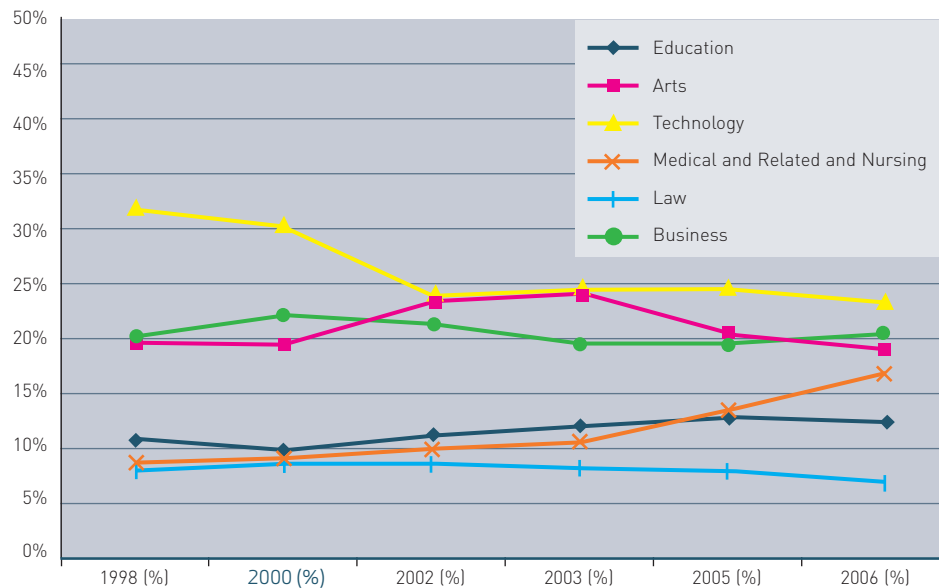
Table 7 and Figure 2 show some changes in the discipline choices and proportions in recent years.

Table 7: Disciplines Accepted by Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree High Point (450+) CAO Acceptors, 1998 – 2006.

	1998 (%)	2000 (%)	2002 (%)	2003 (%)	2005 (%)	2006 (%)
Education	817 (10.8)	781 (9.7)	913 (11.4)	1,037 (12.1)	1,179 (13.1)	1,162 (12.6)
Arts	1,485 (19.7)	1,560 (19.5)	1,890 (23.7)	2,094 (24.4)	1,862 (20.7)	1,773 (19.2)
Technology	2,443 (32.4)	2,456 (30.7)	1,948 (24.4)	2,108 (24.6)	2,265 (25.1)	2,186 (23.7)
Medical and Related and Nursing	658 (8.7)	728 (9.1)	806 (10.1)	934 (10.9)	1,238 (13.7)	1,572 (17.1)
Law	600 (7.9)	687 (8.6)	688 (8.6)	701 (8.2)	700 (7.8)	636 (6.9)
Business	1,542 (20.4)	1,779 (22.3)	1,735 (21.7)	1,696 (19.8)	1,772 (19.7)	1,889 (20.5)
Total	7,545 (100)	7,991 (100)	7,980 (100)	8,570 (100)	9,016 (100)	9,218 (100)

Source CAO

Figure 2: Disciplines Accepted by Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree High-Point (450+) CAO Acceptors, 2006



- The number of high-point acceptors has risen from 7,545 in 1998 to 9,218 in 2006
- Education has strengthened its proportion from 10.8% in 1998 to 12.6% in 2006. However this has declined from 13.1% in 2005
- Arts, which increased its proportion in 2002 and 2003, reverted in 2006 to 19.2%
- Technology high point acceptances hovered around the 25% mark since 2002. However it declined in 2006 to 23.7%. Between 1998 and 2002 high-point acceptors declined from 32.4% to 24.4%. A major reason for this decline in Technology was the decline in high-point Computing course acceptors. Science however remained fairly constant in that time period
- Medically related courses increased their acceptors and proportions. Increased places in Para-Medical courses and, since 2003, the inclusion of Nursing courses at level 8 have contributed to this. 17.1% of all high-point acceptors in 2006 were to medical and related courses. This proportion drops to 14.4% in 2006 if we exclude Nursing acceptors from the medical and related category. This was an increase of 2.7 percentage points from the 2005 figure
- Law high-point acceptor numbers declined to 6.9% in 2006 from 7.8% in 2005. Business high point acceptors remained stable over the time period

Section 2 Key Points

- Medical and Related courses strongly affect the 550+ points range with 49.3% of 550+ point accepting places on these courses in 2006
- The proportion of 450+ point Medical and related course acceptors has increased from 8.7% in 1998 to 17.1% in 2006 due largely to the introduction of Nursing in 2003. However the proportion has increased from 10.9% in 2003
- The proportion of 450+ point acceptors accepting Technology courses has declined from 32.4% in 1998 to 23.7% in 2006 this is due in the most part to the decline in interest in Computing courses
- Technology attracted a quarter, 2,186, of high point acceptors in 2006

Section 3

Technology Level 8 High-Point Acceptors

In 2006, 5,666 level 8 honours bachelor degree acceptors accepted places on Technology courses. Of these, 2,186 (over one third) had 450+ points. This section examines the discipline breakdown and recent trends in high-point acceptances.

Table 8 shows the discipline acceptances of high-point Technology acceptors in 2006.

Table 8: 450+ Technology Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree High-Point Acceptors, 2006

	2006 (% of all 450 +)
Science	1,039 (11.3)
Computing	72 (0.8)
Engineering/Construction	929 (10.0)
Architecture	146 (1.6)
Total Technology	2,186 (23.7)

Source CAO

Table 9 analyses the Technology acceptances from 1998 – 2006 by subject for acceptors with 550+ points.

Table 9: 550+ Points Technology Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree Acceptors 1998 - 2006

	1998 (% of all 550 +)	2000 (% of all 550 +)	2003 (% of all 550 +)	2006 (% of all 550 +)
Science	63 (7.0)	85 (7.7)	144 (11.0)	97 (6.1)
Computing	30 (3.3)	28 (2.5)	4 (0.3)	6 (0.4)
Engineering/Construction	93 (10.3)	122 (11.0)	105 (8.0)	111 (7.0)
Architecture	11 (1.2)	13 (1.2)	23 (1.8)	34 (2.2)
Total Technology	197 (21.9)	248 (22.4)	276 (21.1)	248 (15.7)

Source CAO

- The 248, 550+ Technology acceptors in 2006 form a small part of all 5,666 level 8 honours bachelor degree acceptors of Technology places; approximately 4.4%
- Science has decreased its intake from this highest-point group from 11.0% in 2003 to 6.1% in 2006

- Computing which attracted 3.3% of all 550+ point acceptors in 1998 has declined to just 0.4% in 2006
- Engineering/Construction as a proportion of all 550+ point acceptors has weakened since 2000 although the absolute numbers have slightly increased in that time period
- Architecture has increased its proportion of 550+ acceptors. A possible reason for this is the increase in the provision of places on Architecture courses between 2005 and 2006

Table 10 analyses the Technology acceptances from 1998 – 2006 by subject for acceptors with 500-545 points.

Table 10: 500 - 545 Points Technology Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree Acceptors 1998 - 2006

	1998 (% of all 500 – 545)	2000 (% of all 500 – 545)	2003 (% of all 500 – 545)	2006 (% of all 500 – 545)
Science	320 (14.2)	306 (12.8)	333 (12.2)	371 (12.8)
Computing	85 (3.8)	92 (3.8)	15 (0.5)	14 (0.5)
Engineering/Construction	289 (12.8)	284 (11.9)	296 (10.8)	307 (10.6)
Architecture	41 (1.8)	51 (2.1)	47 (1.7)	89 (3.1)
Total Technology	735 (32.5)	733 (30.6)	691 (25.3)	781 (27.0)

Source CAO

- Overall Technology's proportion of 500-545 point level 8 honours bachelor degree acceptors has declined since 1998 but slightly increased since 2003. In absolute numbers there are more 500-545 point acceptors of Technology courses in 2006 than there were in 1998
- Science has retained its share of 500-545 point acceptors since 2000
- Computing has more or less collapsed in this points range. It had attracted 3.8% of all level 8 honours bachelor degree acceptors in this points range in 1998 and 2000. This proportion dropped to 0.5% in 2003 and 2006
- Engineering and Construction has increased in absolute numbers though declined in proportion of 500 – 545 point acceptors in 2006
- Architecture has increased its share from 1.8% in 1998 to 3.1% in 2006. This is due to the increase in the provision of Architecture courses

Table 11 analyses the Technology acceptances from 1998 – 2006 by subject for acceptors with 450-495 points.

Table 11: 450 - 495 Points Technology Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree Acceptors 1998 - 2006

	1998 [% of all 450 - 495]	2000 [% of all 450 - 495]	2003 [% of all 450 - 495]	2006 [% of all 450 - 495]
Science	673 (15.3)	610 (13.6)	572 (12.6)	571 (12.0)
Computing	319 (7.3)	344 (7.7)	38 (0.8)	52 (1.1)
Engineering/Construction	493 (11.2)	488 (10.9)	508 (11.2)	511 (10.7)
Architecture	28 (0.6)	30 (0.7)	23 (0.5)	23 (0.5)
Total Technology	1,513 (34.5)	1,472 (32.9)	1,141 (25.2)	1,157 (24.3)

Source CAO

- Overall the proportion of high-point Technology acceptors has decreased in number and proportion since 1998. In terms of the proportion of all high-point acceptors Technology has declined by 10 percentage points
- Science at this points level has decreased its absolute number and proportion since 2003
- The collapse of Computing amongst high-point acceptors is very evident here with a decline from 7.7% of this points level in 2000 to 1.1% in 2006. The decline in Computing has not however resulted in an increase in other Technology areas
- Engineering and Construction 450-495 point acceptors have remained steady over the time period
- Architecture acceptors are low with most places having been filled at 500-600 points

Table 12 analyses the Technology acceptances from 1998 – 2006 by subject for acceptors with 450+ points.

Table 12: All 450+ Points Technology Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree Acceptors 1998 - 2006

	1998 [% of all 450 +]	2000 [% of all 450 +]	2003 [% of all 450 +]	2005 [% of all 450 +]	2006 [% of all 450 +]
Science	1,056 (14.0)	1,001 (12.5)	1,049 (12.2)	1,155 (12.8)	1,039 (11.3)
Computing	434 (5.7)	464 (5.8)	57 (0.7)	61 (0.7)	72 (0.8)
Engineering/Construction	875 (11.6)	894 (11.2)	909 (10.6)	915 (10.1)	929 (10.0)
Architecture	80 (1.1)	94 (1.2)	93 (1.1)	134 (1.5)	146 (1.6)
Total Technology	2,445 (32.4)	2,453 (30.7)	2,108 (24.6)	2,265 (25.1)	2,186 (23.7)

Source CAO

- Technology acceptors decreased their proportion of high-point acceptors in 2006 to 23.7%. This is a decline of 8.7 percentage points since 1998
- Computing attracted 5.7% of high-point acceptors in 1998. This decreased to 1.2% in 2002. This decline which has continued and deepened was the major factor in the decline of Technology acceptors between 2000 and 2006. A slight increase was seen in 2006
- Architecture, with increased places, increased its proportion of high-point acceptors in 2006 to 1.6% of all high-point acceptors
- Engineering/Construction has declined in popularity from 11.6% in 1998 to 10.0% in 2006. However in absolute numbers there was an increase from 875 to 929 acceptors.
- Science high-point acceptors declined from 14.0% in 1998 to 11.3% in 2006

Table 13 gives the gender breakdown of high-point Technology acceptors.

Table 13: 450+ Points: Gender Patterns of Technology Acceptors 1998 - 2006

	2006			2003		2000		1998	
	Total	M (%)	F (%)	Total	F (%)	Total	F (%)	Total	F (%)
Science	1,039	443 (42.6)	596 (57.4)	1,049	59.3	1,001	63.5	1,056	60.3
Computing	72	50 (69.4)	22 (30.6)	57	12.3	464	32.5	434	38
Engineering/ Construction	929	739 (79.5)	190 (20.4)	909	20.7	894	26.1	875	23.5
Architecture	146	77 (52.7)	69 (47.3)	93	49.5	94	51.1	80	55
Total	2,186	1,309 (59.8)	877 (40.2)	2,108	40.9	2,453	43.5	2,445	43.0

Source CAO

- Females constitute 57.4% of the high-point level 8 honours bachelor degree Science acceptors in 2006. This proportion has remained constant since 1998. If Science is broken into Physical and Life Sciences, males comprised 60.6% of Physical Science high-point acceptors in 2006
- In 2003 females with high-points almost abandoned Computing courses. In 2006 their proportion of Computing acceptances has almost trebled returning to its proportion in 2000
- In Engineering/Construction the female proportion in 2006 at 20.4% was the lowest in recent years
- Architecture acceptances are gender balanced

Section 3 Key Points

- In absolute numbers there are more 500-545 point acceptors of Technology courses in 2006 than there were in 1998
- The decline in high-point Computing acceptors from 2000 to 2006; 5.8% to 0.8% is a worrying development
- Architecture high-point acceptors increased in 2006 due to increased place provision

$$\frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+A)^3} + \frac{3a(y+G)^2}{(y+A)^3} + \dots$$

Section 4

Medically Related Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree High-Point Acceptors

This section examines the sub-disciplines that make up Medical and Related disciplines. This discipline includes Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science. Also included are the therapies, Pharmacy and other health courses. Nursing is included from 2003 onwards.

Table 14 shows the number and proportion of high-point acceptors to Medical and Related courses in 2006.

Table 14: High-Point Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree (450+) Acceptors: Medically Related Courses, 2006

	2006 (% of all 450 +)
Medicine	358 (3.8)
Physiotherapy	141 (1.5)
Radiology	66 (0.7)
Veterinary	58 (0.6)
Dentistry	56 (0.6)
Pharmacy	168 (1.8)
Nursing	243 (2.6)
Other Healthcare	482 (5.2)
Total Medical and Related	1,572 (17.1)

Source CAO

Table 14 shows that Medical and Related acceptors made up 17.1% of all 450+ point acceptors in 2006.

The following tables analyse the acceptances by points level i.e. 500-545 and 550-600 in 2006 compared to recent years.

Table 15: High-Point Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree (550+) Acceptors: Medically Related Courses, 1998-2006

	1998 (% of all 550 +)	2000 (% of all 550 +)	2003 (% of all 550 +)	2005 (% of all 550 +)	2006 (% of all 550 +)
Medicine	208 (23.1)	284 (25.7)	274 (20.9)	256 (18.4)	331 (20.9)
Physiotherapy	19 (2.1)	30 (2.7)	45 (3.4)	65 (4.6)	101 (6.4)
Radiology	2 (0.2)	0	5 (0.4)	5 (0.36)	7 (0.44)
Veterinary	54 (6.0)	42 (3.8)	65 (5.0)	59 (4.2)	55 (3.5)
Dentistry	18 (2.0)	28 (2.5)	42 (3.2)	52 (3.7)	52 (3.3)
Pharmacy	66 (7.3)	54 (4.9)	96 (7.3)	130 (9.4)	143 (9.1)
Nursing	-	-	-	1 (0.1)	4 (0.25)
Other Healthcare	5 (0.56)	4 (0.4)	22 (1.7)	45 (3.2)	89 (5.6)
Total Medical Related	372 (41.3)	442 (40.0)	549 (42.0)	613 (44.1)	782 (49.5)

Source CAO

- Almost 50% of 2006 acceptors who received 550+ points accepted places on Medical and Related courses up from 44.1% in 2005
- Human Medicine at 331 constituted 20.9% of all 550+ acceptances in 2006 down from 25.7% in 2000. Medical faculties largely filled at this level in 2003 in contrast in 1998 76 students entered Medical Faculties from the 500-545 points range group. In 2006, 14 acceptors entered from the 500-545 points range and 13 from the 450-495 points range
- Dentistry largely filled at this points range in 2006. In contrast in 1998 and 2000, 27 and 26 acceptors respectively entered from the 500-550 points range
- The numbers accepting Pharmacy and Physiotherapy at this point level increased in 2006. Some of this increase may be due to an increase in provision of these courses between 2003 and 2006. In 2005, 130 and 65 applicants accepted Pharmacy and Physiotherapy places compared to 143 and 101 in 2003

Table 16 gives a breakdown of the Level 8 honours bachelor degree acceptors in Medical and Related courses at the 500-550 points level.

Table 16: High-Point Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree (500 - 545) Acceptors: Medically Related Courses, 1998-2006

	1998 [% of all 500-545]	2000 [% of all 500-545]	2003 [% of all 500-545]	2005 [% of all 500-545]	2006 [% of all 500-545]
Medicine	76 (3.4)	17 (0.7)	7 (0.3)	10 (0.35)	14 (0.5)
Physiotherapy	43 (1.9)	71 (3.0)	52 (1.9)	60 (2.1)	35 (1.2)
Radiology	31 (1.4)	33 (1.4)	49 (1.8)	60 (2.1)	56 (1.9)
Veterinary	1 (0.04)	16 (0.7)	3 (0.1)	4 (0.14)	2 (0.07)
Dentistry	27 (1.2)	26 (1.1)	6 (0.22)	1 (0.03)	2 (0.07)
Pharmacy	1 (0.04)	9 (0.4)	37 (1.4)	16 (0.56)	16 (0.55)
Nursing	-	-	-	25 (0.9)	43 (1.5)
Other Healthcare	76 (3.4)	41 (1.7)	167 (6.1)	167 (5.8)	227 (7.9)
Total Medical Related	255 (11.3)	213 (8.9)	321 (11.8)	343 (11.9)	395 (13.7)

Source CAO

- Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary courses largely filled at the 550+ points range
- Pharmacy, Physiotherapy and Radiology largely filled in the 500-545 points range in 2006

Table 17 shows the proportion of each medical and related discipline that filled in the three high-point categories in 2006.

Table 17: % of all Medicine and Related Courses Accepted at Each Points Level in 2006

	% of discipline 550+	% of discipline 500-545	% of discipline 450-495
Medicine	92.4%	3.9%	3.6%
Physiotherapy	71.6%	24.8%	3.5%
Radiology	10.6%	84.8%	4.6%
Veterinary	94.8%	3.5%	1.7%
Dentistry	92.8%	3.6%	3.6%
Pharmacy	85.1%	9.5%	5.4%
Nursing	1.7%	17.7%	80.6%
Other Healthcare	14.1%	37.0%	48.8%
Occupational Therapy	12.8%	82.6%	4.6%
Speech and Language Therapy	43.9%	52.4%	3.7%
Total	782	395	395

Source CAO

- 92.4% of Medicine, 94.8% of Veterinary and 92.8% of Dentistry places were accepted by students receiving 550+ points in 2006
- Similarly very high proportions of Physiotherapy (71.6%) and Pharmacy (85.1%) places were accepted by students receiving 550+ points in 2006
- The highest proportions of Radiology, Occupational and Speech and Language Therapies places were accepted by students receiving 500-545 points in 2006
- 80.6% of Nursing places were accepted by students receiving 450-495 points in 2006

Table 18 shows the gender balance in acceptances to Medical and Related Courses in 2006 at high-points levels.

Table 18: 500+ Points: Gender Patterns of Medical and Related Acceptors 1998-2006

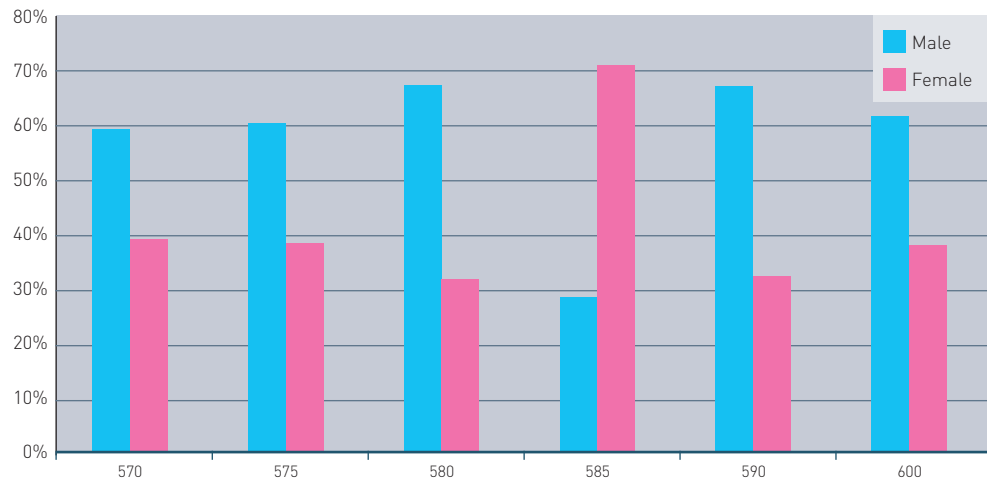
	2006			2003		2000		1998	
	Total	M (%)	F (%)	Total	F (%)	Total	F (%)	Total	F (%)
Medicine	345	38.5	61.5	281	62.3	301	70.1	284	62.3
Physiotherapy	136	22.1	77.9	97	78.4	101	82.2	62	82.3
Radiology	63	12.7	87.3	54	79.6	33	84.8	33	90.9
Veterinary	57	21.1	78.9	68	60.3	58	60.4	55	63.6
Dentistry	54	48.2	51.8	48	64.6	54	66.7	45	44.9
Pharmacy	159	31.4	68.6	133	69.2	63	79.4	67	82.3
Nursing	47	0	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	316	15.5	84.5	189	88.9	45	82.2	81	86.4
Total	1,177	25.7	74.3	870	72	655	73.3	627	70.1

Source CAO

- Females constituted 74.5% of the 500+ Medically related acceptors in 2006, males constituted 25.5%. The female proportion of acceptors has increased, the proportion was 72.0% in 2003
- The Medical Faculty intakes of high-point students in 2006 was 61.5% female down from 62.3% in 2003
- The therapies are predominantly female with 77.9% of Physiotherapy (however down from 82.3% in 1998), 92.7% of Occupational and 98.7% of Speech and Language therapies in 2006
- At this high-point range 100% of Nursing acceptors were female in 2006
- Veterinary was also predominantly female in 2006 (78.9%). The proportion of female acceptors has increased massively since 1998 (63.6%)

When we examine Medicine acceptances we can identify clear gender differences at the highest point levels. Figure 3 shows that at the highest points levels 570-600 a greater proportion of females accepted Medicine with the exception of those receiving 585 points where more males accepted in this points range. The numbers involved are however very low.

Figure 3: % of Medicine Acceptors by Gender and Leaving Certificate Points 2006



Source: CAO 2006

Section 4 Key Points

- Medical and related courses constituted 17.1% of all 450+ point acceptances in 2006 and 49.5% of all 550+ point acceptors, up from 42% in 2003
- Over 90% of Medicine, Veterinary and Dentistry places were accepted by students gaining 550+ points in 2006
- 74.5% of all Medical and Related high point acceptors were female in 2006 up from 72.0% in 2003

$$\frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+A)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+B)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+C)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+D)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+E)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+F)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+G)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+H)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+I)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+J)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+K)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+L)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+M)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+N)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+O)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+P)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+Q)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+R)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+S)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+T)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+U)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+V)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+W)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+X)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+Y)^{13}} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+Z)^{13}}$$

Section 5

Business and Law Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree High Point Acceptors

In 2006, 5,987 level 8 honours bachelor degree applicants accepted places on Business and Law courses. Of these 2,525, 42% had 450+ points. This section examines the discipline breakdown and recent trends in high-point acceptances.

Table 19 shows the discipline acceptances of high-point Business and Law acceptors in 2006.

Table 19: High-Point Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree (450+) Acceptors: Business and Law Courses, 2006

	2006 (% of all 450 +)
Finance and Accounting	429 (4.7)
General Business/Commerce	1,170 (12.7)
General Business/Commerce with a Language	254 (2.8)
Law	636 (6.9)
Business Information Systems	31 (0.3)
Marketing	5 (0.05)
Total	2,525 (27.4)

Source CAO

Although these disciplines constitute the highest proportion of 450+ point acceptors. However, the majority (54.4%) of these acceptors have between 450-495 points. This is also the case with the Technology disciplines. This compares to just 25.3% of Medical and related acceptors in this points range.

The table shows that General Business and Commerce courses and Finance and Accounting courses constituted 17.4% of all 450+ acceptors in 2006.

Table 20 shows the breakdown of acceptors by high-point group in 2006.

Table 20: Proportion of Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree Business and Law Acceptances by Points Range 2006

	550+ (%)	500-545 (%)	450-495 (%)	All 450+
Finance and Accounting	95 (22.1)	138 (32.2)	196 (45.6)	429 (100)
General Business/Commerce	61 (5.3)	318 (27.6)	791 (67.0)	1,170 (100)
General Business/Commerce with a Language	26 (10.2)	79 (31.1)	149 (58.6)	254 (100)
Law	128 (20.1)	300 (47.2)	208 (32.7)	636 (100)
Business Information Systems	0 (0)	5 (16.1)	26 (83.9)	31 (100)
Marketing	0 (0)	1 (20.0)	4 (80.0)	5 (100)
Total	310 (12.4)	841 (33.6)	1,374 (54.1)	2,525 (100)

Source CAO

- The majority of Finance and Accounting and Law acceptances were in the point range 500-600 in 2006
- Over 50% of Business courses were accepted in the 450-495 points range

Table 21 shows the gender breakdown of Business and Law high-point acceptors in 2006.

Table 21: Gender Breakdown of Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree High-Point Business and Law Acceptors 2006

	Male (%)	Female (%)
Finance and Accounting	229 (53.4)	200 (46.6)
General Business/Commerce	563 (48.7)	607 (51.3)
General Business/Commerce with a Language	89 (35.0)	165 (65.0)
Law	234 (36.8)	402 (63.2)
Business Information Systems	21 (67.7)	10 (32.3)
Marketing	3 (60.0)	2 (40.0)
Total	1,139 (45.1)	1,386 (54.9)

Source CAO

- Overall a higher proportion of high-point females accepted Business and Law courses in 2006
- Finance and Accounting and Business and Information Systems are the only two disciplines that had a higher proportion of male acceptors in 2006

- For every one male accepting a General Business/Commerce course with a language almost two females accepted. Without the language attached the ratio of male and female acceptors of General Business/Commerce courses is almost equal.

Section 5 Key Points

- 42% of Business and Law acceptors in 2006 had 450+ points
- The majority of Finance and Accounting and Law acceptances were in the point range 500-600 in 2006
- Females are more likely than males to accept General Business and Commerce courses with a language associated

$$3 \frac{d}{dt} (y + G)^2 +$$

$$3 \frac{d}{dt} (y + A)^3 +$$

$$9 \frac{d}{dt} \dots$$

Section 6

Gender Differences in High-Point Acceptors

In 2006, 52% of Leaving Certificate candidates were female. On average females perform better in this examination so that their points distribution – given in the introduction – is essentially different from that of males with a different median and skew. Above 350 points females strongly outnumber males. There is a gap of almost 12% between the male and female percentage retention rates to Leaving Certificate (Retention Rates of Pupils in Second Level Schools, Department of Education and Science). This male/female retention rate gap is high by international standards and exceeded only by four of the OECD member states (OECD, Education at a Glance 2006).

There are strong differences in the pattern of higher education discipline choice by sex. The following table gives the breakdown by sex and discipline of high-point CAO acceptors in 2006.

Table 22: % High-Point Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree (450+) CAO Acceptors, 2006, By Gender and Discipline

Discipline	Male %	Female %
Science	42.60%	57.40%
Computing	69.40%	30.60%
Engineering	78.70%	21.30%
Construction	81.10%	18.90%
Architecture	52.70%	47.30%
All Technology	59.80%	40.20%
Medically-Related	23.00%	77.00%
Arts/Social Science	28.90%	71.10%
Education	19.40%	80.60%
Law	36.80%	63.20%
Business	47.90%	52.10%
All 450+	38.60%	61.40%

Source CAO

- In 2006, of all CAO level 8 (honours bachelor degree) acceptors, 41.5% were male and 58.5% female. Of these acceptors with 450+ points, 38.6% were male and 61.4% were female
- Females are less likely to choose Construction, Engineering and Computing courses
- Females are more likely to choose Science comprising 57.4% of all high-point Science acceptors in 2006. However if Science is broken into Physical and Life Sciences, males comprised 60.6% of high-point Physical Science acceptors in 2006

- Architecture is more balanced by sex in its intake.
- Overall a lower proportion of high-point females accepted Technology courses in 2006 than in the previous year
- In Medically related courses in 2006 for every male acceptor over 3 females accepted a place. The proportion of females accepting remained the same as in 2005
- High-point student acceptors in Arts and Education were strongly likely to be female
- Three out of every five high-point students entering Law degrees are female while Business related courses were balanced in their high-point intake with 47.9% male and 52.1% female

The proportion of high-point females accepting places has been increasing in the last 9 years. Table 23 below shows that overall the proportion of female high point acceptors has remained between 60 and 62% since 1998. However, it is interesting to note that the proportion of 550+ point female acceptors has in fact increased from 61.4% in 1998 to almost 65.0% in 2006. This shows us that the proportion of females entering courses such as Medicine, Veterinary and Dentistry, which all more or less fill in the 550+ points range, is increasing.

Table 23: Proportion of Female Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree High Point Acceptors 1998 – 2006

Points	2006 % Female	2005 % Female	2003 % Female	2002 % Female	2000 % Female	1998 % Female
550-600	64.80%	62.00%	60.70%	64.40%	62.70%	61.40%
500-545	62.50%	63.00%	61.60%	64.10%	63.40%	61.90%
450-495	59.55%	62.00%	60.00%	60.20%	59.40%	59.30%
450+	61.40%	62.00%	60.60%	62.10%	61.10%	60.30%

Source CAO

Table 24 outlines the number of Leaving Certificate attempts by gender, level and points achieved of level 8 CAO high-point acceptors in 2006.

The table shows the number of 2006 CAO level 8 acceptors who sat the Leaving Certificate once and those who sat more than once. To be accepted for a course a student must:

- matriculate (gain the required standard in specific subjects, such as a C3 in Mathematics). Matriculation requirements are set by the individual institutions. This means that a number of students may have just repeated one subject in order to pass or achieve a certain grade in that subject rather than repeating to increase their overall points score.
- score enough points to secure a place on the course (determined by demand for that course).

The proportion of Leaving Certificate candidates in 2006 who were repeat candidates was 4.4%. Table 24 shows that the proportion of candidates who accepted level 8 places in 2006 who repeated the Leaving Certificate once or more was greater with 11.0% of males and 8.0% of females. The table also shows that for those accepting level 8 places who achieved 550-600 points in 2006 the proportion who repeated once or more increased even more with 17.8% of males and 13.6% of females. One can assume that the majority of these candidates were repeating to gain entry to a particular course requiring very high points. The data shows that males were more likely to repeat to achieve the desired points than females were in 2006.

Table 24: Leaving Certificate Attempts by Level, Gender and Points Bracket for CAO Acceptors 2006.

Points	Repeated the Leaving Certificate once only (% of L8 acceptors in that points range)		Repeated Leaving Certificate more than once (% of L8 acceptors in that points range)		% Repeats once or more	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
550 - 600	95 (17.1)	130 (12.7)	4 (0.72)	10 (1.0)	17.80%	13.60%
500 - 545	94 (5.2)	110 (6.0)	2 (0.20)	3 (0.16)	8.80%	6.10%
450 - 495	167 (8.2)	149 (5.0)	6 (0.30)	4 (0.13)	8.50%	5.10%
450+	356 (9.6)	389 (6.6)	12 (0.33)	17 (0.30)	10.00%	6.90%
All Level 8 Acceptors	1,173 (10.7)	1,195 (7.7)	30 (0.27)	29 (0.20)	11.00%	8.00%

Source CAO

Section 6 Key Points

- 61.4% of high-point acceptors were female in 2006
- Over 75% of high-point acceptances to medically related disciplines and over 80% to Education courses were female in 2006. Male high-point acceptors formed the highest majority (78.7% and 81.1%) of Engineering and Construction courses
- The proportion of females accepting places at 550+ points range increased from 61.4% in 1998 to 65.0% in 2006
- Males are more likely to repeat than females to achieve the desired points (11.0% vs. 8.0%)

$$\frac{3}{9} \frac{3}{1} (y + A)^{13} + 3a(y + G)^2 +$$

Section 7

Republic Of Ireland Students Accepting Places in the United Kingdom through UCAS

Every year Irish students travel to the United Kingdom to take up places on courses in higher education institutions. Students apply through the Universities and Colleges Application System, a similar system to the CAO.

Some high-points courses in Irish universities have been considered more obtainable in the UK. For example, Dentistry and Medicine can be accessed with slightly lower Leaving Certificate grades than are required in Irish Universities. These are courses where places mostly fill in the 550-600 points bracket. Again it is important to note that acceptances are not the same as registrations.

The 2004 UK Higher Education Bill introduced legislation permitting UK universities to charge tuition fees of up to £3,000 per student. This legislation came into effect in September 2006 when all new entrants were required to pay these fees. Different universities and colleges in the UK charge varying amounts, with the level of fees depending on the course subject. The increased fees presented a dramatic cost to Irish students considering a university course in the UK and may have caused students to reconsider this option when they are faced with fees of almost €4,500 per year.

Table 25 shows the numbers of students from the Republic of Ireland accepting places on courses in UK higher education institutions between 2002 and 2006 by discipline.

**Table 25: UCAS Accepted Applicants Domiciled from Republic of Ireland
by Subject Group 2002 - 2006**

Subject group	Year of entry									
	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Group B Subjects allied to Medicine	488	20.4	562	19.6	631	18.6	668	21	609	22.8
Group H Engineering	256	10.7	323	11.2	450	13.3	395	12.4	339	12.7
Group W Creative Arts & Design	208	8.7	254	8.8	335	9.9	329	10.4	266	9.9
Group C Biological Sciences	187	7.8	226	7.9	272	8	261	8.2	222	8.3
Group K Architecture, Build & Plan	170	7.1	265	9.2	307	9.1	273	8.6	217	8.1
Group N Business & Admin studies	170	7.1	214	7.4	241	7.1	231	7.3	177	6.6
Y Sciences combined with social sciences or arts	98	4.1	125	4.3	139	4.1	136	4.3	104	3.9
Group A Medicine & Dentistry	32	1.3	48	1.7	67	2	74	2.3	95	3.6
Group X Education	80	3.3	80	2.8	110	3.3	108	3.4	78	2.9
Group P Mass Comms and Documentation	46	1.9	47	1.6	73	2.2	69	2.2	77	2.9
Group D Vet Sci, Ag & related	100	4.2	77	2.7	83	2.5	79	2.5	76	2.8
Group F Physical Sciences	59	2.5	72	2.5	75	2.2	68	2.1	60	2.2
Group L Social Studies	47	2	71	2.5	86	2.5	78	2.5	56	2.1
Y Combined arts	73	3.1	80	2.8	73	2.2	87	2.7	52	1.9
Group G Mathematical & Comp Sci	65	2.7	68	2.4	81	2.4	53	1.7	41	1.5
Y Combined sciences	63	2.6	72	2.5	57	1.7	53	1.7	41	1.5
Y Social sciences combined with arts	40	1.7	47	1.6	50	1.5	50	1.6	37	1.4
Group Q Linguistics, Classics & related	23	1	22	0.8	31	0.9	36	1.1	31	1.2
Group M Law	35	1.5	39	1.4	76	2.2	36	1.1	27	1
Group V Hist & Philosophical studies	31	1.3	37	1.3	31	0.9	30	0.9	22	0.8
Group J Technologies	27	1.1	29	1	20	0.6	28	0.9	18	0.7
Y Combined social sciences	23	1	33	1.1	17	0.5	7	0.2	13	0.5
Z General, other combined & unknown	57	2.4	72	2.5	66	2	15	0.5	11	0.4
Group R European Langs, Lit & related	5	0.2	6	0.2	8	0.2	9	0.3	5	0.2
Group T Non-European Langs and related	7	0.3	5	0.2	5	0.1	4	0.1	1	0
Total	2390	100	2874	100	3384	100	3177	100	2675	100

Source CAO

- Acceptances of places in UK higher education institutions by Republic of Ireland students declined 16% between 2005 and 2006 from 3,177 to 2,675. A decline of 6% was experienced between 2004 and 2005.
- Subjects allied to Medicine attracted the highest number of acceptances in 2006 with 22.8% of all acceptances. These subjects include the therapies, Nursing and Pharmacy. Places available for all of these courses with the exception of Nursing were almost all filled in the 500-600 points range in 2006 in Republic of Ireland higher education institutions.

- In 2006, 63% of all acceptances were in the Technology and Medically related disciplines. This increased from 60% in 2005 and 58% in 2002.
- The proportion of students accepting Medicine and Dentistry increased from 1.3% in 2002 to 3.6% in 2006. The actual number of acceptances trebled. Interestingly in a period when the overall acceptances to courses in the UK declined the number of acceptances on Medicine and Dentistry courses increased from 74 in 2005 to 95 in 2006. During this time period the number of places offered on Medicine courses in ROI would also have increased. This indicates continuing high demand for these places.
- In 2006 the number of students accepting Architecture, Building and Planning places declined from 273 in 2005 to 217. This may be due to the increase in the number of places offered in ROI institutions in 2006.
- Acceptances on all other disciplines have remained relatively stable or declined in the time period.

Section 7 Key Points

- 2006 saw a decline of 16% in the number of Republic of Ireland domiciled students accepting places in Higher Education institutions in the UK
- The proportion of Republic of Ireland students accepting places on Science related courses in UK higher education institutions increased from 2002 to 2005. However, a 16% decline was experienced in 2006
- The numbers accepting Medicine and Dentistry places increased from 74 in 2005 to 95 in 2006 an increase in proportion of 1.3 percentage points
- Acceptances of Engineering courses declined in absolute number to 339 in 2006 from 395 in 2005. As a proportion however there was an increase

$$\frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{3} (y + A)^{13} + 3a(y + G)^2 +$$

Section 8

Social Class

Improving the performance of under-represented socio-economic groups offers the potential of increasing high-point degree acceptors. "Who Went to College in 2004? A National Survey of New Entrants to Higher Education" (HEA, March 2006) investigates Leaving Certificate performance by social background of students who went on to third level education. Table 26 outlines the percentage of school leavers who achieved a Leaving Certificate, and of those who achieved a Leaving Certificate, the proportions achieving 2-4 Honours and 5+ honours by father's socio-economic group.

Table 26: % Distribution of School Leavers by Educational Level, Achievement and Fathers Socio Economic Group 2002/04 Surveys

% achieving Leaving Certificate	Fathers Socio-Economic Group	Of those who sat Leaving Certificate	
		% 2-4 Honours	% 5+ Honours
89.8	Higher Professional	27.5	41.7
88.6	Lower Professional	31	36.5
85.5	Other non-manual	37.5	23.1
79.5	Skilled Manual	37.7	16.8
77	Semi- & Unskilled Manual	27.8	15.2
60.3	Unknown Class	28.5	14.5
81.3		32.0	26.0

Source: "Who Went to College in 2004? A National Survey of New Entrants to Higher Education", O'Connell, P., Clancy, D. and McCoy, S., HEA, March 2006.

The table shows that those from a higher socio-economic background are more likely to obtain a Leaving Certificate. Almost 90% of students whose fathers are Higher Professionals obtained a Leaving Certificate compared to 77% from the semi and unskilled manual group.

It is also evident that high levels of educational attainment (i.e. at least 5 honours) are positively correlated to the individual's paternal socio-economic groups. 41.7% and 36.5% of those from a Higher Professional and Lower Professional background achieve this level as opposed to 15.2% from Semi- and Unskilled Manual backgrounds.

It is clear from this table that the high performing students under discussion in this document are therefore drawn disproportionately from the higher socio-economic groups. Courses and professions e.g. the Healthcare professions or Legal profession, recruit only from the best performing students who achieve high points in the Leaving Certificate and therefore recruit disproportionately from the higher socio-economic backgrounds. The Clancy/Wall surveys reveal the Medical faculties as having 62.5% of their intake in 1998 from the two socio-economic groups

Employers and Managers/Higher professional. This is the highest such intake for any discipline area.

The 2004 Annual School Leavers' Survey examines the participation rates in post second level education and training according to the result of their last second level exam. Post second level education and training refers to participation in any form of education or training subsequent to leaving second level. This would include PLC courses, FÁS and CERT courses and third level courses. The survey reveals that the participation rate in post second level courses increases to 92% for those who have achieved four or more honours in their Leaving Certificate.

"Who Went to College in 2004?" also examined the entry rates to higher education (in the Republic of Ireland) by level of achievement in the Leaving Certificate. Table 27 outlines the entry rates for those with 2 - 4 honours (two honours are required for Degree entry) and those with at least 5 honours.

Table 27: % of School Leavers with Leaving Certificate who Enrolled in Higher Education by Level of Attainment and Fathers' Socio-Economic Group, 2002 & 2004 Surveys

Fathers Socio-Economic Group	% 2-4 Honours	% 5+ Honours
Higher Professional	60.3	95.8
Lower Professional	63.1	94
Other non-manual	61	88.4
Skilled Manual	65.5	90
Semi- & Unskilled Manual	67	91.8
Unknown Class	41.4	*
Total	63.1	91.4

* small numbers

Source: "Who Went to College in 2004? A National Survey of New Entrants to Higher Education", O'Connell, P., Clancy, D. and McCoy, S., HEA, March 2006.

The entry rates continue to show that if barriers to academic achievement at school can be overcome so too could the academic barriers to higher education experienced by those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. As the report itself says "for those with higher Leaving Certificate results (5 or more 'honours') social class differentials are small".

The probability of high ability young people fulfilling their potential in the form of high-level Leaving Certificate results and higher rates of entry to third level varies strongly with socio-economic background.

Section 8 Key Points

- Almost 90% of students whose fathers are Higher Professionals obtained a Leaving Certificate compared to 77% from the semi and unskilled manual group
- High performing students are drawn disproportionately from the higher socio-economic groups
- Medical faculties had 62.5% of their intake in 1998 from the two socio-economic groups Employers and Managers/Higher professional

$$\frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+A)^3} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+A)^2} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+A)} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+A)^2} + \frac{3}{9} \frac{1}{(y+A)^3}$$

Summary of Key Points

SECTION 1: KEY POINTS

- In 2006, the proportion of females scoring 550-600 points in their Leaving Certificate increased. Males in contrast remained the same as in 2005
- Overall 61.5% of females received 450+ points in their Leaving Certificate in 2006
- A very high proportion of high-point applicants accept places in Republic of Ireland higher education institutions
- Female acceptors of Level 8 honours bachelor degree courses in 2006 constituted 58.5% of all acceptors while females constituted 61.4% of high-point acceptors
- The majority of high-point acceptors, 80.9%, accepted places in universities in 2006 and 10.6% accepted places in Teacher Training colleges

SECTION 2: KEY POINTS

- Medical and Related courses strongly affect the 550+ points range with 49.3% of 550+ point accepting places on these courses in 2006
- The proportion of 450+ point Medical and related course acceptors has increased from 8.7% in 1998 to 17.1% in 2006 due largely to the introduction of Nursing in 2003. However the proportion has increased from 10.9% in 2003
- The proportion of 450+ point acceptors accepting Technology course has declined from 32.4% in 1998 to 19.2% in 2006 this is due in the most part to the decline in interest in Computing courses
- Technology attracted a quarter, 2,186, of high point acceptors in 2006

SECTION 3: KEY POINTS

- In absolute numbers there are more 500-545 point acceptors of Technology courses in 2006 than there were in 1998
- The decline in high-point Computing acceptors from 2000 to 2006; 5.8% to 0.8% is a worrying development
- Architecture high-point acceptors increased in 2006 due to increased place provision

SECTION 4: KEY POINTS

- Medical and related courses constituted 17.1% of all 450+ point acceptances in 2006 and 49.5% of all 550+ point acceptors, up from 42% in 2003
- Over 90% of Medicine, Veterinary and Dentistry places were accepted by students gaining 550+ points in 2006
- 74.5% of all Medical and Related high point acceptors were female in 2006 up from 72.0% in 2003

SECTION 5: KEY POINTS

- 42% of Business and Law acceptors in 2006 had 450+ points
- The majority of Finance and Accounting and Law acceptances were in the point range 500-600 in 2006
- Females are more likely than males to accept General Business and Commerce courses with a language associated

SECTION 6: KEY POINTS

- 61.4% of high-point acceptors were female in 2006
- Over 75% of high-point acceptances to medically related disciplines and over 80% to Education courses were female in 2006. Male high-point acceptors formed the highest majority (78.7% and 81.1%) of Engineering and Construction courses
- The proportion of females accepting places at 550+ points range increased from 61.4% in 1998 to 65.0% in 2006
- Males are more likely to repeat than females to achieve the desired points (11.0% vs. 8.0%)

SECTION 7: KEY POINTS

- 2006 saw a decline of 6% in the number of Republic of Ireland domiciled students accepting places in Higher Education institutions in the UK
- The proportion of Republic of Ireland students accepting places on Science related courses in UK higher education institutions increased from 2002 to 2005. However, a 16% decline was experienced in 2006
- The numbers accepting Medicine and Dentistry places increased from 74 in 2005 to 95 in 2006 an increase in proportion of 1.3 percentage points
- Acceptances of Engineering courses declined in absolute number to 339 in 2006 from 395 in 2005. As a proportion however there was an increase

SECTION 8: KEY POINTS

- Almost 90% of students whose fathers are Higher Professionals obtained a Leaving Certificate compared to 77% from the semi and unskilled manual group
- High performing students are drawn disproportionately from the higher socio-economic groups
- Medical faculties had 62.5% of their intake in 1998 from the two socio-economic groups Employers and Managers/Higher professional

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