

# HPAT Changes From 2027

Understanding the New Medical Entry Requirements for Irish Universities

**EFFECTIVE FROM 2027 | ALL IRISH UNIVERSITIES**

## Introduction

Irish Universities with Medical Schools are modifying the calculation of points for admission to undergraduate medicine programmes. These important changes will come into effect for students seeking admission from August/September 2027.

# What's Changing?

## 1. HPAT Scoring Reduced

The maximum HPAT score will be reduced from 300 points to 150 points. While HPAT remains an essential component of medical school selection, it will carry less weight in the overall calculation.

## 2. Full Leaving Certificate Points Count

Under the current system, Leaving Certificate points above 550 are moderated (adjusted down at a 5:1 ratio). From 2027, this moderation will be removed. All Leaving Certificate points earned will count toward your total, up to the maximum of 625 points.

## 3. New Maximum Total

The combined maximum will be 775 points (625 from Leaving Certificate + 150 from HPAT), compared to the current maximum of 865 points (565 adjusted LC + 300 HPAT).

**IMPORTANT TIMELINE:** These changes apply to students entering medicine from 2027 onwards. If you're sitting your Leaving Certificate in 2025 or 2026, the current system still applies to you.

# Comparison: Current vs New System

Component	Current System (2025-2026)	New System (2027+)
HPAT Maximum	300 points	150 points
Leaving Certificate Maximum	565 points (adjusted)	625 points (full)
LC Points Above 550	Adjusted (5:1 ratio)	No adjustment
Combined Maximum	865 points	775 points
Minimum LC Requirement	480 points	480 points (unchanged)
HPAT in Application Year	Yes - Required	Yes - Required (unchanged)

**KEY INSIGHT:** The new system places greater emphasis on academic achievement (Leaving Certificate) while still requiring strong HPAT performance. Most successful applicants will need to achieve 80th percentile or higher in HPAT alongside excellent Leaving Certificate results.

# Universities Affected

These changes apply to all Irish and EU students seeking undergraduate medicine entry at the following universities:

- University of Galway
- University of Limerick
- Trinity College Dublin
- University College Cork (UCC)
- University College Dublin (UCD)
- RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences

**Competition Facts:** Approximately 3,000 students take HPAT annually, but only around 500-600 undergraduate medical places are available across all Irish universities. By 2026, over 200 extra places will have become available compared to 2022.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Q1: I'm sitting my Leaving Certificate in 2025 or 2026 – does this affect me?

No, these changes will not affect you. The existing system for calculating points (Leaving Cert plus HPAT) will remain unchanged until 2027. Make sure you're aware of school-specific eligibility requirements for medicine programmes on the CAO website.

## Q2: Why are these changes being introduced?

The changes are being introduced due to the significant increase in medical places since 2022 (over 200 extra places by 2026), the revised Leaving Certificate grading scale in 2017, and the establishment of multiple entry pathways including HEAR, DARE, and mature student routes that didn't exist when HPAT was introduced in 2009.

## Q3: Will HPAT still matter after these changes?

Absolutely. Despite the reduced weighting, HPAT remains vital for medical school selection. With approximately 3,000 students taking HPAT annually but only around 500-600 undergraduate medical places available, competition is fierce. Most successful applicants will need to achieve 80th percentile or higher in HPAT alongside strong Leaving Certificate performance.

## Q4: What is HPAT and what does it assess?

The Health Professions Admission Test (HPAT) is a complementary assessment to the Leaving Certificate. It assesses three key areas: logical reasoning and problem solving, interpersonal understanding, and non-verbal reasoning. It's designed specifically for selection to healthcare professional programmes and is used internationally.

## Q5: Why are Leaving Certificate points no longer being moderated from 2027?

The removal of points moderation brings Irish medical schools in line with international practice. Moderation is not commonly applied for other health programmes nationally or internationally. The

2017 Leaving Certificate common points scale also provides a broader, more granular range of scores compared to when HPAT was introduced.

### **Q6: Why do we still need HPAT at all?**

International best practice for medical school admission combines final school exam results with an additional tailored assessment. HPAT is specifically designed for healthcare professional programmes and follows this international norm. Relying solely on Leaving Certificate results would move Ireland away from this evidence-based approach.

### **Q7: What if I want to apply to medicine in 2027 – what do I need to know?**

You'll still need both Leaving Certificate and HPAT results. The maximum combined points will be 775 (625 from LC + 150 from HPAT). Leaving Certificate points above 550 will count in full. You must take HPAT in the year of your CAO application, meet minimum entry requirements, and achieve at least 480 points in your Leaving Certificate.

### **Q8: Won't this increase pressure on Leaving Certificate results?**

The changes refocus on Leaving Certificate achievement, which has proven to be a stronger predictor of student completion than HPAT. The ongoing expansion in medical places, changes to the grading system, and the planned unwinding of the Covid-era post-marking adjustment from 2025 all support these changes for 2027.

## Additional Resources

For the most up-to-date information about medical school entry requirements, please visit:

- Central Applications Office (CAO): [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)
- Irish Universities Association: [www.iua.ie](http://www.iua.ie)
- HPAT-Ireland: [hpat-ireland.acer.org](http://hpat-ireland.acer.org)

*This document provides general information about HPAT changes from 2027. Always refer to official university and CAO websites for the most current admission requirements.*