**Leaving Certificate Upgrade** (Department of Education, 17/10/13)

The current position is that where a student receives an upgrade of their Leaving Certificate results, they can immediately change, where possible, to their higher course choice. However, there have been cases where this has not been possible and students have been allowed to continue on their lower course choice and transfer to year 1 of their higher course choice the following year.  This has resulted in requests for clarification as to the circumstances under which such students can qualify for free fees under the Free Fees initiative, which generally prohibits free fees where a student repeats year 1.

The position is that free fees are allowable where a student repeats year 1 in the following circumstances:

 (a) In their “repeat year” the student must commence the course of study in the chosen institution which they had originally applied for on their CAO application but where they did not receive sufficient points from their initial Leaving Certificate results.   The Institution must obtain written confirmation of this (from the CAO)

**And**

(b) The student cannot be accommodated by the institution on their higher choice of study in year 1 as all places have been filled and they are granted a deferral so that they can commence on their higher choice of study the following year.

**Or**

(c) The institution has a place for the student on their higher course of study but due to commencement of the course in September, together with intensive course content, the Institution confirms that it would be unfeasible for the student to make up the study time lost and a deferral is granted for one year.

If following a Leaving Certificate recheck and upgrade, an Institution can accommodate a student on their higher choice of study (and (c) above does not apply) but the student seeks to defer this option, the student must be advised by the institution that he/she will not be eligible for free fees for year 1 of their higher choice should they take up their higher choice of course the following year.