

February 2023

Senior Cycle 2024 - 2025

Subject Choice Information Booklet

"If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself." Henry Ford



"Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe." Abraham Lincoln.

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Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to provide students and parents / guardians with the necessary information to choose the subjects for the Leaving Certificate.

STUDENTS SHOULD READ THIS BOOKLET FULLY! We pride ourselves here in Coláiste Chú Chulainn on our commitment to success. Subject choices are crucial to this success. This booklet will explain the process involved in making subject choices in Coláiste Chú Chulainn and will provide detailed information on each subject available in the school, both compulsory and optional.

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Career Guidance Counsellors

Subject Choice Process in Coláiste Chú Chulainn

Students study seven subjects for the Leaving Certificate. In 4th year students will study eight subjects. English, Mathematics and Irish (unless in possession of an official Certificate of Exemption) are compulsory. The remaining subjects on offer are organised into blocks based on pupil preferences.

Much work goes into the development of these blocks in order to best suit the requirements of the pupils. In order to derive maximum benefit from the process it is important that pupils give some thought to their strengths, abilities and where known, future career and university aspirations in advance of making their subject choices.

Students can receive a one to one appointment with their Guidance Counsellor. This meeting takes place after the Junior Certificate Mock Examinations. Parents are welcome to attend.

Parents and students will also be invited to attend a Subject and Programme Information Evening that will give detailed information on the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), 4th Year and Subject Choice specific information. In addition to the seven main subject groupings, pupils will also benefit from compulsory classes in ICT, PE and Career Guidance.

Based on these initial preferences the available subjects are then organised into blocks. These blocks are arranged to best meet the preferences of the majority of pupils.

Factors to Consider When Choosing Your Leaving Cert Subjects

Third Language

Most students will study a European language. A third language is required for entry to National University of Ireland (NUI) colleges (University College Dublin, Maynooth University, University College Cork, National University of Ireland Galway and for a range of associated constituent colleges, all of which are listed on the NUI website) for most degree programmes in Arts, Human Sciences, Law, Social Science, Commerce, Medicine and Health Sciences and some other degrees. If you want to keep all your options open choose a modern foreign language.

Science Subjects

Choosing a subject in the field of science is also a popular choice. Having a laboratory science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) is a requirement for some courses so it is good to be aware of these. Most courses in healthcare professions require a science subject e.g. nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy. Additionally some medical courses require two science subjects such as Dentistry and Medicine.

Chemistry is a required subject for Pharmacy in the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland and University College Cork. Trinity also requires Chemistry but will accept Physics/Chemistry as an alternative. Veterinary Science (UCD), Dentistry (UCC), Medicine (UCC), Medical and Health Sciences (UCC), Human Nutrition and Dietetics (Technological University Dublin) all require Chemistry. Some engineering courses require a science subject.

Optional Subjects in Coláiste Chú Chulainn dependent on demand and feasibility.

Students will take 5 option subjects in 4th Year:

Accounting	German
Applied Math	History
Art	Home Economics
Biology	Music
Business Studies	Physical Education
Chemistry	Physics
Construction	Politics & Society
Design & Communication Graphics	Spanish
Economics	
Engineering	
French	
Geography	

Only option subjects deemed feasible with adequate student numbers will run.

Student will receive a subject choice form and must number their preferences from 1 to 8, (1 being the subject you want to do most and working your way down). It is important that you go all the way to 8 as we may not be in a position to offer you all of your first 5 choices.

Parents will be directed on how to help their student complete the options form (including reserve subjects) during an information session which will take place in school with our Guidance Team and Programme Co-ordinator **at 6pm on Tuesday 6th February 2024. It is imperative that all 3rd year parents attend this session to enable them to help their student make informed Senior Cycle choices for next academic year.** A register will be taken.

The deadline for submission of the Senior Cycle online option form is **3.50pm Monday 26th February 2024.** Late submissions will not be considered.

Additional Programmes / Subjects

Students may also be invited to enrol as part of the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP.) Some students may prefer to follow the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCAP.) The programme co-ordinator will provide further information on these programmes to those students interested.

Core Subjects Overview

Core Subject: Irish (Unless DES Exemption in place)

Course Overview

It is important to consider that Higher Level Irish is a requirement to qualify as a primary teacher in Ireland. Employment in An Garda Síochána and many public service and civil service posts requires a qualification in Irish.

Students at Leaving Cert are introduced to Irish Literature and culture. The Leaving Cert exam takes the form of three parts: oral, aural (listening skills) and written examinations. Recent revisions to the syllabus mean that there is now a greater emphasis on the spoken word and trying to be more fluent in our native tongue.

Exam Structure

Irish is assessed at three levels: Higher, Ordinary or Foundation Level.

The learner's oral competency is assessed in an oral examination worth 40%, at each level, of the overall mark. The other three skills are assessed in June.

Aspects of literary works must be studied at Ordinary Level, while at Higher Level these same works and additional material must be studied in greater detail.

Core Subject: English

Course Overview:

English is a core subject and is compulsory. The exams at both higher and ordinary level require students to sit two papers.

Language

Students study the following five designated areas of language in a wide variety of contexts, functions and styles.

1. The Language of Information.
2. The Language of Argument.
3. The Language of Persuasion.

The course starts with practical and familiar problems, and gradually introduces more abstract ideas, leading towards the use of academic mathematics in the context of further study.

Tip: It is useful to be aware of the range of college courses that accept /do not accept Foundation Level Maths, and the impact for both CAO Points and College entry. From 2017, CAO points will be allocated by certain colleges and institutions only - universities will not award points for Foundation Maths, but most will accept it as meeting the entry requirement. A Grade F1 will be awarded 20 Points and Grade F2 is worth 12 Points. Other restrictions may apply - for example, the Defence Forces do not accept Foundation Maths for Cadetships in the Army, Air Corps or Navy.

Project Maths divides the course into five 'strands' of maths which are studied at all levels, and in greater depth at higher levels:

- **Statistics and Probability** aims to provide an understanding of what probability is and why concepts such as variation and uncertainty are important. Students will also learn how to analyse statistics such as those in newspapers, business reports, and scientific data, so that they can draw meaningful and relevant conclusions.
- **Geometry and Trigonometry** deals with shapes such as circles and triangles, both on the coordinate plane and otherwise. The skills developed here are useful in areas such as architecture, landscape design, and agriculture, as well as visual design and spatial reasoning.
- **Number Learners** continue to make meaning of the operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of whole and rational numbers and extend this sense-making to complex numbers.
- **Algebra** builds on the relations-based approach of junior cycle, which has five main objectives:
 - to make use of letter symbols for numeric quantities
 - to emphasise relationship based algebra
 - to connect graphical and symbolic representations of algebraic concepts
 - to use real life problems as vehicles to motivate the use of algebra and algebraic thinking
 - to use appropriate graphing technologies (graphing calculators, computer software) throughout the strand activities.

Exam Structure

At Higher and Ordinary level there are two assessment components:

- Mathematics Paper 1
- Mathematics Paper 2

Each paper will contain two sections; A and B:

- Section A will address core mathematics topics, with a focus on concepts and skills.
- Section B will include questions that are context based applications of mathematics.

At Foundation level there is one assessment component, a written paper. Learners will be assessed by means of problems set in meaningful contexts.

Option Subjects

Accounting

Course Overview

Accounting is a business studies option within the Leaving Certificate programme. It covers aspects of business and social life which are not dealt with in any other subject in that programme. It is concerned with the preparation, recording, extraction, presentation and analysis of financial information for the purpose of making economic decisions.

The course also involves a Management Accounting section where the student will learn how to analyse business costs and how to prepare budgets.

This business subject teaches the skills and knowledge needed to understand how business works. Accountancy has the highest percentage of A grades among the Leaving Cert business subjects and one of the highest among all Leaving Cert subjects. The syllabus will help you:

- To contribute to a balanced and appropriate general education, leading to the personal and social development of each student together with a fostering of the concept of accountability
- To create awareness of the business environment and to provide each student with the knowledge, understanding and skills leading to a personal competence and responsible participation in this changing and challenging environment.
- To encourage the development of self-reliance, mental organisation and agility, clear and logical thinking, planning habits, methods of investigation and processes whereby accuracy can be ensured
- To enhance numeracy skills and promote awareness of the use of figures computations and statistics in the world of business and enterprise
- To expose students to aspects of business and enterprise with a view to career and working life, additional studies in accounting or as a basis for further education.

Course Content

Topics covered include:

Financial Statements Preparation, Farm Accounts, Club Accounts, Company Accounts, Manufacturing Accounts, Financial Statements Analysis and Interpretation, Budgeting, Break-even Analysis, Cost Classification, Accounting Theory and Principles.

Exam Structure

The subject is examined at higher and ordinary level. Both levels involve one exam of three hours duration. The exam paper is made up of three sections, the first two are based on the Financial Accounting section of the course and the third covers the Management Accounting section. Questions must be answered from all sections of the exam paper.

Applied Mathematics

Course Outline

Applied mathematics is the use of the language of mathematics to study and solve real-world problems. It is multi-disciplinary in nature; applied mathematicians collaborate with colleagues in many disciplines using quantitative techniques and high-performance computing to shed light on complex problems in their field.

How does a social networking platform calculate who it should show as a suggested connection? Can we design our cities and our towns in such a way to minimise traffic problems? Or can we use maths to compute the Earth's orbit around the sun? All of these questions and more are tackled in applied maths.

Mathematical modelling is fundamental. Mathematical modelling is the process through which applied mathematicians use mathematics to represent, analyse, make predictions and provide insight into real-world phenomena. Used in a variety of scientific disciplines such as theoretical physics, bioinformatics, robotics, image processing, chemistry, economics, engineering, and finance, models are abstractions of reality that respect reality. These abstractions can lead to scientific advances, be the foundation for new discoveries, and help leaders make informed decisions.

Course Content

There are three main strands:

1. Mathematical modelling with networks and graphs.
2. Mathematical modelling of the physical world.
3. Mathematical modelling a changing world.

Exam Structure

Applied Mathematics consists of a project and a written exam worth 20% and 80% respectively.

The modelling project assessment will require students to demonstrate proficiency in course content and skills that cannot be easily assessed by the written examination. The assessment will require students to present a solution to an authentic modelling problem, and to report on the work and process involved. The written examination will consist of a range of question types. The questions will require students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding, and an ability to apply, analyse and evaluate appropriate to each level.

Applied Maths has undergone an exciting transformation with the syllabus being redesigned and modernised in recent years, equipping students with the tools to tackle the problems of the modern world.

Art

Course Overview

The Leaving Certificate Art syllabus is a broadly based course, which is made up of four units. These units link together and are based on the everyday visual experience of the student's own environment.

Note: that the Leaving Cert Art course has nothing to do with the portfolio submissions which art and design colleges often require. The course does not aim to build a portfolio. All marks are given for work done on the day. However, it is common to take Art while preparing a portfolio, and much of the practice work done in class can be included .

Art is examined in three ways:

1. Still Life and Imaginative Composition Coursework —completed between Feb — April of 6th year. This is worth 50% of marks
2. Life Drawing — examined in May, worth 12.5%
3. History of Art and Appreciation — examined in June, worth 37.5%

Course Content

All students, both Ordinary and Higher level, follow a common course. The practical work can include Life Sketching, Still Life, Imaginative Composition, Design and Craftwork.

The History of Art and Appreciation is a broad course covering Irish and European Art, and also Art Appreciation. It requires looking at artworks through the use of reproductions, slides and art galleries, reading books and writing essays on different subjects.

Exam Structure

The exam structure is the same at higher and ordinary level

Candidates will be required to answer all four papers:

- a) Imaginative Composition or Still Life - 100 marks
- b) Design or Craftwork - 100 marks
- c) Life Sketching - 50 marks
- d) History and Appreciation of Art - 150 marks

Biology

Course Overview

Biology remains one of the most popular subject choices. The syllabus requires a lot of memory work. If your chosen subject is Biology you will gain an understanding of yourself and the natural world in which you live. The course uses practical activity and investigation to develop your skills and knowledge. The scope of biology is wide and varied and covers not only the traditional study of plants and animals but also areas such as molecular biology and biotechnology which have clear relevance to modern society

Course Content

The syllabus consists of approximately 70% biological knowledge, understanding and skills; the remaining 30% deals with the technological, political, social and economic aspects of biology.

The syllabus introduced in 2002 has been developed in response to current knowledge and application of biology. Account has been taken of the need to include contemporary biological technologies such as DNA profiling and genetic screening. It aims to create in students an awareness of the application of biological knowledge to modern society and to develop an ability to make informed evaluations about contemporary biological issues.

The course covers a wide range of topics, including cell structure and diversity, metabolism, genetics and human and flowering plant anatomy and physiology. The general principles of ecology are studied, and one particular ecosystem is examined in detail. An ecology field trip is arranged in the 5th Year. Particular emphasis is placed on the practical aspects of biology, and there are a number of mandatory activities that each student must carry out for themselves.

The course is divided into three units:

Unit 1 The study of life (ecology and food science)

Unit 2 The Cell (Genetics, photosynthesis, respiration and enzymes)

Unit 3 The organism (a study of body systems, plant biology and microbiology)

There are 22 mandatory practical activities. Three of these are examined each year, two of which have to be answered. A laboratory record of these activities has to be kept and available for inspection by The Department of Education. An ecology portfolio must also be completed. As of yet, no marks are awarded for the laboratory notebook or the portfolio. There is a strong emphasis on social and applied aspects e.g. when studying the breathing system a breathing disorder is studied.

Biology is often perceived as an easier subject than physics or chemistry but this is not so. There are high failure rates at ordinary level.

Exam Structure

The examination at higher and ordinary level is three hours duration. The exam paper is divided into three units.

Section A- Six short questions (answer five) 100 marks.

Section B - Three questions on practical activities (answer two) 60 marks.

Section C - Six long questions (answer four) 240 marks.

Business

Course Overview

This subject teaches the skills and knowledge needed to understand how business works.

This is a practical course that introduces students to the world of business in a straightforward and logical way. It aims to create an awareness of the importance of business activity and to develop a positive and ethical attitude towards it. The importance of people in business is highlighted.

The course sets out to illustrate the process of setting up a business and developing a new product or service. It emphasises the importance of good management and deals with skills and activities necessary for good management practice. It also deals with the impact of technology, foreign trade, global firms and competition and with business structures and the national economy.

Business requires students to stay alert and to be aware of current related business media (e.g. newspapers, TV, radio). The course is theory based and therefore requires a lot of learning. Leaving cert business has been on offer for many years now, so there are lots of past papers to help the student when revising.

Course Content

- This subject is concerned with understanding the environment in which business operates in Ireland and in the wider world.
- It also involves equipping the students with a positive view of enterprise and its applications in the business environment, in both the public and private sectors.
- There are 7 core units covering the following topics: Introduction to people in business; Enterprise; Managing 1 & 2; Business in action; Domestic Environment and International Environment.
- A flexibility of design that caters for present day Irish business education and yet is capable of adaptation to future developments in a structured and efficient way.
- It assists students to develop their education for adult and working life including the creation of positive attitudes towards self-employment.
- From time to time there may be field trips or guest speakers where the course allows. These are not a compulsory part of the course and are organised at the teachers' discretion.

Exam Structure

Higher & Ordinary Level

3 hour paper (400 marks); 3 sections.

Section 1: Short questions: 80marks or 20%

Section 2: Applied Business Question: 80 marks or 20%

Section 3: Long Questions: 60% / 60 marks per question answer 4 questions from 7

Chemistry

Course Overview

The subject aims to provide a relevant course for students who will complete their study of chemistry at this level while, at the same time, providing a foundation course for those who will continue to study chemistry or related subjects following completion of their Leaving Certificate.

The Leaving Cert. course follows on directly from Junior Cert Science, and deals with more topics in a lot more depth. The course includes 28 mandatory practical experiments which must be completed in the lab, as well as a written paper including questions on the experiments and examining the theory and applications of chemistry. There are an amount of calculations involved. Chemistry has been the second most popular science subject for some time now.

Course Content

The syllabus consists of approximately 70% pure chemistry; the remaining 30% deals with the social and applied aspects of chemistry.

The syllabus is comprised of all the essential and relevant topics within general chemistry. The major topics involved include the following:

1. Atomic structure
2. Volumetric analysis
3. Organic chemistry
4. Water chemistry
5. Reaction mechanisms.

There also is an option to be taken as part of the course which involves the study of atmospheric and industrial chemistry or the study of materials and electrochemistry.

Experimental investigations are an essential part of the leaving certificate course. Each Student must complete at least 28 experiments over the duration of the course. Experimental work is examined as part of the leaving cert exam and forms the basis for a minimum of three questions on the exam paper.

Exam Structure

The leaving cert exam is three hours in duration. Each candidate must answer at least two questions from Section A (experimental section) and a maximum of six questions from Section B.

There are eleven questions in total on the exam paper, each carrying 50 marks.

There is no element of continuous assessment but experimental copies must be available for inspection by the State Examinations Commission. Students taking chemistry have to memorize the chemical components of a series of prescribed experiments. They will need to present the elements of four such experiments in their exam.

Construction Studies

Course Overview

Construction Studies introduces students to the knowledge and skills associated with construction technology and construction materials and practices.

This is achieved through both theoretical study and integrated practical projects which provide a basis for the thorough exploration of materials and processes.

Course Content

The course is essentially about the study of buildings and the built environment. The theoretical part of the course examines all parts of building from the planning stages to the completed building. The course is studied under the following main headings:

- Planning and Design
- Drawings and Documents
- Site Preliminaries and Foundations

- Walls, Partitions
- Floors, Roofs
- Fireplaces
- Windows and Doors
- Stairs
- Plastering and Painting
- Plumbing and Heating
- Services Drainage

Exam Structure

- Construction studies is assessed at two levels, Ordinary level and Higher level
- There is a written examination, a practical test, and an assessment of student project work.

The examination at both higher and ordinary level has three separate components:

Section A: Three hour written paper worth 300 marks. The exam consists of 10 questions out of which five have to be attempted. Question 1 is a compulsory drawing question of a building detail.

Section B: 4-hour practical woodwork exam where the student makes a small item out of timber under exam conditions. The exam normally takes place in May. This accounts for 150 marks.

Section C: Building Project where the student makes a building detail, a scale model of a building or a craft piece. The student also produces a portfolio to accompany the project that they make. Ideally this project must be completed by Christmas. This accounts for 150 marks.

Design Construction Graphics (DCG)

Course Overview

Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) has taken the place of technical drawing for the Leaving Certificate and provides students with the opportunity for visualising and comprehending information presented verbally or graphically.

If you are interested in taking this subject to Leaving Certificate level, you will need to have taken Tech Graphics to Junior Certificate level.

There is a great emphasis in the Leaving Certificate course on comprehension, analysis and problem solving. In simple terms, you must be able to understand what has to be done, analyse how you are going to approach it and then proceed to solve the problem.

Although it is not an essential subject for either architecture or engineering, it is regarded as a useful asset if you are thinking of a technical course. The DCG course now has a project aspect.

Quick Facts

Design and Communication Graphics is assessed by means of two assessment components: a student assignment at 40%, of which Computer Aided Design (CAD) forms a significant and compulsory element, and an examination paper at 60%.

Course Content

The course is comprised of two parts; Core areas of study and Optional Areas of Study

Part One — Core Areas of Study

Plane and Descriptive Geometry

- Project Systems
- Plane Geometry
- Conic Sections
- Descriptive Geometry of Lines and Planes
- Intersection and Development of Surfaces

Communication of Design and Computer Graphics

- Graphics in Design and Communication
- Communication of Design
- Freehand Drawing
- Information and Communication Technologies

Part 2 — Optional Areas of Study

- You will be required to study two of the optional areas listed below.
- Applied Graphics
- Dynamic Mechanism
- Structural Forms
- Geological Geometry
- Surface Geometry
- Assemblies

Exam Structure

One Terminal Exam Paper: 3 hours duration. 60%.

3 hours duration.

Student Assignment 40% Emphasis on:

1. Elements of design
2. Communication graphics
3. Use of ICT'S in design

Different theme for higher and ordinary level May take the form of:

- A design investigation and modification
- A concept design

Economics

Aim

Leaving Certificate Economics aims to stimulate students' curiosity and interest in the economic environment and how they interact with it. It develops a set of skills, knowledge and values that enables students to understand the economics forces which affect their everyday lives, their society and their economy at local, national and global levels, making them more informed as decision-makers.

Strands of study

Strand 1: What is economics about?

- 1.1 Economics as a way of thinking
- 1.2 The economic concepts of scarcity and choice
- 1.3 Economic, social and environmental sustainability

Strand 2: How are economic decisions made?

- 2.1 The market economy
- 2.2 The consumer
- 2.3 The firm
- 2.4 Government intervention in the market

Strand 3: What can markets do?

- 3.1 Market structures
- 3.2 The labour market
- 3.3 Market failure

Strand 4: What is the relationship between policy and economic performance?

- 4.1 National income
- 4.2 Fiscal policy and the budget framework
- 4.3 Employment and unemployment
- 4.4 Monetary policy and the price level
- 4.5 Financial sector

Strand 5: How is the economy influenced by international economics?

- 5.1 Economic growth and development
- 5.2 Globalisation
- 5.3 International trade and competitiveness

Exam Structure

Economics is assessed at two levels, Ordinary level and Higher level, by means of two assessment components: a research study, and an examination paper. The written examination is worth 80% and the research study is worth 20%.

Engineering

Course Overview

Leaving Certificate engineering is the study of mechanical engineering for students in the senior cycle of post-primary education. Students develop the skills and initiative in the planning, development and realization of technological projects in a safe manner. Practical resourcefulness, creativity and design in the planning and development of technological projects are emphasised. There are two main areas of study: workshop processes, and materials and technology.

If you are interested in taking this subject to Leaving Certificate level, it is required to study Engineering at Junior Cycle level.

Course Content

The course is essentially about the study of buildings and the built environment. The theoretical part of the course examines all parts of building from the planning stages to the completed building. The course is studied under the following main headings:

- Health and Safety
- Benchwork
- Classification and Origin of Metals
- Heat Treatment of Metals
- Structure of Metals
- Iron and Steel
- Non-Ferrous Metals
- Plastics Processing
- Fabrication and Finishing of Metals
- Machining
- Metrology
- Technology

Exam Structure

- Engineering is assessed at two levels, Ordinary level and Higher level
- There is a written examination, a practical examination, and an assessment of student project work.

The examination at both higher and ordinary level has three separate components:

Section A: Three hour written exam worth 300 marks at HL and 200 marks at OL.

Section B: Six hour practical exam where the student makes a project under exam conditions. The exam normally takes place in sixth year, week one in May. This accounts for 150 marks.

Section C: Project where the student designs their own project based off a brief. The student also produces a portfolio to accompany the project that they make. The brief is given in September of 6th year and students will have until March to complete. This accounts for 150 marks.

French

Course Overview

French follows a common syllabus framework for the teaching and examining of modern languages in the Leaving Certificate. The syllabus aims to develop learners' communicative skills in French, to develop their strategies for effective language learning and raise their awareness of cultural, social and political diversity. Assessment is by means of a written examination, and an aural and oral examination at two levels, Ordinary level and Higher level.

Course Content

This syllabus aims to lead every pupil towards four basic outcomes as a result of the experience of modern language learning in the classroom:

- (a) a communicative competence in the target language
 - (b) awareness about language and communication
 - (c) an understanding of how to go about learning a foreign language
 - (d) a level of cultural awareness
1. To foster in learners such communicative skills in the target language as will enable them to:
 - a. take a full part in classroom activities conducted in the target language;
 - b. participate in normal, everyday transactions and interactions, both spoken and written, both at home and abroad;
 - c. extract information and derive enjoyment from the mass media and the more accessible literature of the target language community;
 - d. consider as a realistic option the possibility of pursuing leisure activities, further study and/or career opportunities through the medium of the target language.
 2. To give students a critical awareness of how meaning is organised and conveyed by the structures and vocabulary of the target language, and thus to contribute to their understanding of the workings of human language in general.
 3. To help learners develop strategies for effective language learning.
 4. To equip learners with a broad acquaintance with the cultural, social and political complexion of contexts in which the target language is a normal medium of communication and thus to help raise their awareness of cultural, social and political diversity generally.

Exam Structure

The examination will assess a candidate's ability to:

1. Understand the spoken language
2. Understand the written language

3. Communicate in the spoken language
4. Communicate in the written language

Mark Allocation for Leaving Certificate French:

Section	Higher Level	Ordinary Level
Speaking	25%	20%
Listening Comprehension	20%	25%
Reading Comprehension	30%	40%
Writing	25%	15%

Geography

Course Overview

Geography is a very popular subject choice. Up to 20% of the final grade is achieved before sitting the actual examination by completing a report on a geographical investigation - this is a great advantage for students.

Course Content

The syllabus is divided into 4 main units. All students study the Core Units 1-3 and Elective Unit 4:

Core Unit 1: Patterns and processes in the physical environment

This unit examines the relationship between the tectonic cycle, the rock cycle and the processes of landform development.

Core Unit 2: Regional geography

This unit examines how economic, human and physical processes interact in regional settings.

Core Unit 3: Geographical investigation and skills

This unit encourages the development of skills in handling spatial information leading to the completion of an individual geographical investigation.

Elective Unit 4: Patterns and processes in the economic environment

This unit examines patterns in economic development and the growth of a single interdependent global economy.

Higher Level

Students taking the Higher Level also study Optional Unit 6: Global Interdependence. This unit examines the interdependent nature of global economic, social and political processes and challenges the differing views of development.

Geographical skills

The teaching and application of skills is integrated into each of the units where appropriate.

- Map and aerial photograph interpretation
- Satellite imagery

- Data analysis and interpretation
- Census of population data
- Weather maps and data

Exam Structure

There are two assessment components:

1. Written Examination (80%)
2. Geographical Investigation Report (20%)

The teaching of geographical skills is an important element of the course; students are encouraged to improve their ability to gather information (from map-reading, statistics, charts), present information (using diagrams, maps, and writing), and evaluate information (separate fact from opinion, make informed judgements, propose sensible solutions to problems). These skills are assessed in the Geographical Investigation.

German

Course Overview

Leaving Certificate German aims:

- To introduce the students to German as a living and vibrant method of communication thus helping them to appreciate a culture other than their own.
- To enable the students to acquire the necessary communicative skills that will allow them to take full part in classroom activities in German, participate in everyday transactions and interactions, extract information from and to interpret the various mass media communications, make further study and or possible career paths through the medium of the German language a realistic option.
- To achieve the above aims the students must be facilitated to develop a critical awareness of how meaning is organised and conveyed by the structures and vocabulary of the German language and to develop an understanding of language in general.

The aim is to continue and develop the aspects and aims of the Junior Cycle Programme and to develop skills in the following four areas leading to proficiency in all areas of the German language:

Oral/speaking Written Aural/listening Reading

Course Content

Modern languages require students to be proficient in the following skills:

- Oral Proficiency in a range of personal, social, cultural and topical areas.
- Aural Proficiency The ability to listen to and answer questions on a wide variety of auditory stimuli.
- Comprehension Proficiency The students must be able to read, interpret, extract and manipulate texts ranging from literature to contemporary journalism and answer questions in the target language.

Assessment

There are two assessment components: a research study report (submitted prior to the examination) and a written examination.

Course Content

The Leaving Certificate History Syllabus gives teachers a choice of 4 topics which will be studied from a selection of 12 topics in modern Irish and modern European history. The topics are arranged in two discrete fields of study:

- Early Modern, 1492-1815
- Later Modern, 1815-1993

Students will study topics from one of the fields of study. Within each field of study, there are six topics from Irish history and six from the history of Europe and the wider world. Students will study two topics from Irish history and two from the history of Europe and the wider world from the selected field of study.

Two topics will be prescribed for documents-based study: one from the Early Modern field of study and one from the Later Modern field of study. Students will engage in a documents-based study of the prescribed topic from their selected field of study.

Research Study

Students undertake a Research Study which will take the form of a report to be submitted around Easter time before the Leaving Certificate exam in June. This Research Study can be about any aspect of history, in any period. The teacher will help and oversee this work but the choice of subject matter is that of the student. This part of the assessment carries 20% of the total marks.

Exam Structure

Assessment consists of two components: A written examination paper (80%) and A research study report (20%) submitted around Easter before the June exam.

The report must be the candidate's own work. Authentication procedures will be put in place to ensure compliance with this requirement. These will include a protocol in relation to the use of internet-sourced material.

Home Economics

Course Overview

The subject is an applied subject combining theory with practice. It is concerned with the management of resources (material and human) to meet the physical, emotional, intellectual, social and economic needs of individuals and families. The study of home economics emphasises the interdependent relationships that exist between individuals families and their immediate and distant environments.

Course Content

The syllabus consists of Core Areas and Three Electives:

The Core Areas

1. Food Studies - 45%
2. Resource Management and Consumer Studies - 25%
3. Social Studies - 10%

Electives

1. Home Design and Management - 20% or
2. Textiles, Fashion and Design - 20% or
3. Social Studies - 20%

Students opt for one elective area only. Those choosing the Textiles, Fashion and Design elective must produce a garment which will be inspected and graded.

The elective areas are extensions of the content contained in the Core Areas and provide students with the opportunity to study certain topics in more depth.

As part of the Core Areas, a mandatory section comprises of Practical Coursework which must be completed during the two years and will be sent to the Department of Education and Science for inspection. This is 20% of the final examination marks.

Exam Structure

The Leaving Certificate Home Economics (Social and Scientific) syllabus is examined as follows:

1. Written Exam paper – 80%

The written examination consists of three sections:

Section A

12 short questions – Students answer 10. These deal mainly with all the core areas of practice. (60 marks allocated)

Section B

5 questions - Students are to answer Question 1 (Food Science and Nutrition) and any other 2 questions (from the other Core Areas). (180 marks allocated)

Section C

3 questions - Students are to answer 1. Elective question, based on which Elective was chosen to do in class. (80 marks allocated)

Music

Course Overview

The Leaving Certificate Music syllabus provides continuity and progression from Junior Certificate Music. The general aims and overall shape of both is broadly similar. In providing the musical knowledge, understanding, practical competencies and attitudes appropriate to their age, abilities and interests, the syllabus caters for the varying needs of all students including those who wish to pursue further studies in music. You do not need music to progress into a music course in college but needless to say it would help

The syllabus structure has been adopted to provide a fully balanced musical experience central to which is the development of musicality. Studying music at Leaving Cert. provides a vital basis for further education in the area and if students are good at music they can gain valuable points in the Leaving Certificate.

Quick Facts

Performance: Examined in April of 6th year

Listening Paper: Examined in June of 6th year 90 minutes duration

Composition Paper: Examined in June of 6th year 90 minutes duration

Course Content

The course consists of three main components: (1) Composing (2) Listening (3) Performance
Ordinary level

Students will choose one of the three activities to represent 50 per cent, e.g.

- Performing 50% Composing 25% Listening 25% or...
- Performing 25% Composing 50% Listening 25% or...
- Performing 25% Composing 25% Listening 50%

Higher level

Students will undertake additional studies (a Higher level elective in one of the three activities, e.g.: Performing 25% Composing 25% Listening 25% + One Higher level elective 25%. This will allow students to gain up to 50 per cent of the total marks in the musical activity that best suits their talent.

Musical Performance:

As mentioned above you can choose to designate 50% of your assessment to musical performance. If you choose this option you have a few further options open to you:

Perform 6 pieces of music on one instrument

Or

You can be examined on two instruments. If you choose this option you are required to perform four pieces of music on each instrument.

Or

You can choose to perform four pieces of music (25%) and be examined in Music Technology (25%). Music Technology involves inputting music into a software package on the computer and being able to perform music edits on it, e.g. add dynamics or tempo markings, or transpose the music. If you are good on computers this could be a nice option for you.

Exam Structure

Listening Paper: Examined in June of 6th year. 90 minutes duration. Four set works, Irish music and general listening skills.

Composition Paper: Examined in June of 6th year. 90 minutes duration. Melody writing and harmony.

Performance: Examined in April of 6th year. Candidates may perform as a soloist or as part of a group or both.

Ordinary Level: 2 pieces on one instrument and one unprepared test.

Higher Level: 3 pieces on one Instrument and one unprepared test
OR 2 pieces on each of two instruments and one unprepared test

Electives for extra 25%: Higher Level only Each candidate must choose one of the above components to study for this extra credit. The majority tend to opt for a Performance elective.

Performance Elective: This involves a more substantial performance during the examination period in April of 6th year.

Listening Elective: The candidate must work on a music project over the course of 5th and 6th year. They must submit some work to the State Examinations Commission and sit an extra written paper in June.

Composition Elective: The candidate must undertake a large scale composition to be submitted to the Examinations Commission in their final year.

Physical Education (new subject for 2021 – 2022)

Course Overview

P.E. introduces students to the knowledge and skills and a deeper understanding of physical education. This is achieved through both theoretical study and non-examination-based assessment in practical skills and project centred work.

Course Content

P.E. is assessed in three separate areas, a written theory exam, practical skills and a physical activity profile.

Theory (50% weighting of final grade)

Students study a wide range of topics exploring various themes that impact on performance level and contemporary issues important in modern day sport.

- Learning and improving skill and technique
- Physical and psychological demands of performance
- Structures, strategies, roles and conventions
- Planning for optimum performance
- Ethics and fair play
- Promoting physical activity
- Technology, media and sport
- Physical activity and inclusion

Practical (30% weighting of final grade)

Students select three physical activities/sports, they will be assessed in each of these based on their level of skills, fitness and knowledge of the activity. It is essential that they compete in one of these activities at school or club level to maintain and improve performance and fitness levels.

Physical Activity Profile (PAP) (20% of final grade)

Students complete a physical activity profile analysing their performance in an activity, identifying strengths and weaknesses. They implement a training programme with performance goals giving written evidence of training and reflection.

Exam Structure

The written examination is assessed at Ordinary and Higher level. The non-examination assessment in the practical and PAP is assessed at Common level.

The written examination is 2 hours 30 minutes in length. It contains a combination of compulsory short answer questions, case study questions and essay type questions.

The PAP is a digital document and submitted for external assessment at the end of the course.

The practical activities are externally moderated in the 2nd year of study and assessed by the state exams commission.

This course provides a great bridge to sport-based courses at 3rd level education and allows students who have an interest in sport and physical activity to gain a deeper understanding and specialise in this area of study whilst at school

Physics

Course Overview

The Leaving Cert physics course follows directly from Junior Cert Science, and covers more topics in greater depth. Physics is often referred to as the maths side of science even though only a small proportion of the course is based on maths. Physics aims to enhance the student's ability to think logically, observe and understand scientific method

The course is heavily based around experiments - students are required to complete and write reports of 24 practical experiments throughout the two years of Senior Cycle, and be fully aware of:

- how to accurately record and analyse results
- how to minimise and accommodate for experimental errors.

These laboratory experiments, along with many more non-compulsory experiments are examined in detail on a section of the written exam paper.

Course Content

The Physics course also involves a lot of theory which is tested in the written examination. Students are expected to be able to use various formulae with respect to SI units and significant figures, and have a good understanding of the role of physics in modern society and technology.

The study of Physics for Leaving Certificate is broken down into eight sections or topics:

(a) Six compulsory sections (b) Two option sections (Higher paper only, one to be done)

Compulsory sections:

Optics / Waves: the study of light and sound and real life applications of the theory.

Mechanics: time, space, distance, speed and acceleration.

Heat: changes of state, energy conversions and mathematical problems.

Electricity: develops on from simple circuits to more detailed concepts.

Electricity and Magnetism: gravity, relationship between electricity and magnetism, study of how a motor works, ac. and dc. circuits and phenomena with real world applications.

Atomic Physics: cathode rays, x-rays, radioactive decay, fission and fusion, nuclear reactors and real world applications.

Options:

Particle Physics: recent type of physics, delving into the new discoveries leading to a better understanding of the formation of the universe and where we came from.

Applied Electricity: detailed study of electricity and the working of a motor developing from electricity already studied.

The course also consists of 24 core mandatory experiments complementing each section in an aim to develop students' technical skills and enhance understanding and reinforce key concepts.

Exam Structure

The leaving cert exam is three hours in duration.

Leaving Certificate Physics is assessed by means of one terminal examination paper at each level.

Students are required to keep a record of their practical work over the two years of the course.

Politics and Society

Course Overview

Leaving Certificate Politics and Society aims to develop the learner's capacity to engage in reflective and active citizenship, informed by the insights and skills of social and political sciences.

The objectives of Leaving Certificate Politics and Society are to develop:

- an understanding of the social systems within which people act: locally, nationally and more widely.
- an understanding of concepts which underpin contemporary systems of government and of the diverse models for making these concepts operational.
- an understanding of and a respect for human rights and responsibilities, for human dignity and for democratic modes of governance.
- an understanding of and a respect for sustainable development.
- a commitment to and a capacity for active participation in the learner's social and political worlds.
- a commitment to and a capacity for critical, discursive and independent thinking.
- a commitment to and a capacity for engagement in peaceful and democratic means of resolving conflicts.
- a sense of care for others and a respect for and a valuing of diversity in all areas of human life within the parameters of human rights principles.
- the capacity to analyse and interpret qualitative and quantitative social and political research data, and to use such data carefully in forming opinions and coming to conclusions.

Politics and Society is organised in four strands, each structured around key concepts.

STRAND 1	STRAND 2
Power and decision-making	Active citizenship
STRAND 3	STRAND 4
Human rights and responsibilities	Globalisation and localisation

Assessment for certification in Politics and Society will be carried out through two assessment components:

1. Report on a citizenship project (20% of the total marks)
2. Written examination (80% of the total marks).

Spanish

Course Overview

Spanish follows a common syllabus framework for the teaching and examining of modern languages in the Leaving Certificate. The syllabus aims to develop learners' communicative skills in Spanish, to develop their strategies for effective language learning and raise their awareness of cultural, social and political diversity. Assessment is by means of a written examination, and an aural and oral examination at two levels, Ordinary level and Higher level.

Course Content

This syllabus aims to lead every pupil towards four basic outcomes as a result of the experience of modern language learning in the classroom:

- (a) a communicative competence in the target language
 - (b) awareness about language and communication
 - (c) an understanding of how to go about learning a foreign language
 - (d) a level of cultural awareness
1. To foster in learners such communicative skills in the target language as will enable them to:
 - a. take a full part in classroom activities conducted in the target language;
 - b. participate in normal, everyday transactions and interactions, both spoken and written, both at home and abroad;
 - c. extract information and derive enjoyment from the mass media and the more accessible literature of the target language community;
 - d. consider as a realistic option the possibility of pursuing leisure activities, further study and/or career opportunities through the medium of the target language.
 2. To give students a critical awareness of how meaning is organised and conveyed by the structures and vocabulary of the target language, and thus to contribute to their understanding of the workings of human language in general.
 3. To help learners develop strategies for effective language learning.
 4. To equip learners with a broad acquaintance with the cultural, social and political complexion of contexts in which the target language is a normal medium of communication and thus to help raise their awareness of cultural, social and political diversity generally.

Exam Structure

Oral Examination (25%): the Spanish oral exam consists of two parts, personal questions and role-plays.

Listening Examination (20%)

Written exam (55%): you will need a lot of vocabulary for the written exam. Make a note of the words that come up frequently and learn them off. Also, learn all the tenses and become familiar with the endings of different verbs, especially the irregular ones.

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

The goal of the LCVP (Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme) is to prepare young people for adult life by ensuring that they are educated in the broadest sense, with an ability to cope and thrive in an environment of rapid change. Participants in the programme are encouraged to develop skills and competencies fundamental to both academic and vocational success.

Throughout the programme students are encouraged to:

- Be innovative and enterprising
- Take responsibility for their own learning
- Adapt to changing circumstances
- Evaluate data and devise solutions to problems
- Communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively
- Work with others as part of a team
- Investigate and plan career options
- Use information and communications technologies
- Investigate local businesses and community enterprises
- Learn from their experiences

These skills and qualities are equally relevant to the needs of those preparing for further education, seeking employment or planning to start their own business.

Students who decide to take LCVP will have classes throughout 5th and 6th year where they will complete two link modules:

Link Module I - Preparation for the World of Work

Students will research and investigate local employment opportunities, develop job seeking skills such as letter writing, CV presentation, interview techniques; gain valuable practical experience of the world of work; interview and work shadow a person in a career area that interests them

Link Module II - Enterprise Education

Students will be involved in organising visits to local business and community enterprises; meet and interview enterprising people on site and in the classroom; plan and undertake interesting activities that will build self-confidence, creativity, initiative and develop teamwork, communication and computer skills.

Throughout the two years, students complete work that is kept in a portfolio and is submitted for assessment in May of sixth year. Students also do a written exam in May and receive their results along with the other Leaving Cert subjects in August.

See LCVP website for more details about the programme.

<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Senior-cycle/LCVP/>



1. We **Plan** for Success for Every Student
2. We **Model** Success in Our Practice
3. We **Celebrate** Success
4. We are **Partners** for Success in Our Community
5. We **Deliver** Success for Students, Families and Community

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