



**Optimising Clues To A Future
Career Direction
A Guide For 4th Year Parents**

**Patrician Presentation S.S.,
Fethard, Co. Tipperary**



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Selecting My Leaving Certificate Subject & Beyond
Optimising Choices Through Career Direction & Guidance For 4th Year Parents

1. What Career Will Suit You?

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with their chosen occupation. These are individuals who, generally, have fulfilling working

lives, and for whom work is a meaningful and stimulating experience. However, on the other hand, there are also individuals who, day in and day out, year in year out, struggle to find any real purpose in their chosen field of work other than the financial reward that is necessary for survival. For them, work is a means to an end, something that facilitates meeting their financial obligations. It can be argued that such outcomes do not happen by chance and that various factors have come into play to determine if an individual enjoys or dislikes their work. Those that find themselves in a fulfilling job are said to be in a working environment that matches their interests, aptitudes, and personal characteristics. Those that find themselves in a working environment they do not enjoy, may have to perform tasks that do not match their interests or aptitudes or personal characteristics, or indeed all three.

Those that find themselves in a fulfilling job, or indeed course of study or training, are said to be in a working environment that matches their interests *and* aptitudes. We can have an interest in a particular area but not the aptitudes necessary to perform in that area. Think of all the teenagers you have an interest in becoming a professional football player but do not succeed in doing so because they do not have the necessary aptitudes. Similarly, the seven year old child who has an aptitude for playing the piano may not have the necessary interest to sustain this activity as ability alone is of little use without the adequate interest to back it up¹. It is therefore necessary for us to have both an interest *and* an aptitude for a job not just to gain enjoyment from that job but also to excel in that job.

However, to guarantee satisfaction from a job, is it sufficient just to have an interest and an aptitude for the task involved in that job? For example, consider the professions of an Actuary and a Maths teacher. Both roles require an interest and an aptitude for the subject of Mathematics. However, the tasks involved in each of these positions goes beyond just having an aptitude and interest in mathematical concepts.

In a classroom setting there is far more social and individual interactions than would be encountered in actuarial tasks. How would an actuary fare in a classroom, and how would the Maths teacher perform in the actuary's office? Would an actuary enjoy teaching; explaining, and re-explaining Mathematical concepts, rather than using them? Would an

¹ Robert Nathan and Linda Hill, *Career Counselling*, (London: Sage Publications, 2000) p 61.

actuary have the personality traits and flexibility of character to adapt their style to suit differences in students' personalities and learning styles? Would the teacher enjoy the more solitary aspects of work involved in the more clerical and office based actuarial activities rather than continuously engaging with people?

These examples bring into play the idea that the characteristics of the tasks in a job should match, as far as is possible, the personal characteristics of the individual. An accountant performs tasks that are logical, step by step, and requires everything to be in the right place on a balance sheet. Furthermore, what is an accountant's home like? Is it neat and tidy, is the book collection arranged in specific order, is everything in its place? Is this because they are an accountant or is the accountant's mind naturally working that way? Is the accountant's mind neat and tidy with everything in its place and has that accountant then found a working environment that has similar characteristics?

Consider the following. Two individuals may have an aptitude and interest in a working environment that requires them to be up and about, working with their hands and creating things. Landscape gardening and cooking are areas of work that would seem to satisfy these conditions. However, the personality of one individual may dictate that the individual who is more laid back and prefers a less pressured working environment may opt for landscape garden as opposed to being a chef with its highly pressurised and fast paced working environment.

Imagine Rory McElroy and Jonathon Sexton have an equal interest and aptitude for both golf and rugby. Has Rory McElroy chosen golf over rugby because he has personality traits that are more comfortable relying on himself rather than in an environment where Jonathon Sexton is more comfortable relying on others and others relying on him? Imagine the most outgoing, loudest and extrovert person you know, should they become a archivist in a

library? Imagine an introvert and quiet person, should they become a stand-up comedian? Imagine the student who resents being told to get their hair cut and having to wear a school uniform. Would they be comfortable in an environment like the Army or Garda?

Therefore, the greater the overlap between our interests, aptitudes, *and* personal characteristics and those required by the job or area of study, the greater the degree of satisfaction when we get. The overlap may be represented as follows.



In order to maximise our ability to make the right choices in terms of courses to study or occupation, or training course, it is necessary to know, as much as possible, about our own interests, aptitudes, and personal characteristics. This requires us to develop a certain degree of self-awareness and be able to read and interpret what makes us *tick*. Once we know as much as possible about ourselves (step 1), step 2 is now necessary, i.e. to find an area of study or occupation that matches, as much as possible, our interests, aptitudes and personal characteristics. A common mistake is to skip step 1 and instead carry out step 2.

However, it can be argued that there is no point in knowing all the details about all the courses/jobs that are available if we don't know ourselves first.

Despite us wanting to have a clear, specific career objective², a lot of us have difficulty discovering the type of work for which we are best suited or which we would most enjoy³. There is no easy way to know which jobs⁴, course, or further training satisfy us, and it has to be accepted that the best we can do is to strive towards an answer and engage in a *process* rather than search for a single event or action that would give an easy perfect answer.

Our immediate and past environment⁵ – whether happy or unhappy – is an essential source of exploration that may provide us with clues to good career direction. Investigating our leisure interests, school performance, experience of work, our imagination, and our psychological disposition – may suggest what type of work or further study or training may provide the optimum person-environment fit.

2. Looking In The Mirror

2.1 Our Personality

As we move through the teenage years, there are clearly defined stages of both cognitive growth and social reasoning. During the middle and late stages of adolescence we begin to *think* in a more abstract way. We begin to develop the ability to take on the perspective of others⁶ and begin to see how we relate to others. This enables us to think more about

² Norman A. Sprinthall and W. Andrew Collins, *Adolescent Psychology*, 3rd ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc. 1995) p 468.

³ Nancy J. Cobb, *Adolescence – Continuity, Change, and Diversity*, 4th ed., (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2001) p 414.

⁴ John J. Conger & Nancy L. Galambos, *Adolescence and Youth*, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 1997) p 243.

⁵ Lynda Ali and Barbara Graham, *The Counselling Approach To Careers Guidance*, (London: Brunner-Routledge, 2004) p 106.

⁶ John Dacey and Maureen Kenny, *Adolescent Development*, (Wisconsin: Brown & Benchmark Publishers, 1994) p 114.

ourselves and watch ourselves as from above. This is a very important part of the process of self-analysis that is necessary in order for us to self-evaluative. In addition, our ability to manipulate new information – and critical thinking – make judgments after assessing a situation – also begin to develop and become more pronounced in our way of thinking. Moreover, our ability to deal with a problem that may have many possible outcomes – divergent thinking – begins to be established within our thought processes. All of these changes allow us to see ourselves in a more sophisticated way compared to the insights we had as a child, and gain valuable insights into ourselves in terms of career preferences.

In childhood and early adolescence, we may have viewed ourselves as being tall, short, or sporty. In later adolescence, we developed the ability to recognise more internal characteristics such as brave, intelligent, kind, impulsive shy, loud, witty. Useful avenues that are worth exploring are: *“What personality traits do you most admire in yourself?”* *“What do you think people like about you?”* *“Which talents stand out most?”* *“What type of person do you think you are?”* This deeper form of self-exploration can be relatively easy for some of us. Others find these types of questions uncomfortable or difficult to answer. In such cases, it may be useful to remember that, to an extent, we have already unconsciously answered these questions by choosing certain types of people to be our friends and choosing certain pastimes and hobbies in which to get involved.



2.2 Pastimes & I

Our hobbies and pastimes may give a useful marker to future career directions. We may be interested in team sports as opposed to the more solitary sports such as golf or running. Does the former mean we are comfortable relying on others and others relying on us? Does choosing an individual sport mean we are more comfortable relying on ourselves? If we do not like sport, what does this say – in a constructive and informative way - about our personality? Maybe we would not like a job that requires manual labour and moving about? We can find inspiration in reading or chess. Does this mean we prefer more solitary activities? Or do we prefer working in a group setting as illustrated by our involvement in

group activities such as the scouts? Do we find satisfaction in performing in the school play or choir or in a debating team? Does this indicate some form of creative expression of our personality? Do we enjoy being creative with our hands as expressed through cooking or fixing things at home? Do we have a preference for the outdoor life as expressed through hobbies such as hiking or fishing? Do we enjoy acquiring new skills as demonstrated by taking a course in life-saving or music lessons? Do television habits also give some clues? For example, have we a particular interest in a certain issues as illustrated by watching news or current affairs programmes or watching wildlife programmes on television? Do we read certain types of books or particular stories in a newspaper? Have we involved ourselves in community activities such as voluntary work or first aid classes? Whatever makes us feel good is always worth considering. The things that are enjoyable, that are special, may provide the best clues to the kinds of work that we can be good at, and enjoy the most⁷.

2.3 School Academic Activities

It can be argued that hobbies and pastimes provide more positive clues than compulsory school activities because they are activities we opt to do even though we don't have to. Notwithstanding this, it is always useful to examine our experiences of compulsory activities in school. With this in mind, it is important to examine what subjects within the school curriculum we like/d or dislike/d. What is it about Maths that you enjoy? Is the logical step-by-step approach that Maths requires that is enjoyable? Or was this logical step-by-step the very thing that makes it not enjoyable? Is it the fact that it produces black and white answers as opposed to an essay which has no right or wrong answers? If you have a

⁷ Louise Welsh Schrank, *How To Choose The Right Career*, (Illinois: VGM Career Horizons, 1991) p 17.

preference for subjects like English and History, is it because they provide the comfort of knowing that there is a spectrum of acceptable answers and that the construction of answers allows you the freedom of story-telling and the developing of an argument or a personal line of thinking?

Maybe you have a preference for a subject like Geography and enjoyed the insights this subject provides into the world around us? Is your interest stimulated by the world of business? Is it the insights into how business works, or is it the black and white logic and step-by-step approach of accounting, or the more abstract view provided by economics?

Do you enjoy the world of science? If so, is it how Physics explains how things work, or how Biology explains how living organisms behave and interact with each other, or is it how Chemistry gives an insight into the composition of everything around us and the changes they undergo? Do you find comfort in the creatively expressive activities of drawing, painting, or sculpting in Art, or in playing an instrument in Music? Do you find expression in languages like Irish, French, German or Spanish? Are you intrigued by discussions of social, spiritual, or moral issues in Religion, C.S.P.E. or S.P.H.E.? Do you enjoy being up and about and not confined to a desk when working with your hands or with particular materials in subjects like Metalwork, Technology or Construction Studies? Have you experienced Technical Graphic at Junior Cert. level or Design & Computer Graphics at Leaving Cert. level. If so, did you enjoy this area of practical work that is more computer based? In other words, discovering whatever gives us a “buzz” can positively contribute to the direction taken for further study of career choice. Even if some of the answers to the above questions point to a negative experience, this can be seen as a positive pointer to future learning.

It should also be remembered that our experiences in school might not have been positive. Indeed, the school environment we experience, or have experienced, may be having a negative or detrimental effect on us. This may have resulted in a poor person-environment fit⁸ with regard to the type of school, or the academic demands of an education system that does not suit us. It is always productive to acknowledge such experiences and to work within this frame of reference, and to try and prevent any such negative experiences from hindering or closing off any career options that may be relevant. Always remember *'don't let what you can't do interfere or blind you to what you can do!*

⁸ John Conger & Nancy Galambos, *Adolescence and Youth*, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 1997) p 222.

Examining both non-vocational and academic activities serves to recognise that experiences which were not specifically vocational in content nevertheless exert an important influence on our vocational choice⁹, and can give vital clues to what activities may help us towards greater satisfaction in the world of work or study.

2.4 Creativity

Creativity is also another area worth exploring. Authors are creative and express their creativity by writing. Musicians are creative and express their creativity through playing an instrument. Singers are creative and express their creativity through singing. A sculptor is creative and expresses their creativity through making things with their hands. An actor or actress is creative and express their creativity through characters. Is a professional football player creative and expressing their creativity on the football field? Is a mechanic as creative as a painting restorer, and do they differ only in the way they express their creativity? Is a barrister is creative and expresses their creativity through the presentation of an argument? Is a teacher being creative when they deliver a class? A painter and decorator is creative in a different way, an architect is creative, a photographer is creative, and a dress designer is creative, a carpenter is creative, a landscape gardener is creative, a chef is creative, a film director is creative, and a person involved in marketing or advertising or public relations, is creative.

By this definition, is an engineer creative? Is an accountant creative? Is a surgeon creative? If yes, all have found different ways to express their creativity. Are we all creative to some degree? Is the challenge to define our own creativity - not just using the restrictive term *artistic* - and to find our own way of expressing our unique form of creativity?

2.5 Experience of Work

In addition to exploring our hobbies, and school subjects that may or may not appeal to us, it is important to delve into the area of part time employment that we may have experienced. These activities have the real potential to provide opportunities to investigate

⁹ Super, Et al., *Career Development: Self-Concept Theory*, (New Jersey: College Entrance Examination Board, 1963) p 405.

and experience learning and work opportunities before choosing them¹⁰, provide opportunities for *reality testing*, as well as helping us realise what career routes *not* to take.

Partaking in the world of work may help us discover where our interests lie, even if by exclusion – we may discover, for example, that we would not enjoy the same work in a full-time capacity¹¹. Work experience that has given us pleasure and may inform us about what activities are enjoyable and rewarding. Holding a job can help us develop a sense of responsibility and give us a feeling of being productive. Work can also develop general skills, ranging from interpersonal ones, such as getting along with co-workers, to personal ones, such as managing time.

This can allow us see and assess other aptitudes beyond those related to academic and hobbies such as, energy to work long hours to achieve objectives, determination to identify and find solutions to problems, commercial and entrepreneurial instinct, creativity, and inventiveness, ability to motivate others, leadership, and forward planning. These attributes are particularly important if we find academics difficult.

2.6 Our Imagination

One other area that can be useful to tap into is our own imagination. Delving into our own imagination may bring forth further avenues to explore or, at the very least, allow us to gain further understanding of the type of person we are. Unleashing an unconstrained imagination can allow us to shift our point of view; to dream up new ideas for things, imagine as many possible solutions to a particular problem as possible¹². To find the best clues to careers that will bring us fulfilment we should begin with our own imagination.

¹⁰ OECD *Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers*, Paris: 2004, p 64.

¹¹ Nancy J. Cobb, *Adolescence – Continuity, Change, and Diversity*, 4th ed., (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2001) p 411.

¹² John Dacey and Maureen Kenny, *Adolescent Development*, (Wisconsin: Brown & Benchmark Publishers, 1994) p 124.

Imagine that you won the Lotto and had enough money for the rest of your life and that you never had to work again, but you wanted to? What job would you do? Or, if you were leaving school today and starting college tomorrow and could design your own degree, what would it be?

When thinking this through, remember there are no points required for this degree and you have a guaranteed place. Imagine you had total freedom in this choice; you can study whatever subject you like on Monday, and whatever subject you like on Tuesday, and so on, and they can be different subjects each day.

2.7 A Positive Asset Search

In well documented research, it is believed that all humans strive to make the most of their existence and that each person possesses the fundamental power to understand themselves and determine their own direction in life. With this in mind, it is always necessary to conduct a positive asset search and seek out our own strong points. This should be done in order to uncover, and tap into, what every individual possesses: that is, a fundamental decency and a talent for some task or activity that makes that individual unique. A positive self-evaluation depends upon us finding some area of success somewhere. It may appear that we have not succeeded at anything; yet, for some of us, there may be activities that are not usually in the foreground of our awareness because these experiences are often taken for granted, or simply never thought about¹³.

A positive asset search is particularly important if our academic record does not bring to light any area of success and helps us explore beyond this narrow frame of reference. There may be talents that are beyond the scope of conventional academic measures. Sometimes these talents can be a greater indication of success in the world or work than an aptitude test or Junior/Leaving Certificate exam results. Have you a pronounced determination to work hard and succeed despite the outcome not being perfect? Have you enthusiasm and self-confidence? Are you loyal and honest? Have you a high degree of common sense or motivation? Have you a well-developed sense of entrepreneurial instinct or creativity, and inventiveness? Have you the ability to persuade and motivate others? Have you a strong

¹³ Robert Nathan and Linda Hill, *Career Counselling*, (London: Sage Publications, 2000) p 75.

sense of empathy and ability to help others? Have you a strong sense of social responsibility? Can you be realistic, optimistic, tolerate stress, be flexible? Have you an affinity for interacting with children, elderly people, or indeed animals? Do you have good interpersonal and intrapersonal skills? Remember, school based aptitude tests or academic exams cannot measure these very important emotional intelligences¹⁴.

Caution should be taken when digging for personality traits. It may transpire you find some negative attributes or that you do not have certain talents such as public speaking. This should not be seen as a negative, it is just the way people are. We can't all be outgoing and extrovert. Consider the computer programmer who spends all day working alone at their desk or an archivist working on their own in a library. They enjoy their working environment because of the fact that they are more comfortable working on their own. After all, it can be argued that an Olympic long distance runner has more self-discipline than a member of the Olympic basketball team who needs the collective lift from other individuals around them. An individual may be deemed as being not very patient. This should not be seen as a negative, rather a personal trait and accept that that is just the way they are. Indeed, accepting this may provide clues to a future working environment that may match that personality trait. For example, an impatient person may not be suited to working as a research scientist who may have to wait years to discover a new drug. That scientist may enjoy that area of work because they are more comfortable in a working environment that focuses on the process rather than the end product.

Remember, to maximise the fit between you and the world of work or training or further study, it is necessary to look at the *you* first, step one, before looking at the characteristics of the job or courses of study, step two. If step one does not produce sufficient clues to determine step two, then more time needs to be spent researching ourselves. However, this can be difficult and the may be limited because of the lack of experiences you have had.

To further expand on step 1, researching ourselves, it can be useful to explore the interest aptitudes and personal characteristics needed for different working environments. The next section looks at different areas of work, the different types of jobs involved, and the necessary personality traits and interest and aptitudes used in these jobs. When doing the

¹⁴ John W. Santrock, *Adolescence*, 10th ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005) p 148.

next section you will be learning about different areas of the world of work, however, this learning is secondary, as the primary learning will be comparing and contracting these insights with your own interest, aptitudes and personal characteristics. To help with this, each area of work has a written homework. This homework is not about that area itself, but rather about you as a person. The example '*Life In The Circus*' is used to help to show how you should approach each of the different areas of work. Your teacher will help explain this.

3. Selecting A Degree – Some Worked Examples

Following are worked examples that illustrated insights that are useful regardless of the subjects arears mentioned.

3. 1 Misreading Clues

Consider **Student A** who states that they want to do a computer course. When asked why, they talk about their love of Facebook and computer games as their only reasons. They do not mention that they have done a coding course and liked it, they do not mention that they built their own computer, or double the memory on their laptop. They have not said that their academic comfort zone is to think in a mathematical and physics type way – which is what a computer course requires. These would be much stronger clues to indicate that a

computer course would be a good match.

Consider **Student B** who states that they want to be a psychiatrist. When asked why they start talking about the workings of the human mind and how people behave. Also, they do not like doing science subjects and have no interest in how the body works. Rather than do medicine followed by psychiatry, do the clues point to studying psychology rather than psychiatry?

Student C expresses an interest in doing Law. The reasons they site are based in a television programme they watch. This programme has a sharp, fast moving script, a rich lifestyle, expensive cloths and cars, and good-looking people. There is very little if any details of Law in the television programme. Is this an attraction to a well-produced T.V. programme rather the workings of Law.

Consider **Student D** who states that they want to be secondary school teacher. When asked why, their answers are reminiscences about their time in school. The answers do not contain any mention of subject/s they love, or any mention of working with children. Is this student just getting sentimental as they are nearing the end of their secondary schooling? Are they just trying to hang on to a place they loved? Are they expressing their feelings about their secondary school experiences rather than a desire to actually teach?

As a result of doing work experience in hairdressing, **Student E** expresses an interest in becoming a hairdresser. When asked what they liked about their work experience they do not talk about the tasks a hairdresser does, but rather the camaraderie and craic they had with the other staff in the salon. Did their work experience just make them feel grown up and part of a team? To follow a career in hairdressing a person should be creative with their hands and enjoy, and be stimulated by, the tasks a hairdresser does day in day out.

Student F expresses an interest in becoming a physiotherapist. This idea is rooted in their experience as a 12 years old when they had to do physiotherapy for a sports injury. It may transpire that the attraction is based in the fact that the physiotherapist they had was very good at their job and made them feel really good about themselves. Are they attracted to the actual task involved? How would they feel about working with elderly people? How would they feel about working with stroke victims? Do they just want to practice sports physiotherapy?

Student G, who is slightly immature, for their age, did their work experience in a factor where they spent a week driving a forklift truck. They loved it, and it was the best craic ever! They now want to go back to do this work place after school. Is this based in the novelty effect of driving a forklift – something they had never done before – and the feeling of taking part in an adult activity? Be careful of the novelty factor.

Consider **Student H** who expresses a strong desire to turn their hobby into a career. Examples are the student who took part in the school play and wants to be the next Colin Farrell, the footballer who wants to be the next David Beckham, the individual who plays in their own band and wants to be the next Bono. It needs to be remembered that Colin Farrell, David Beckham, and Bono, Katie Taylor, or Saoirse Ronan only one in several thousand – if not more, who made it. For the vast majority of individuals, an interest in acting, sport or music (and most other hobbies and past-times), will remain being expressed through hobbies *only* rather than a fulltime career. On the other hand, if the individual can become the next big thing.

Consider **Student I** whose main reason for pursuing Geography in college is because of the teacher they had in secondary school. In secondary school some teachers have the ability to inspire and ignite a passion in the classroom. This can be seen as a constructive experience if an individual's career decision is positively and genuinely influenced by the subject content. However, care needs to be taken so that the individual does not mistake enjoyment of a teacher and the atmosphere in the class with enjoyment of the subject and its content. Selecting a subject to study at third level based on a certain teacher's style or personality or the atmosphere in that class *only*, are not reasons to select that subject in college.

3.2 Having Too Narrow A Lens

Student J says they want to do teaching. When asked why, they state they want to help others. The reason they have picked teaching as an outlet to help others may be because it is the only helping activity they have observed to date. Also, they do not mention tasks involved in teaching nor do they mention having a favourite subject or two. Might there be a more fulfilling outlet for helping others? For example, politics, social work, youth worker, nursing, civil rights organisations, charities, or NGOs, which might provide an even better outlet for helping people.

A **Student's K** favourite subject in school is woodwork and, as a result wants to be a carpenter. When pushed further, they state that they love working with their hands. But why considered carpentry only? After all, it may be the only experience to date, they have had of working with their hands. What about a mechanic and looking at the different types available for example, motor, aircraft? What about an electrician or a plastering or hairdressing or jewellery making or dress making? What about product design or some form of engineering? Might there be another hands on area that will provide even greater fulfilment?

Another **Student L** who loves History wants to study this subject in college. When asked why, they discuss how History has impacted on society today, and the politics of today, and how the past has influenced the way things are throughout the world today. Should this student also consider the subjects of Politics, International Relations and Sociology? In other words, there may be other outlets for a student's interest rather than just the subject of History.

Student M has a strong interest in working in the business world and logically has opted for a general business degree. However, they have a very strong aptitude for maths and a mathematical way of thinking. Indeed, even though they are very interested in Business, their best results are in Maths and Applied Maths. Should they really do a business degree with a strong written assignment focus? Would they be more suited to a more maths based business course, like accounting or actuary or finance. that will allow for an overlap between both an interest in business and an aptitude for a mathematical way of thinking?

3.3 Keeping It Broad

Student N states that they are not sure if they should do a marketing course or a general business course. Without realising, they have answered their own question. If they are not sure, they should keep their options open by doing a general business course to begin with. A more general course will allowed them taste all forms of business including marketing and will also allow them to specialise in marketing later on or indeed specialise in another area of business that they may discovered along the way. In other words if there is a degree of uncertainly, keep it broad and general for a year or so to allow a decision about any specialty be more informed.

3.4 Misinterpreting Course Titles

Consider **Student O** who has an interest and aptitude for Business and is considering pursuing a Business & Language degree to add to their skill level and increase their employment prospects. To study a language in college, a student should have enjoyed, and be relatively good at, the language/s they studied in secondary school. If the language/s taken in secondary school was not relatively easy and was not enjoyable, it is unlikely to be easy or enjoyable to study that language in college. Indeed, if the language in secondary school required a grind, this grind may have to continue in third level. It is not a good idea to be doing a subject in college that required a grind in secondary school. Indeed, if that grind needs to continue in college it might be the wrong subject to pursue. The above points not only apply to the language/s taken in secondary school, but also apply to any new language that might be taken up at beginner's level in college. We would all love to fluent in another language, *but wanting to, and being attracted by the idea*, does not automatically give us the *ability* to become fluent.

Consider **Student P** who has an interest and aptitude for Business and who may consider pursuing a in Business Computing to add to their skill level and increase their employment prospects. When pursuing such a degree the following needs to be remembered. A lot of computing business courses are actually computer courses. These degrees study how computer applications are applied to the business world. Therefore, to pursue such a degree a student should primarily have an interest in, and aptitude for, computers and then an interest in, and an aptitude for, applying these computers skills to the business world. Having

an interest in Business only may not be enough to carry a student through to graduation in this degree.

Consider **Student Q** who has a very strong interest and aptitude for their chosen sport. Indeed, this activity may be the only activity that is pronounced compared to all other activities and it may be the activity that makes them feel exceptionally good about themselves. As a result they may wish to pursue this sport as a career either by being directly involved as a player or participant, or indirectly e.g. administration or another activity such as Sport Science. When pursuing a sports science degree the following needs to be remembered. Sports science degrees are primarily science degrees, where science is applied to sport. Therefore, to be successful in this degree, an individual should also have an interest in, and an aptitude for, at least one science and preferably two secondary school sciences. Having an interest in, and an aptitude for, sport only and no - or very little interest in science - may not be enough to carry a student through to graduation in this degree.

Consider **Student R** who wishes to do a degree in Forensic Science. We are all familiar with the three traditional sciences, Biology, Chemistry, & Physics. With the advent of certain T.V. programmes, Forensic Science has become very popular. When choosing a Forensic Science degree, the following should be remembered. Forensic Science should not be seen as a new/different set of experimental techniques that are outside the area of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. In a 'forensics lab' investigative experiments are carried out and these experiments are actually experiments from the three traditional science subjects of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. It is these subjects that should be the primary driver behind selecting a Forensics Science degree. Therefore, it might be more useful to see forensic science as a term representing what the traditional Biology, Chemistry and Physics techniques *are used for*, namely, crime investigation as well as other forensic analysis, such as monitoring pollution.

Student S states *'I'm going to get 600 points, so I'll go for a high points course – I don't want to waste my points'*. Imagine you were given €200,000 to buy a car. You could buy a two seater convertible Porsche with that money. However, does this suit your needs? Imagine you have three kids and two dogs. Will the Porsche suit your needs. Will a people carrier – that will cost much less than the Porsche - suit your needs better? The points needed for a course have nothing to do with the course suiting a student. The course must match the student's interests and aptitudes. If it doesn't, they will not enjoy the course or may even drop out. There are plenty of people who get 550+ points and do a course that only needs 400 or even 320 because it matches their interests and aptitudes.

Student T states *'I'm going to get 600 points, so I'll go for a high points course – I don't want to waste my points, and I want to do a prestigious course'*. A potential medicine student says they want to do medicine because it has high points and will look good and it is a prestigious course. Throughout the conversation, that student never mentions the tasks a doctor carries out by a doctor, and never mentions that they will enjoy those tasks. A career should only be picked if there is an attraction to the tasks that are carried out, day in day out, in that career,

and not simply because that course has high points.

3.5 What Job Will I Get With That Degree?

Student U is very anxious to know what job they will get from a degree they might pick. Some students know what job they want to do after college. As a result, they can pick a job specific degree. For example, they can pick an engineering degree in order to get a job as an engineer, or pick a nursing degree in order to become a nurse. However, prior to starting a degree a lot of people do not know what job they want to end up doing. This is perfectly normal. Before picking a degree, an individual often asks *'what job will I get from that degree'*? The better question might be, *'what job do you want?'*. They often can't answer this. With this in mind it is worth considering the following point.

Imagine a student was asked to pick their Leaving Certificate subjects on the first day of 1st year. The answer to this should be, *'I can't pick them now'*. This is because the student needs to experience the subjects in 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year and 4th year, and needs to experience more of life outside school to be able to decide. Similarly, imagine being asked to pick your degree at the start of 5th year. The answer to this should be, *'no, not yet'*. This student has to experience more of the subjects in 5th and 6th year and experience more of life. Similarly, if a student does not know what job they want to do when picking a degree, they should be allowed to experience the subjects in their degree in 1st year of college, and 2nd year, and 3rd year, and experience more of life before picking a job. Therefore, for the majority of individuals, *'what job will I get from my degree'* is better asked towards the last year of their degree. In other words, let the experiences of 1st year in college, and 2nd year in college and 3rd year in college - and indeed outside college - drive the choice of job, or indeed postgraduate studies.

4. Block To Career Development

4.1 Restricted by Location & Limited Job Openings

One area that may cause a block to our career development is what may be termed external constraints. These are constraints that are out of our control: for example, government economic policy, or the fact that certain jobs are only to be found in specific locations¹⁵, or the type of job that is wished for are few and far between. These restrictions need to be dealt with openly and honestly so that we are fully aware of all aspects of the situation we may find ourselves in, before making any final decisions. A compromise between reality and our dreams may need to be reached without denying the existence of what may be our life-long ambition.

¹⁵ Robert Nathan and Linda Hill, *Career Counselling*, (London: Sage Publications, 2000) p 80.

As a small country, Ireland can have a limited number of job opportunities in certain areas. For example, consider **Student W** who may have a love of animals and wants to become a Zookeeper. The main places that employ zookeepers are Dublin Zoo and Fota Wildlife Park in Cork. It needs to be remembered that there are only a small number of such jobs in this country. Indeed, the vacancies in these areas may only arise every few years and when they do so, the number of vacancies may only be in single digits and the number of applicants may be very large.

Consider also **Student X** who is interested in becoming a pilot with the Air Corp. Each year the Air Corp only recruits less than 20 pilots and there are 1000's of applicants and these jobs are based mainly in Baldonnell in Dublin. Indeed, some years, depending on government policy, they may not recruit any pilots.

Consider **Student Y** who wants to pursue a career in the supports structures around sports teams e.g. physiotherapist, strength and conditioning, or a nutritionist. Over the last number of years the number of openings in these areas of sport has increased. However, is there are limit to the number of these jobs in Ireland, regardless of growth in the economy? In Ireland, there will probably only ever be five professional rugby teams, (the four provincial and one national team). Similarly, the number of G.A.A. teams that may provide fulltime paid employment for sports specialist may not increase beyond the number of counties in Ireland. Therefore, full time paid employment for all those physiotherapist, sports scientists, strength and conditioning experts, and nutritionists who graduate each year for all of these courses throughout the country may be limited by the size of the country regardless of the growth in the economy.

There may be other areas within our small country that have limited career opportunities and opportunities that exist only in specific parts of the country only. However, if ambition to have a full time wage from pursuing your dream go for it.

4.2 Fear

Throughout 4th and 5th year in secondary school a **Student Z** always expressed an interest in doing medicine. In 6th year they seem to change their minds. When asked why, they have changed their minds, they talk about how difficult it will be to get a place on the course and

the disappointment they will feel if they don't get there. When pushed, the student still expresses a strong interest in the tasks a doctor does. Therefore, are they really changing their minds, or are they simply expressing fears about the process they have to go through to get to where they want to be. Sometimes perseverance and courage is necessary.

4.3 Peer Influences

As an individual enters the teenage years they have a strong desire to develop a sense of sense of autonomy and independence. Also, the influence of our peer group will increase, and may be matched by a similar decrease in parental influence. This is perfectly normal. However, given the power of peer pressure our educational and career aspirations can be either strengthened or reduced depending on the values of the peer group in general and of close friends in particular¹⁶. Therefore, catch yourself making decisions that have been negatively influenced, be it consciously or subconsciously, by your peers.

4.4 Shyness Versus Quietness

Some individuals are gifted with the ability to express themselves verbally; while others have somewhat succumbed to the inevitable onslaught of hormones and may suffer from, what could be referred to as a poverty of language¹⁷. Indeed, others around you might have described you as being *quiet* or *shy*. This is normally said in a negative sense. However, quietness might best be viewed as just another normal characteristic of the individual and, as such, should not be seen as a negative trait. Remember, if you are a quiet person, good, it must be because you are comfortable within yourself, happy with how you are and what you have in your life, and don't feel a need to tell everyone about it. So enjoy, but remember to take this trait into account when selecting a working environment. Maybe you won't enjoy a D.J. in a night club.

¹⁶ John Dacey and Maureen Kenny, *Adolescent Development*, (Wisconsin: Brown & Benchmark Publishers, 1994) p 262.

¹⁷ Don C. Dinkmeyer, Don C. Dinkmeyer, Jr., and Len Sperry, *Adlerian Counseling and Psychotherapy*, (Ohio: Merrill Publishing Company, 1987) p 36.

Shyness however, is different. We normally display shyness when we are conscious of what others might think of what we say or do. So we hold back for fear of a negative evaluation. This is normal to some degree in the teenage years and usually dissipates as we mature. However, to gain some insights into shyness and determine the source of it, have a look at the section on self-esteem.

4.5 Unrealistic Goals

Some of us, for various reasons, may have developed an inaccurate view of ourselves and our abilities and can have unrealistic career goals. We can think we are better than we are, or we can think we are not as good as we are. We can say to ourselves, “*I’m not very smart*”, or “*You have to be self-confident to be a lawyer*”.¹⁸

Similarly, as a result of an overestimation of our abilities and talents¹⁹ we may, for example, dream of becoming a doctor but may never obtain the academic qualifications to enter medical school. Some of us might have the abilities for a particular profession, but have an unrealistic view regarding the amount of work required and are unable to understand the need for a positive attitude towards hard work and learning²⁰. Whatever the root cause of our inaccurate view of ourselves, we need to catch ourselves letting it determine our decision making process. This can be helped by seeking out the view of another person who has a realistic view, and will be honest with us.

4.6 What We Think Of Ourselves

4.6.1 Signs & Symptoms of Low Self-Esteem

Some of us, through previous experiences (be they in the home, school, or in our peer group), may have developed a strategy that results in what is known as self-defeating beliefs²¹. Since self-esteem is important for our motivation towards success and achievement,²² it is important to be conscious of the sources and symptoms of our low self-esteem and how we

¹⁸ John J. Pietrofesa and Howard Splete, *Career Development: Theory and Research*, (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1975) p 35.

¹⁹ Elizabeth B. Hurlock, *Adolescent Development*, 4th ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972) p 141.

²⁰ Edwin Herr and Stanley H. Cramer, *Career Guidance and Counseling Through the Lifespan*, 6th ed. (New York: Longman, 2004) p 412.

²¹ Robert Nathan and Linda Hill, *Career Counselling*, (London: Sage Publications, 2000) p 75.

²² Thomas P. Gullotta, Gerald R. Adams, and Carol A. Markstrom, *The Adolescent Experience*, 4th ed., (California: Academic Press, 2000) p 96.

act out such perceptions of ourselves. We may have experienced repeated academic 'failure', or we may have suffered negatively from not achieving – as viewed by our parents and/or peers – in other areas such as sport or leisure pursuits. Deliberately or otherwise, we may have had our attempts to be successful mocked or ridiculed by those that matter to us. This may have resulted in our feelings of self-worth being eroded. Whatever the cause of low self-esteem, we can be motivated to protect our self-worth by developing various coping strategies in an effort to protect ourselves from further negative attention and/or prevent further erosion of our own view of ourselves.

These coping strategies or self-handicapping strategies²³, may include some of the following. Non-performance is one such strategy, where we avoid eye contact with a teacher/parent. Another strategy is a shame effort²⁴, where we ask questions we already know the answer in order to make ourselves feel better. We may use procrastination²⁵ and delay any effort to attempt a task so that we can later blame time management. Another strategy is when we set unreachable goals so that we can use the excuse that nobody could possibly achieve what they had aspired to. Another strategy is known as the academic wooden leg²⁶ whereby we admit to minor failings such as freezing in exams²⁷, or that the exam was too long. This allows us to blame circumstances rather than our lack of ability²⁸, and helps us avoid the negative evaluation of others²⁹, and indeed ourselves. Also, we can find ourselves adopting negative aspirations³⁰ or a negative identity³¹, in other words we do the opposite to what is expected of us in order to distract attention from the real issue.

Other protection strategies can include; comparing our exams results to our peers who have achieved lower scores as a way of finding comfort and/or distracting from our own

²³ Lovejoy, C. & Duril, A. (2010). Self-handicapping: The Interplay Between Self-Set and Assigned Achievement Goals, *Motivational Emo*.

²⁴ John C. Colman and Leo Hendrey, *The Nature of Adolescence*, 2nd ed., London: Routledge, 1990.

²⁵ Duru, E. & Balkis, M. (2017). *Procrastination, Self-esteem, Academic Performance, and Well-Being: A Moderated Mediation Model*, *International Journal of Educational Psychology*, 6), 97-119.

²⁶ Midgley, A. & Urdan, T. (1996). "If I Don't Do Well Tomorrow, There's a Reason": Predictors of Adolescents' Use of Academic Self-Handicapping Strategies, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 88, 423-434.

²⁷ Lovejoy, C. & Duril, A. (2010). *Self-handicapping: The Interplay between self-set and assigned achievement goals*, *Motiv Emo*,

²⁸ Midgley, A. & Urdan, T. (1996). "If I Don't Do Well Tomorrow, There's a Reason": Predictors of Adolescents' Use of Academic Self-Handicapping Strategies, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 88, 423-434.

²⁹ Lovejoy, C. & Duril, A. (2010). *Self-handicapping: The Interplay Between Self-Set and Assigned Achievement Goals*, *Motiv Emo*,

³⁰ Elizabeth B. Hurlock, *Adolescent Development*, 4th ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972) p 141.

³¹ John W. Santrock, *Adolescence*, 10th ed., New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005, p 439.

performance, or using misconduct³²/messaging as a way of distracting from our academic work. Do you recognise any of these?

4.6.2 What Is Self-Esteem?

There are several definitions of self-esteem. One definition states that self-esteem is the extent to which we prize, value, approve, or like ourselves³³. In everyday language the term 'esteem' refers to something positive or admirable. This implies that self-esteem is **purely a positive thing**. Therefore, from this definition, you would think that self-esteem is only derived from the things that make us feel good about ourselves³⁴.

Another definition states that self-esteem is the **negative or positive** attitude that we have about ourselves. This definition leads us to believe that self-esteem is binary, i.e. positive or negative, good or bad, black or white. This definition implies that if we focus on our positive attributes only, we will have a positive self-esteem, and if we focus on our negative attributes only we will have a negative self-esteem.

However, there is a more helpful definition of self-esteem. This states that self-esteem is an **overall evaluation** of ourselves³⁵ or a **global view** we have about ourselves **as a whole**³⁶. The use of the terms "**overall**", "**global**", and "**as a whole**" implies that it is the **summation** of our positive and negative attributes that produce our overall feelings of self-worth. This allows us take into account that all of us have both positive and negative attributes at the same time. What does this mean for us?

The popular notion to boost our self-esteem and confidence is to tell ourselves how good we are at doing things, or how good we are as a person. While this is useful, is it enough?

³² Michaels, M., Barr, A., Roosa, M. & Knight, G. (2007). *Self-Esteem, Assessing Measurement Equivalence in a Multiethnic Sample of Youth*, *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 27, 269-295,

³³ Blascovitch, J., & Tomaka, J. (1991). *Measures of Self-Esteem*. In J. P. Robinson, P.R. Shaver, & L.S. Wrightsman (Eds.) *Measures of Personality and Social Psychological Attitudes* (Vol 1).

³⁴ Stets, J. & Burke, P. (2014). Self-Esteem and Identities, *Sociological Perspectives*, 57, 409-433,

³⁵ Tsaousis, I. (2006). *The Relationship of Self-Esteem to Bullying Perpetration and Peer Victimization Among School Children and Adolescents: A meta-analytic review*. *Aggression and Bullying Behaviour*, 31, 186-199.

³⁶ Morin, A., Maïano, C., March, H. Nagengast, B. & Janosz, M. (2013). *School Life and Adolescents' Self-Esteem Trajectory*, *Child Development*, 84, 1967-1988.

We all have shortcomings. We all have flaws. We all have vulnerabilities. We all have things we can't do well. We all have things we can't do at all. We cannot all be brilliant at everything. We cannot be perfect. Nobody can. Therefore, is the trick accepting, and be comfortable with, these shortcomings and vulnerabilities (while strive to improve where possible) and accept them as part of who we are? Should we drop the terms 'self-esteem' and 'confidence' and replace them with **being comfortable with ourselves**?

Consider the following scenario. Two people are called for an interview for the same job. Neither has any experience and both are straight out of college. One interviewer decides to ask a question someone with no experience could not possibly answer. This was done - not to catch them out - but rather to see how they react in a situation where they don't know the answer.

When asked the question, one interviewee resorts to pretending to know the answer and spoofs and does so very confidently. The other interviewee, pauses, and then says, "*I don't have enough experience to answer that question; I would have to ask my co-workers and boss for guidance and help*". Now who is the more confident interviewee? The second interviewee is not afraid to admit - to themselves and to others - that they do not know something and they have the ability to ask for help from others. Is this interviewee a more confident person who is not afraid to expose a flaw? This scenario adds an extra meaning to the word 'confident'. Is the word 'confident' an adequate word to describe what we want to strive towards? Would it be more accurate to use the phrase **comfortable with ourselves**?

In other words, being comfortable enough in ourselves to accept our flaws and allow others to see them. Being comfortable enough not to let a negative view of others impact on how we view ourselves. So maybe let's forget about self-esteem and confidence, and strive toward being **comfortable with ourselves**.

4.7 Gender Issues

One of the unhealthy restrictions placed on us in terms of career development is gender stereotyping which can act as barriers to our progression³⁷. These barriers, while traditionally having a greater impact on women, for example in the field of engineering, can

³⁷ L. Sunny Hansen, *Integrative Life Planning*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997) p 30.

also affect men. For example, in Irish society today, primary teaching and nursing can sometimes be seen as feminine³⁸, thereby possibly placing barriers between men and such professions. In addition, we ourselves, whether male or female, may also unconsciously restrict our options because of own prejudices or family prejudices.

As with all issues that can prevent an individual fully exploring all suitable options, it is important not to deselect occupational options because of gender³⁹. Women and men should make choices and decisions more according to their authentic interests, talents, values, and preferences and to explore a wide variety of fields, subjects, and activities not labelled by gender⁴⁰. Females can be farmers, train drivers, firefighters, engineers, scientist, and pilots. Men can be Montessori teachers, nurses, make-up artists, and hairdressers, midwives, and indeed house husbands.

4.8 Disabilities

With 8.2% of the population⁴¹ deemed to have a *disability*, the lack of opportunities imposed by their *disability* should not be compounded by ruling out possible career paths that may be suitable. This can occur if the disability *only* is used to define the person. This serves to ignore what the individual can do and focus only on what they can't. By focusing in on the positive aptitudes and personal characterises of the individual possible career options can be explored which might otherwise be ignored. The starting point for this process may be to allow the individual themselves list their positive attributes in an open and honest way. After all, it can be argued that we are all good at something – we just need to find it.

4.9 Emotional Issues⁴²

³⁸ Spencer G. Niles and JoAnn Harris-Bowlsbey, *Career Development Interventions In The 21st Century*, (New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall, 2002) p 107.

³⁹ Linda Seligman, *Developmental Career Counseling and Assessment*, (California: Sage Publications, 1994) p 190.

⁴⁰ Edwin L. Herr and Stanley H. Cramer, *Career Guidance and Counseling Through the Lifespan*, 6th ed. (New York: Longman, 2004) p 412.

⁴¹ <http://www.cso.ie>

⁴² Liam Murphy, *Counselling the Adolescent In A Changing Ireland: National Survey of Second Level Schools In Ireland*, 1993, p 23.

All of our families have their ups and downs. We may have periods of difficulties with our relationships with our Mum, Dad, brother, sister, or indeed our mates. We may even experience illness, illness of others, or bereavement, or other distressing events. Sometimes we can cope with these difficulties and not let them interfere with our school lives. Sometimes these difficulties can impact on how we do in school and prevent us planning our future or indeed, see anything worthwhile in our future. If this is the case, you may need to reach out for help. Sometimes we cannot change the situation that is causing us stress. But we may be able to change how we react to the situation. The situation you might find yourself in may be causing you to lose out on the present. However, might your reaction cause you to lose out on your future? If you find yourself unable to change how you are reacting to the situation, look for help. Talk to somebody. Talk to a trusted adult. Talk to a teacher. Talk to your Guidance Counsellor.

4.10 Being Ready

Some of us may simply not be ready to decide on a particular career or course of study. A sense of readiness may not become apparent until our early, or indeed, late twenties. However, it should always be remembered that to force a decision when not ready to do so, can be detrimental in the long run and negate against a more accurate selection in the future. Also, sometimes we can narrow down our choices to one/two particular areas but may still be unwilling to make a commitment. This reluctance to commit to any path may be because the decision is seen as too momentous to risk making a mistake. This can sometimes be the case when we continue to find fault with every idea or tend only to focus on the negatives of each choice.

If we reach the end of their secondary education without discovering one area that interests us, it is sometimes useful to forget about finding a course that will result in a job/career. Instead, we should just focus on what would be interesting to study/train for the next 3/4

years and select a broad ranging degree/training course and hope that during those years something will come to light that might give clues to a future career. This can also be a useful approach for students who have several areas of equal interest but are unable to select a specific one.

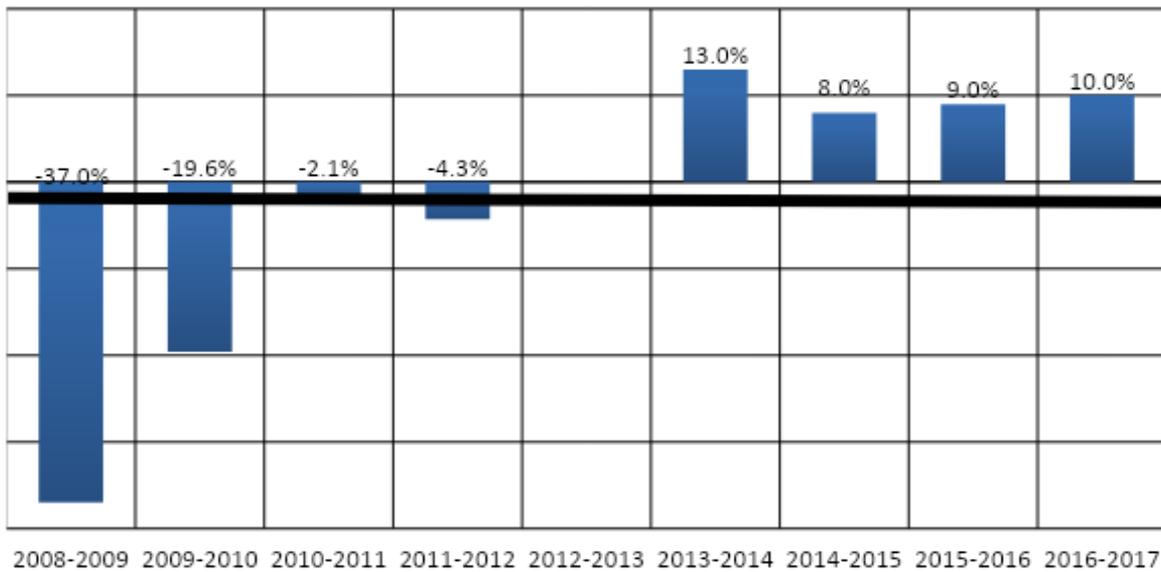
5. The Labour Market

5.1 Swings In Employment Numbers

The table below⁴³ shows the year on year increases or decreases in employment growth in the construction, I.C.T., Hospitality, and Financial Services sector. In 2008-2009 the employment in the construction sector decreased by 37%. Consider an individual who, at that time, wished to pursue an Architecture degree and may have been reluctant to do so because employment prospects were poor. However, six years later in 2013-2014 employment in the construction sector started to increase again just as that potential Architecture student would have been graduating. Similarly, consider an individual who wished to take on an apprenticeship may have, at that time, found it difficult to find an employer and therefore, gave up on their dream of becoming a carpenter.

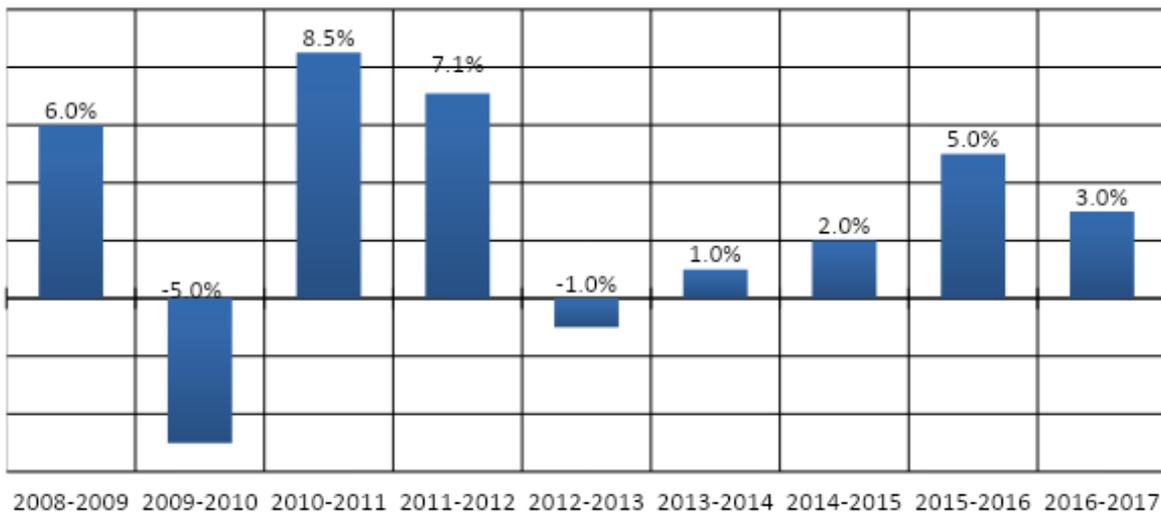
⁴³ *National Skills Bulletin, Solas, Dublin, Employment Growth by Sector (%) Year on Year Comparisons (Q.4).* 2018, p. 31, 2017, p. 29, 2016, p. 29, 2015, p. 28, 2014, p. 25, 2013, p.29, 2012, p. 22, 2011, p. 22, 2010, p. 22.

Employment Growth Construction Sector 2008-2017

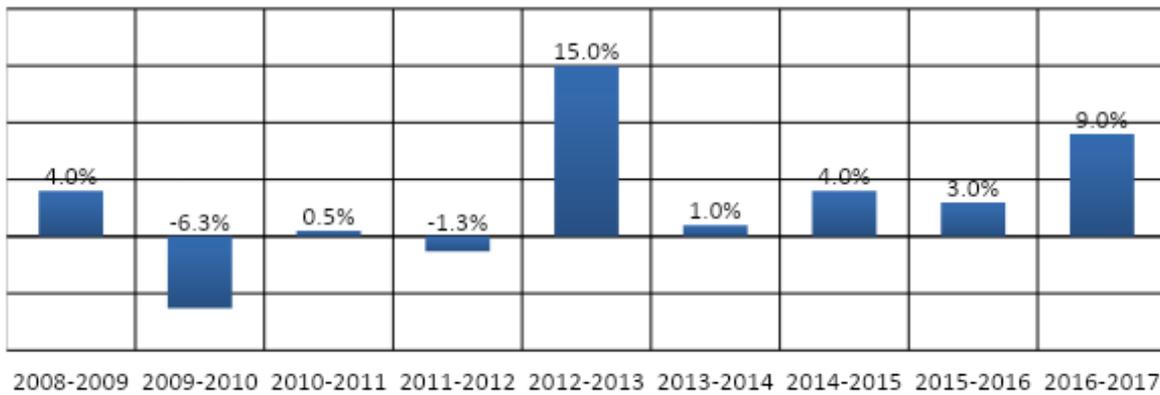


As the chart shows employment growth is very seldom constant and can go up and down with changes in the economy. This fluctuation can also be seen in the I.C.T. sector, the Hospitality sector and the Financial Services sector.

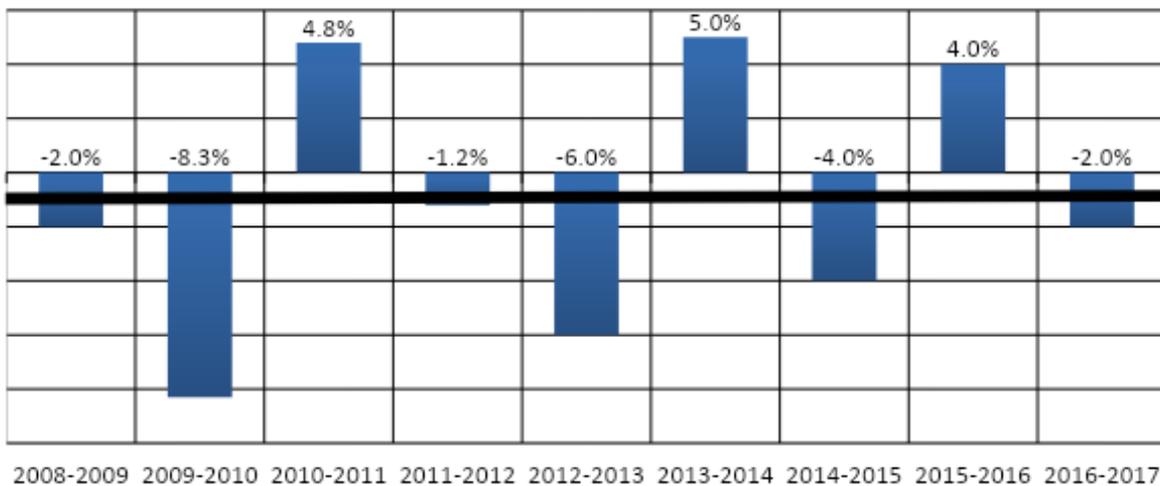
Employment Growth ICT Sector 2008-2017



Employment Growth Hospitality Sector 2008-2017



Employment Growth Financial Services Sector 2008-2017



If can be a useful exercise to observe these employment trends in any given sector. However, these trends are not necessarily a predictor for job growth in four, five, or six years' time after an individual has finished training, or further or higher education. If there was a particular employment sector with continuous growth that could guarantee employment throughout an individual's working career – there is none - and if this area matches an individual's interest, aptitudes, and personal characteristics, then this avenue might be worth pursuing.

However, if employment growth figures are the only indicator used for career selection an individual might end up working in an area doing tasks each day that they may not be

interested in, or doing task that are above or below their aptitude levels. Moreover, an individual might end up working in an environment that has characteristics that do not match the person's characteristics, e.g. outdoors when the person is better suited to indoor work, and visa-verse, or working in an area where the main task are interacting with people when the individual might be better suited to working on their own or in small groups or on a computer. Think of your most hated subject in school. Think of the feelings that this class brought about. Nobody wants to end up having those same feelings – all day, day in day out - in their working environment, no matter how much they get paid or how easy it is to get a job.

5.2 Employer Skills Needs Versus Being Authentic

A number of organisations and individuals state that what is needed from employees in today's working world are people who can work as a team, have the ability to speak in public, have another language and have sophisticated I.T. skills. These are very valuable and attractive attributes to prospective employers and indeed some individuals have these skills or the potential to acquire these skills. However, what about those who might prefer to work on their own or in small groups? What about someone who would prefer to carry out tasks that are not primarily I.T. based?

In other words, if an individual is an extrovert, maybe they should pursue a job that requires this trait. If an individual is an introvert, maybe they should pursue a job that accommodates this characteristic. If an individual prefers to carry out tasks that are not primarily I.T. based, maybe they should find a job whose tasks accommodate this trait. Imagining the physical discomfort in trying to change our height. Would an individual suffer the same internal discomfort if they try and change our internal personality traits?

We buy a book based on our own preferences rather than one that is one the best seller's list and we listen to music based on what we like rather than what is at the top of the charts. Therefore, while it can be useful to take into account the external needs of employers, this

needs to be balanced with our own internal needs and personal characteristics. Imagine walking around all day in shoes that do not fit.

6. Staying In Training Or Education For As Long As Possible

6.1 Employment and Unemployment

The table⁴⁴ below show the percentage unemployment rates by education level.

In 2010 the overall unemployment rate was 13.8%. During that year 23.2% of those with a lower secondary education (did not finish secondary school) were unemployed, and 16.4% of those who finish secondary school or had some further education were unemployed, and 8% of those with third level education were unemployed. The same relative pattern can be seen in 2011 to 2007. The conclusion from these figures is that the lower the level of education and training the greater the chances of being unemployed and the higher the level of education and training the lower the chances of unemployment. In other words, when economy is performing poorly the lower the level of education or training the greater the chances of being made unemployed.

5.2 Earning Potential

The table below⁴⁵ shoes the average earnings in Ireland according to educational attainment. In 2016, compared with those with an upper secondary education (those who finish secondary school are given 100%), those with a degree earned 83% more, and those who did not finish secondary school earned 12% less that those who finish secondary school.

In 2010 the overall unemployment rate was 13.8%. During that year 23.2% of those with a lower secondary education (did not finish secondary school) were unemployed, and 16.4% of those who finish secondary school or had some further education were unemployed, and 8% of those with third level education were unemployed. The same relative pattern can be seen from 2011 to 2007. The conclusion from these figures is that the lower the level of education and training the greater the chances of being unemployed and the higher the level of education and training the lower the chances of unemployment. In other words, when the economy is performing poorly, the lower the level of education or training, the greater the chances of being made unemployed.

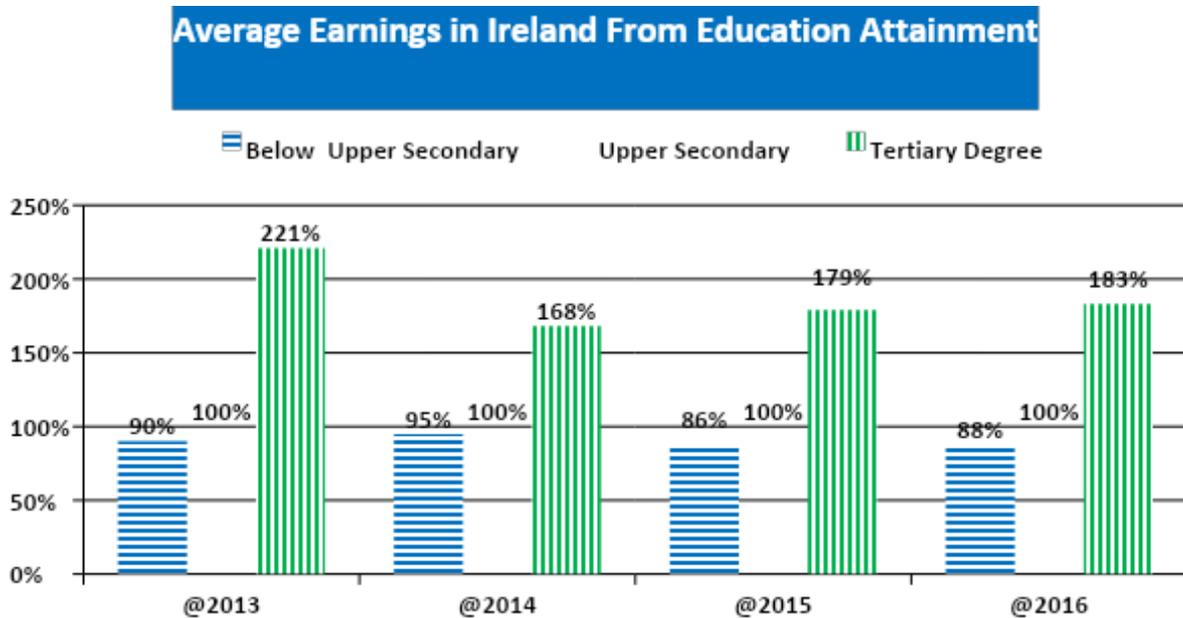
6.2 Earning Potential

⁴⁴ *National Skills Bulletin, Solas, Dublin*, Unemployment & Earning by Education (Q4 of each year).

2018 p. 51, 2017, p. 45, 2016, p. 46, 2015, p. 45, 2014, p. 44, 2013, p. 134, 2012, p. 131, 2011, p. 109.

⁴⁵ *Education at a Glance, OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing Paris, 2018 p. 98, 2017 p. 114, 2016 p. 125, 2015 p. 125.

The table below⁴⁶ shows the average earnings in Ireland according to educational attainment. In 2016, compared with those with an upper secondary education (those who finish secondary school are given 100%), those with a degree earned 83% more, and those who did not finish secondary school earned 12% less than those who finish secondary school.

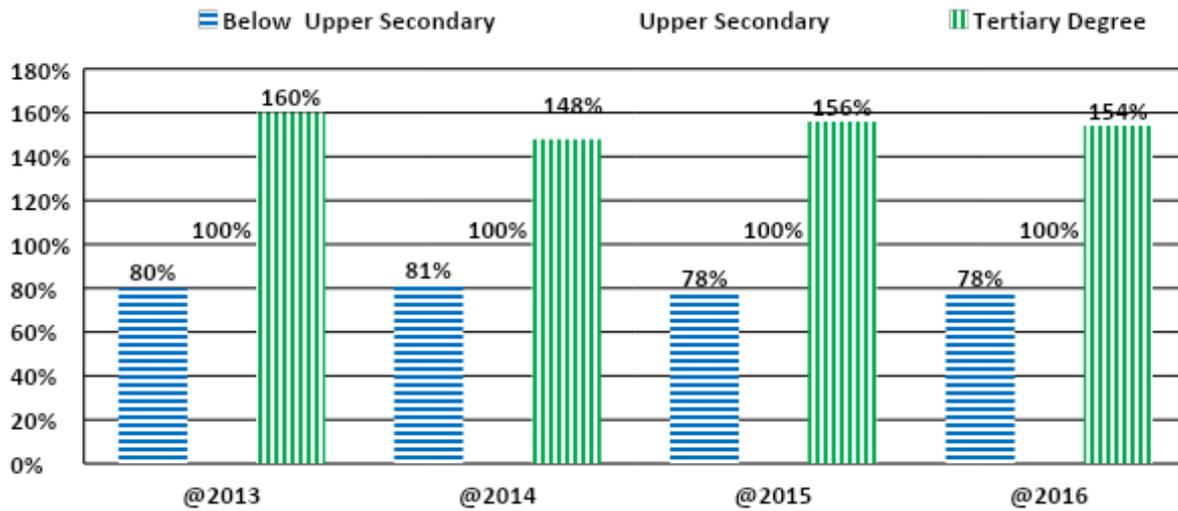


A similar trend exists for 2015, 2014 and 2013. This pattern of earning potential is repeated internationally. The table⁴⁷ below shows the average earnings in 35 O.E.C.D. countries. This table shows that in 2016, compared with those upper secondary education (those who finish secondary school are given 100%), those with a degree earned 54% more, and those who did not finish secondary school earned 22% less than those who finish secondary school. A similar trend exist for 2015, 2014 and 2013.

⁴⁶ Education at a Glance 2018, OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing Paris, 2018 p. 98, 2017 p. 114, 2016 p. 125, 2015 p. 125.

⁴⁷ Education at a Glance, OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing Paris, 2018 p. 88, 2017 p. 104, 2016 p. 114 & p.116, 2015 p. 116.

Average Earnings in 35 OECD Countries From Education Attainment



The graph below⁴⁸ shows the average weekly earnings of those without a degree (non-graduates) and those with a degree (graduates).

The group studied did their Leaving Certificate in 2007. Some went to college and some went into the work force. Four years later in 2011 the group that went to college graduated, and started working. At this stage, those that went straight to work after their Leaving Certificate had been working for 4 years.

At that point, their earnings were compared. In 2011, the non-graduates were earning €380 per week, having been working for 4 years. The graduates, now in their first year of work, were earning €425 per week. In 2015 eight years after doing their Leaving Certificate, the non-graduate group were earning €430 per week and the graduates were earning €655 per week.

⁴⁸ *Higher Education Outcomes*, Central Statistics Office & Higher Education Authority, p. 74, 2018.

The graph below⁴⁹ shows the average weekly earnings of graduates 5 years after graduation.

Those with a Level 6 qualification earned €475 per week, those with a Level 7 earned €525 per week, Level 8, €650 per week, and those with a Level 9, €740 per week, and Level 10 €920 per week.

The conclusion from these figures is that the greater the level of education and training the greater the earning potential and the lower the level of education and training the lower the earning potential. In other words, the greater the skill level – be it through formal education or training – the greater the earning potential.

These unemployment and earning figures are averages. Therefore, there may be individuals who left school early and have never been unemployed and who earn more than someone with a degree. However, these individuals may have a pronounced talent or aptitude in their chosen area, and/or have a pronounced interest in, and aptitude for, a very specific and

⁴⁹ *Higher Education Outcomes*, Central Statistics Office & Higher Education Authority, p. 65, 2018.

unique area , and/or are simply very lucky. Knowing someone like this does not necessary mean another person can copy this unless they have their own pronounced aptitude or talent in a particular or unique area, or are very lucky.

7. Researching Third Level Courses

'The most frequent reason third-level students give for leaving a course is that they either did not know enough about the course or had a poor understanding of what was involved in the course.'

Aiming Higher – A Guide for Parents by Higher Education Authority & U.L.

'The most frequent reason stated by students for leaving a course was a mismatch between themselves and their course'

An Inquiry into Withdrawal from College -A Study Conducted by T.C.D.

'Poor choice of a course is a major reason for withdrawal and 'students often fail to understand the content, scope or depth of the course selected' and 'relying on friends' opinion rather than information available directly from university sources'

A quantitative investigation into the reasons why students exit from first year of their programme – A Study Conducted by U.C.D.

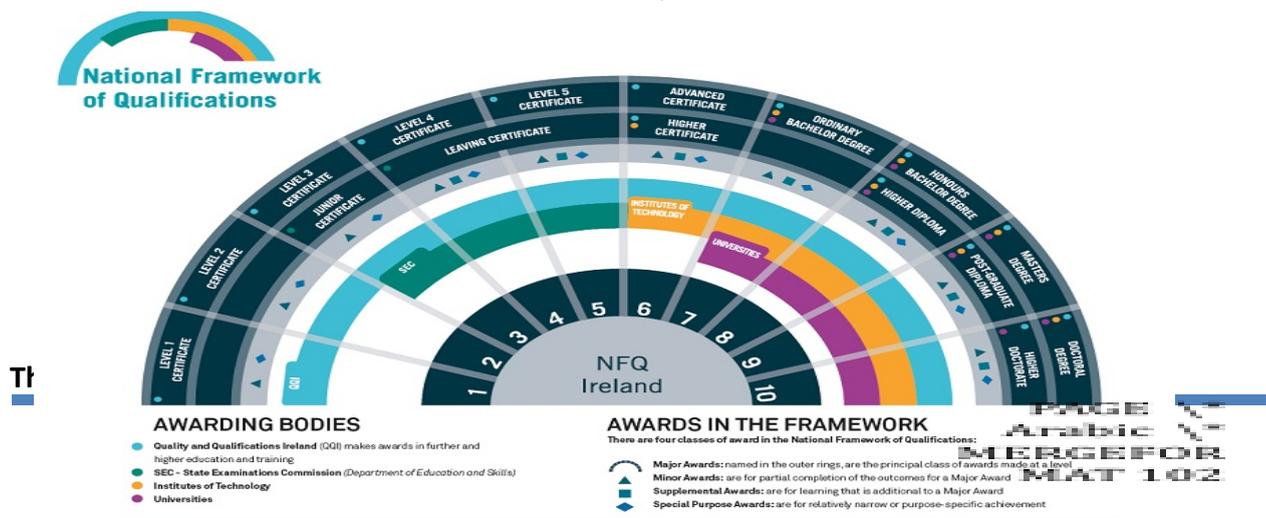
When researching third level courses, students are confronted with information about clubs and societies, sports facilities, social events and stories about current and past students etc. However, this type of information gives very little indication about the likelihood of a student enjoying the most important thing about being in college - enjoying the material being covered in lectures. With this in mind, the following is worth noting.

To finish any year of any degree in any college a student has to clock up 60 credits of learning. This total of 60 is usually composed of individual units of 5 or 10 (or sometimes 7.5) credits of material. To gain these **credits** a student has to cover a certain number of **modules** of material. This is effectively the syllabus. This 'syllabus' is available on line from the third level institution concerned. Students should not just look at the modules available in 1st year, but also the modules available in each year of the degree. Students should also check out what modules are compulsory and what modules optional and compare these with the modules for the similar courses in other third level colleges. This research is vitally important for all courses but is also essential when students are choosing new subjects that they may not have studied in school, e.g. Sociology, Law, Philosophy, Linguistics, Politics etc. Therefore, the most productive research can be to determine the answers to the following three questions.

What will I study and what skills will I have to use in 1st year?
What will I study and what skills will I have to use in 2nd year?
What will I study and what skills will I have to use in 3rd year?

Be motivated by the content of the course and the skills used to study the content.
8. National Framework Of Qualification (NFQ)
 Remember, students study **MODULES** the content, to gain **60 CREDITS** every year.

The National Framework of Qualifications works from levels 1 to 10. If a student has completed the Junior Certificate they are deemed to have reached level 3. If a student completes the Leaving Certificate they are deemed to have reached level 5. Level 6 is a Higher Certificate (normally 2 years), level 7 is an Ordinary Degree, and level 8 is an Honours Degree (normally 3 /4 years). Level 9 is a Masters and level 10 is a PhD. More details on www.nfq.ie.



Some students obtain enough points at Leaving Certificate to enter directly into a Level 8 honours degree course. They therefore skip levels 6 and 7. Others obtain points to gain admission to a level 7 ordinary degree course and skip level 6. They can then progress and convert this level 7 into a level 8 by studying for an extra year or so.

Some students get the points to gain admission to a level 6 certificate course. This can then be converted straight into an 8, or a 7 and then to an 8.

Some students do a P.L.C. course (which require no points) and progress to a level 6,

or
straight
into a
level 7 or
8.

Percentage	Honours Level Grade	Honours Level Points	Ordinary Level Grade	Ordinary Level Points
90% - 100%	H1	100	O1	56
80% - 89%	H2	88	O2	46
70% - 79%	H3	77	O3	37
60% - 69%	H4	66	O4	28
50% - 59%	H5	56	O5	20
40% - 49%	H6	46	O6	12
30% - 39%	H7	37	O7	0
0% - 29%	H8	0	O8	0

9. The Points System

Honours Maths

- All students achieving a H6 or higher will have 25 points added to their total score for honours Maths. The Maths grade itself does not change. There are no bonus points for Ordinary level Maths.
- This is a standard 25 points regardless of the grade achieved.
The same points are awarded for an H1 as a H6.
- There are no bonus points for a H7 in Honours Maths.
- If Maths is not included in the top six subjects counted, the bonus points are not included.

Example 1				Example 2			
Subject	Level	Grade	Points	Subject	Level	Grade	Points
Irish	Honours	H4	66	Irish	Honours	H3	77
English	Ordinary	O1	56	English	Honours	H2	88
Mathematics	Honours	H5	56+25= 81	Mathematics	Honours	H6	46+25=71
French	Honours	H3	77	French	Honours	H2	88
Biology	Honours	H4	66	Biology	Honours	H1	100
Geography	Ordinary	O2	46	Geography	Honours	H1	100
History	Honours	H3	77	History	Honours	H3	77
Top 6 in bold			= 423	Top 6 in bold			= 530
Maths included				Maths NOT included			

- When counting the Leaving Certificate point for medicine, points above 550 are adjusted to a maximum of 565 points. Therefore, for every 5 points above 550 add 1 point.

10. Qualifax

This is the national database for all courses in the county.

Here are some examples of how this website can be sued. .

**Student
Section**

QualifaX - National Learners Database - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.qualifax.ie/

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Google

QualifaX - National Learners Database

Skip to content

QualifaX
The National Learners' Database

You are not signed in
[Create new account](#) | [Sign In](#)

Search the website
 [SEARCH](#)

Home Students Adult learners Guidance professionals Parents / Family News



For Students

Are you looking for the widest range of education and...



For Adult Learners

QualifaX contains information about a wide range of...



Guidance Professionals

There is specific information and materials available...



For Parents & Family

Is your son or daughter considering continuing their...

Welcome to QualifaX

QualifaX is Ireland's National Learners' Database. It is the "one stop shop" for

Internet | Protected Mode: On 100%

http://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_content&view=ar

Search Courses in Qualifax

Qualifax
THE NATIONAL LEARNERS' DATABASE

You are not signed in
[Create new account](#) | [Sign In](#)

Search this site

Home Students Adult learners Guidance professionals Parents / Family News NFQ My Account

You are here: Home > Students > Course Finder

Course Finder
Higher Education
CAO

In this section

- ▶ Students
- ▶ Career Events
- ▶ Choosing a Career
- ▶ **Course Finder**
 - All Courses
 - Courses leading to NFQ awards
 - Courses outside Ireland
 - Disability resource
 - Help on searching courses
 - Higher Education CAO
 - Mature student
 - PLC Post Leaving Cert
 - Postgraduate
 - Students from abroad

Courses in Qualifax

Searching courses is one of the most important parts of Qualifax. There are a number of searches available on the left hand side menu. Most people will use [All Courses](#). You may however, prefer to look at one of the course types listed below. Clicking on any of these links will give you a full list of all the courses. It may be necessary to reduce that list by selecting Refine Search and picking some options from the menus.

- [Adult Literacy](#) - Literacy tuition to adult students.
- [Apprenticeship](#) - Training for craftspeople in Ireland.
- [Back To Education](#) - Second-chance education.
- [CAO](#) - Third level Higher Education courses in Ireland.
- [Disability Resource](#) - Third Level courses for students with disabilities.
- [Failte Ireland](#) - Courses in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry.
- [FAS](#) - Courses for jobseekers looking for employment.
- [Higher Education Direct Entry](#) - Third Level courses.
- [International](#) - Courses in Ireland that will accept students from overseas.
- [Lifelong Learning](#) - Courses for adults, includes part time and professional.

International Students

View My Tagged Courses

Some good news ...

Subject Choice

Where are the jobs?

Higher Education CAO - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=16

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Google

Higher Education CAO

recognised undergraduate higher education courses in the Republic of Ireland.

Application may be made on-line at www.cao.ie. Alternatively, application packs may be obtained from second level schools in the Republic of Ireland or by contacting CAO at Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway, Ireland.

Find a course

- ▶ All Courses
- ▶ Higher Education CAO

"Architectur
e"

"Leinster"

Higher Education CAO - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=16

Showing 1 to 21 of 21 results

Click Here To Give More Detail

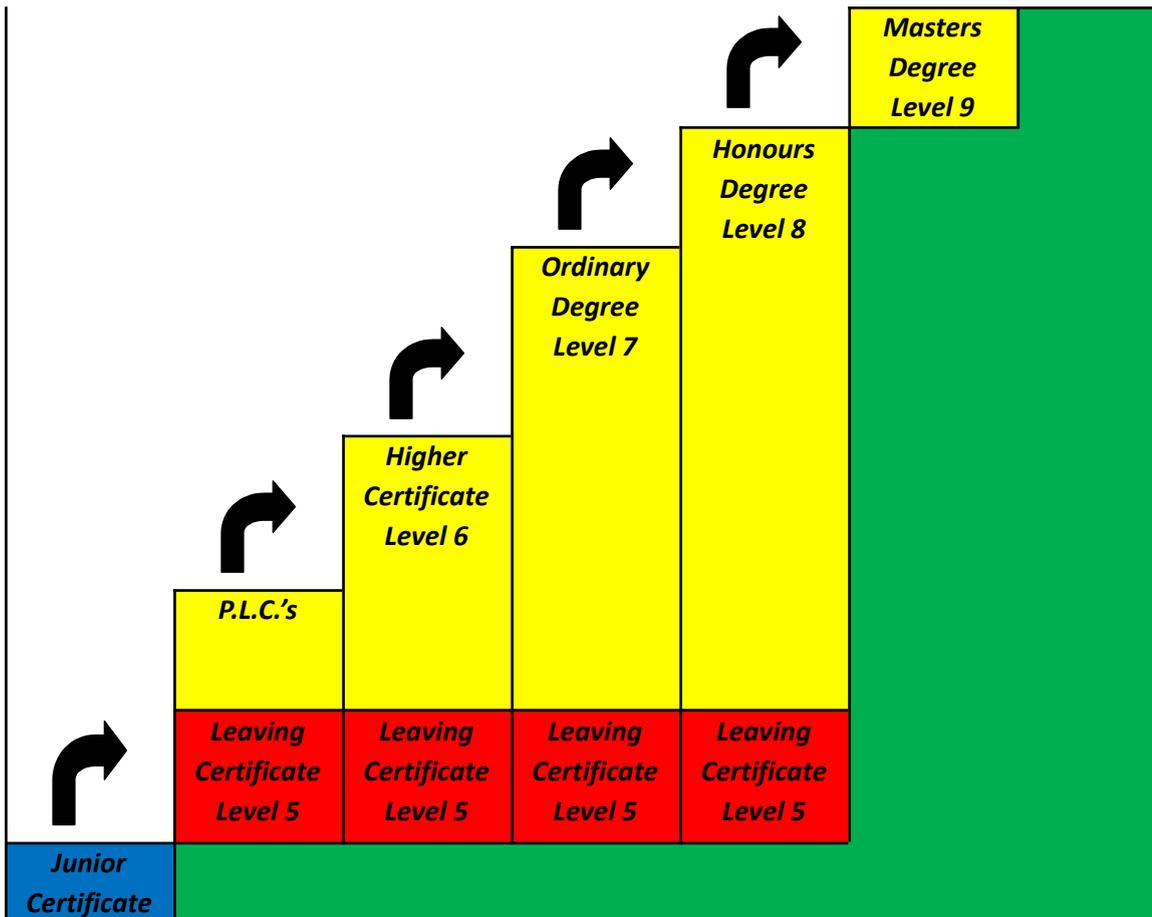
Compare	Tag All	Code	Course	Course Provider	NFQ Level	Credits
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	CW026	Architectural Graphics - Wexford Campus	Institute of Technology Carlow and Institute of Technology Carlow - Wexford Campus	Level 6 NFQ	
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	DT105	Architectural Technology	Dublin Institute of Technology	Level 7 NFQ	380
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	CW407	Architectural Technology	Institute of Technology Carlow	Level 7 NFQ	295
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	CW007	Architectural Technology - Wexford Campus	Institute of Technology Carlow and Institute of Technology Carlow - Wexford Campus	Level 7 NFQ	245
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	DT101	Architecture	Dublin Institute of Technology	Level 8 NFQ	532
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	DN001	Architecture	University College Dublin	Level 8 NFQ	525
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	GC489	Architecture - Interior	Griffith College	Level 8 NFQ	240

http://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=39&Itemid=39

Internet | Protected Mode: On



**PhD
Level 10**



Higher Education CAO - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=16

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Google

Higher Education CAO

recognised undergraduate higher education courses in the Republic of Ireland.

Application may be made on-line at www.cao.ie. Alternatively, application packs may be obtained at second-level schools in the Republic of Ireland or by contacting CAO at: Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway, Ireland.

Find a course

All Courses

Higher Education CAO

Mature students

Disability

Students

Postgraduate

Courses awards

Help on Searching

Events

Useful links

How to apply

Support

Choose a course

Narrow search to Leinster

Can be used to find courses in a particular college

Can be used to find course with restricted entry

Narrow search to Dublin

View Search Help | Advanced Search

Keywords/Course Title	<input type="text"/>
Course Category	Any
Qualification Type	Any
Course Provider	Dun Laoghaire Inst of Art Design & Technology
Course Code	<input type="text"/>
Province	Leinster
County	Dublin
Restricted Entry	Yes

Search Reset

back to top

Done

Internet | Protected Mode: On

100%

Documents CAREERS BOO... CAREERS BOO... new layout - ... Higher Educat... EN 16:21

IPAGE
Arabic
MERGE FOR
MAT 102

All Courses - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=15

Google

PLC Courses

Postgraduate Courses

UCAS
U.K. Entry

Compare	Tag All	Code	Course	Course Provider	NQF Level	Points
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	DL041	Animation	Dun Laoghaire Inst of Art Design & Technology	Level 8 NQF	635
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	DT101	Architecture	Dublin Institute of Technology	Level 8 NQF	532
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	AD111	Art & Design - Core	National College of Art & Design	Level 8 NQF	0
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	DC212	Composition at the Royal Irish Academy of Music	Dublin City University	Level 8 NQF	335
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	TR802	Dental Hygiene	Trinity College Dublin	Level 7 NQF	425
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	TR803	Dental Technology	Trinity College Dublin	Level 7 NQF	320
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	DT544	Design - Interior & Furniture	Dublin Institute of Technology	Level 8 NQF	500
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	DT545	Design - Visual Communication	Dublin Institute of Technology	Level 8 NQF	690
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	DT515	Design Display	Dublin Institute of Technology	Level 6 NQF	350
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	DT529	Drama - Performance	Dublin Institute of Technology	Level 7 NQF	355

Restricted Search Leinster Courses that need more than points

Restricted Search Leinster Courses that need more than points

All Courses - Internet Explorer provided by Dell
 http://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=15

Number of Courses Tagged : 6

Courses can be TAGGED (saved)

Portfolio courses. Evening & holiday time. Found under ALL COURSES

Compare	UnTag All	Code	Course	Course Provider	NFQ Level	Points
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Untag	A1	Art Portfolio Preparation	College of Further Education		
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Untag	Various	Portfolio Preparation	Dun Laoghaire Inst of Art Design & Technology		
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Untag	MA4 MA5 FA32 SA41 SA40 SA48 SA49	Portfolio Preparation	Dun Laoghaire Inst of Art Design & Technology		
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Untag	PR701A PR701B	Portfolio Preparation	National College of Art & Design		
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Untag	SA42	Portfolio Preparation - Animation	Dun Laoghaire Inst of Art Design & Technology		

All Courses - Internet Explorer provided by Dell
 http://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=15

Secure Search

Course Finder

Course Finder

Compare	Tag All	Code	Course	Course Provider	NFQ Level	Points
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	44962	Cooking - Indian - Practical	Newpark Adult & Continuing Education Centre		
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	16332	Cooking - Italian	Palmerstown Community School		
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	6745	Cooking - Joy of	Hartstown Community School		
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	13	Cooking - Jovs	Holy Family Community School		
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	32097	Cooking - Oriental	Colaiste Ide College of Further Education		
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	13	Cooking for all - You Cook	Marino College of Further Education		
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	21092	Cooking for Beginners	Riversdale Community College		
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	5603	Cooking for Special Occasions	Cabinteely Community School		
<input type="checkbox"/>	★ Tag	43330	Cooking on a Shoestring	Castleknock Community College		

Creative Card Making

Creative Digital

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a list of courses. A yellow callout box with a blue border contains the following text:

Use ALL COURSES to find Gaisce courses e.g. Portfolio, cookery, creative writing.

Narrow search to "Dublin" & "Evening Attendance"

Two black arrows point from the callout box to the first and fourth rows of the course list. The course list is as follows:

Tag	Course Name	Provider	Level
W3	Creative Card Making	Donahies Community School	
BN748	Creative Digital Imaging	Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	Level 6 NFQ
D603	Creative Embroidery - Introduction	National College of Art & Design	
102	Creative Textiles	Portmarnock Community School	
BN747	Creative Website Design	Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	Level 6 NFQ
8873	Creative Writing	Ballsbridge College of Further Education	
13866	Creative Writing	Coolmine Community School	
CW	Creative Writing	Crumlin College of Further Education	
M8	Creative Writing	Donahies Community School	
WA24	Creative Writing	Dun Laoghaire Inst of Art Design & Technology	

At the bottom of the screenshot, a blue header bar contains the text: **11. Minimum Subject Requirements & Other Points**

11.1 Minimum Subject Requirements

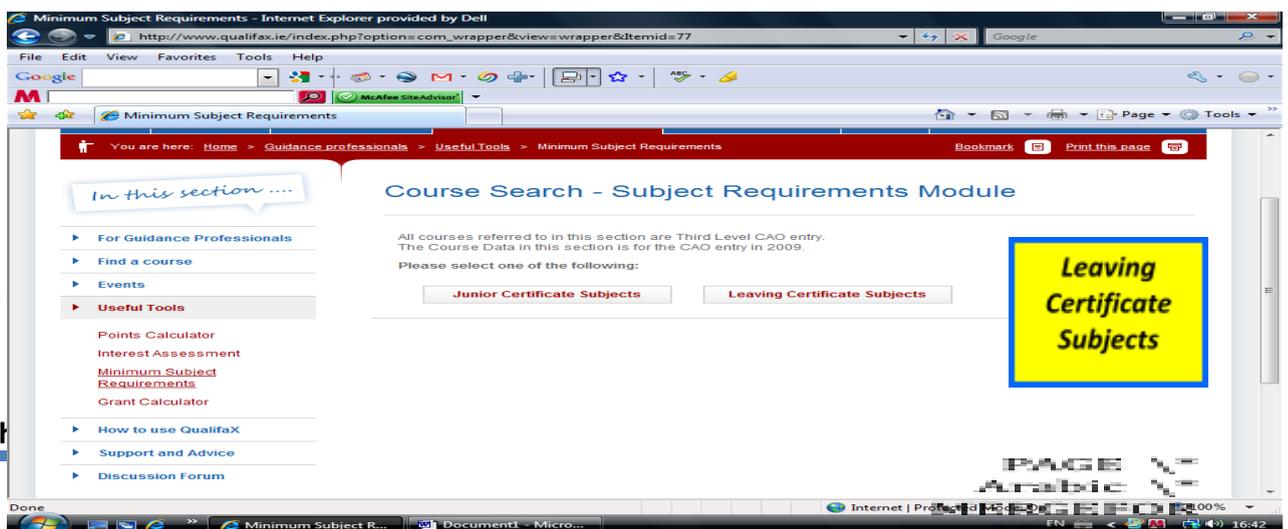
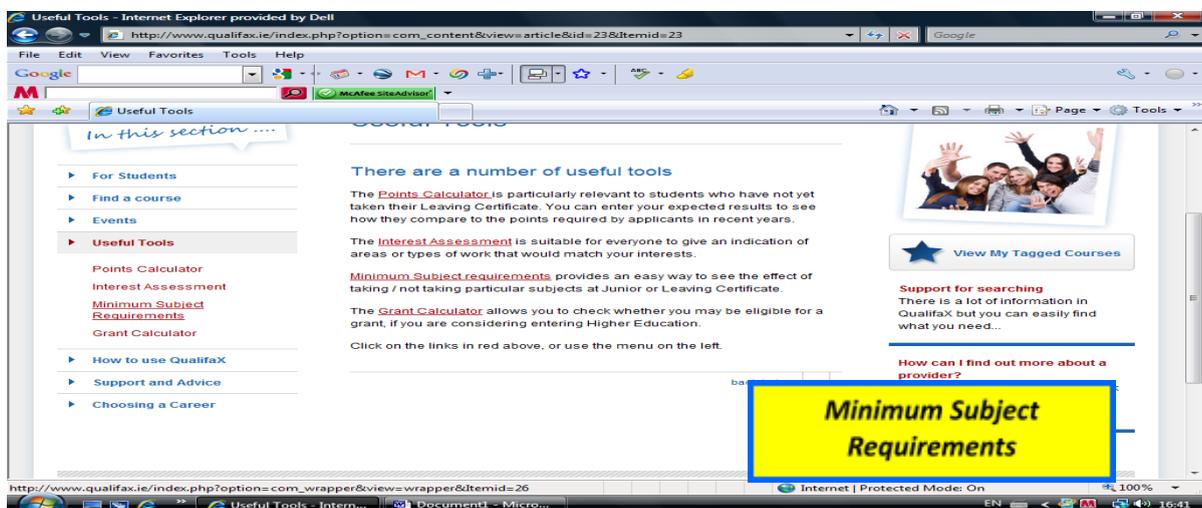
To gain admission to college the points requirement is the second hurdle that needs to be cross. The first is want is called minimum requirements. Generally, as most students will do Irish, English, Mathematics, and a third language this will cover the minimum entry requirements for most, but not all courses. However, there are different rules for different colleges and courses. T.C.D. only requires English, Maths, and Irish or a third language. Most of the I.T's require Irish or English, and Maths. Some UCD, U.C.C & U.C.G. courses do not require a language and some do not require Maths. In addition, some courses have additional requirements.

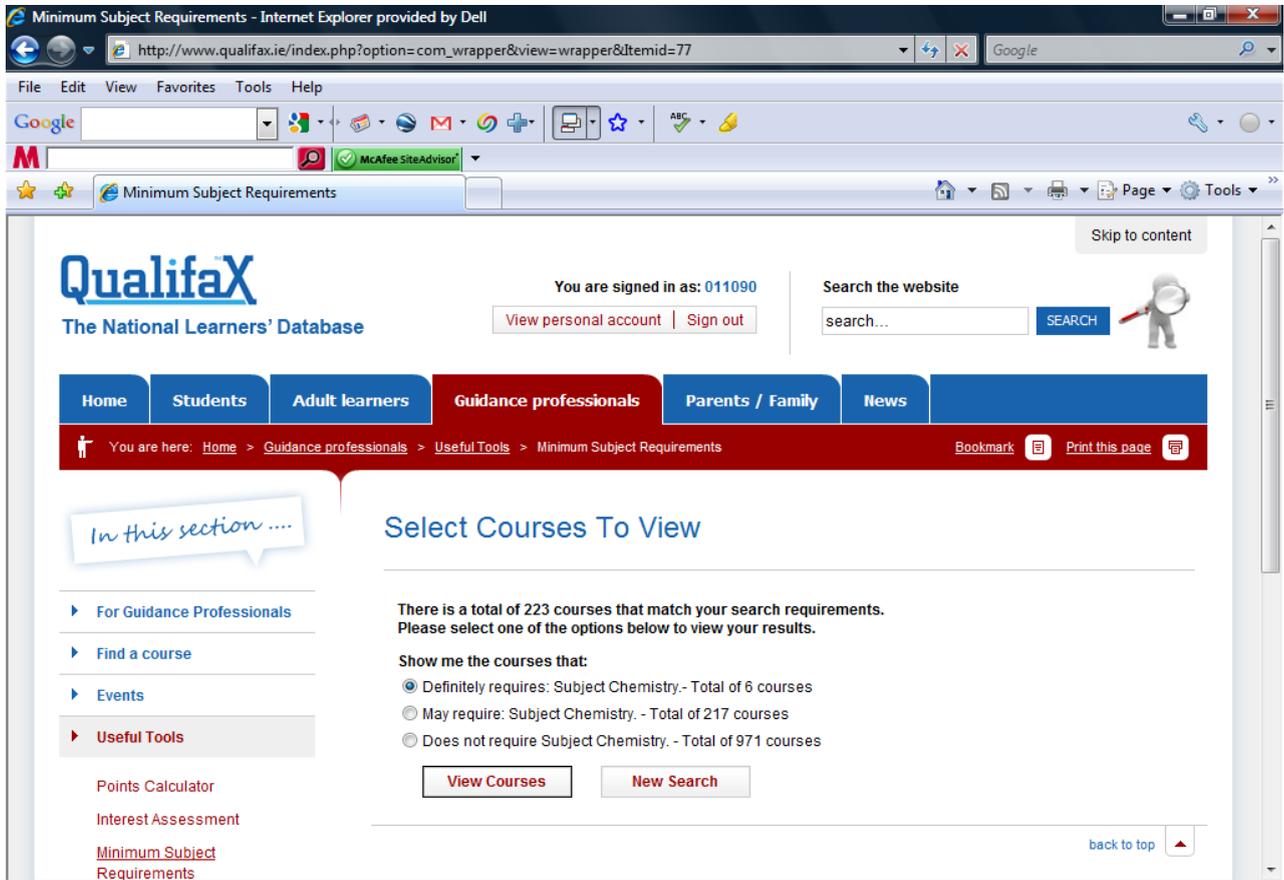
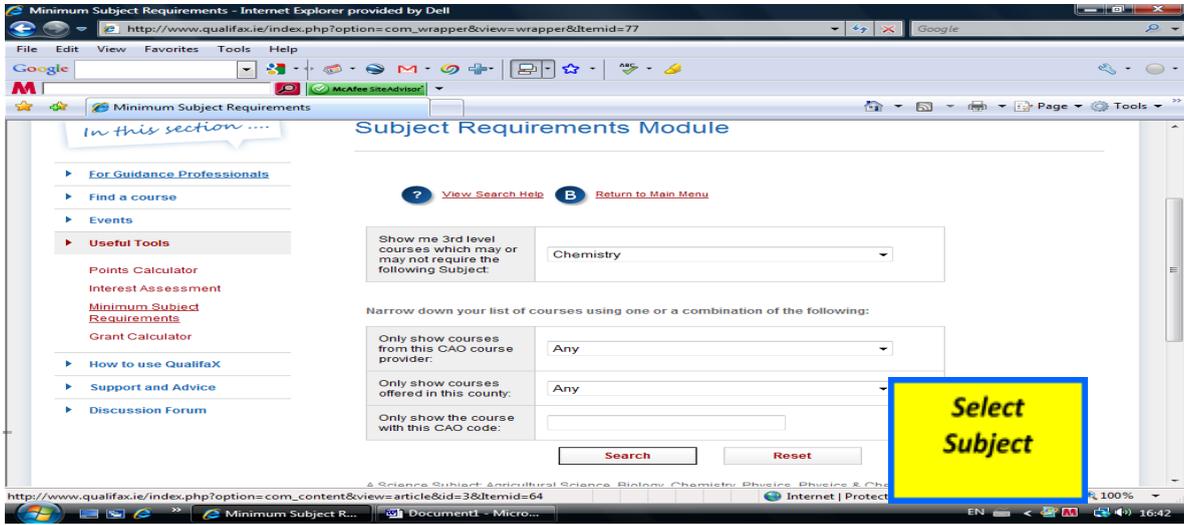
For example, all level 8 engineering courses require a H4 in honours Maths. A H4 in Honours Irish is a requirement for primary teaching. A H5 in Chemistry is a requirement for Veterinary in U.C.D., Human Nutrition & Dietetics in D.I.T., Pharmacy in T.C.D., Medicine and Dentistry in U.C.C. Physics is a requirement for Theoretical Physics in T.C.D. One laboratory science

(Chemistry/Biology/Physics) is required for many science courses. Two science subjects are required for Physiotherapy and Human Genetics in T.C.D. Commerce in U.C.D. requires an O2 or H6 in Maths. Two science subjects are required for Physiotherapy and Human Genetics in T.C.D. Most U.C.D. courses require 2H5 and 406/H7 while most T.C.D. courses require 3H5 and 3O6/H7.

Other courses require a portfolio and/or aptitude test and/or an interview. In addition, the Defence Forces require a 3H5 in three honours subjects and three 3O6 in ordinary level subjects. These must include Maths, Irish, English, and a third language. An Garda Síochána also has specific subjects requirements.

These examples illustrate how complicated this process is, therefore it is vital to check the complete list in the **Directory Of Leaving Certificate Entry Requirements** published by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors. The third level institutes adhere to a two-year rule as regards essential subjects and grades, so there is no possibility that any new requirements will be added once a student has started the two-year leaving cycle.





Courses that require Chemistry

11.2 A Third Language

Over the last number of years a number of courses have dropped their third language requirement, for example, Science and Engineering courses in U.C.D. In addition, some colleges do not require any third language at all. However, since a large number of courses still require a third language it is recommended that no student sit the Leaving Certificate without a third language.

On the other hand there are students who have always been interested in a particular course area that does not require a language. This interest is ongoing and definite. Maybe these students do not need to do a third language and can pick a replacement subject that will be of more interest and obtain more points.

11.3 The “Wimbledon” Effect

Please be careful of the “*Wimbledon*” effect. In June, while the tennis tournament is on the television, a lot twelve year olds are on the street are playing tennis. Two months later the attractiveness of this sport has reverted back to its original interest level. Similarly, when the

Internet took off, the interest in computers rocketed. This later died back. Similarly, when the economy is in the news the demand to study economics increases but when it is not in the news the interest levels are lower. Be careful about following trends and fashion.

11.4 The “Easy” Subjects

There is no such thing as an easy subject. There are statistics⁵⁰ that show some subjects obtain a higher number of H1s than others. This however, is a reflection on the type of candidate that selects these subjects. For example, Applied Maths has a large number of H1’s. This does not mean it is an easy subject, rather it reflects the fact that these students probably do, and have an aptitude for, Honour Maths and Physics.

However, the question still needs to be asked as to why students think that for example, Biology is the easiest science, and Business is easier than Economics or Accounting? This is definitely is not the case. The grades obtained in the Leaving Certificate results in Biology are not better than those in Chemistry or Physics and the grades in Business are not better than those in Economics or Accounting.

It might be that students consider subjects like Business to be easier because a student can pick up the text book and understand a topic without much help from a teacher. This is not the case with Economics to Accounting were a teacher’s assistance is needed to understand individual topics. This may also explain - to some extent - why Biology is considered to be easier than Chemistry or Physics. These points are also worth considering when, for example, the cousin or next door neighbour says “*don’t do Geography because I found it*

⁵⁰ www.examinations.ie

hard". It being difficult for the cousin or neighbour does not mean it will be difficult for another student.

11.5 An Extra Subject

Taking an 8th subject is a major undertaking. About 8% of students do so for the various reasons. Some students have the academic ability and an 8th subject at honours level is not an undue burden. Given that the points system only counts the best six subjects and since some students may only do 4 or 5 honours (including ordinary maths and/or ordinary Irish) an extra subject is sometimes useful. If a student has an academic ability that dictates he only takes four honours and three ordinary subjects, then it would appear to be a contradiction to take an extra subject at honours level to increase the number of honours. It should also be remembered that the extra subjects are subject to demand, timetabling constraints and teacher availability. We will do our best to offer these subjects within the timetable, possibly taking place at the same time as P.E. This will mean that only one double class per week can be allocated to these extra subjects and, as a result, requires a considerable amount of extra work on behalf of the student.

11.6 The Number of Honours Subjects

When subjects have been decided upon it is important to count the number of ordinary level and honours subjects taken. The C.A.O. system only counts the best six subjects. It is important to be conscious of the ceiling in points that can be obtained if a student is only taking four honours and three ordinary level subjects. Please check the points table in this document. However, it is worth repeating that *needing* to take an extra subject, or a subject at honours level, does not make a student *capable* of doing so.

11.7 Doing A Subject Privately/Outside School

In December/January of 6th year the State Exams Commission send a personalised form to each student via the school. This form is used to confirm what exams a student will sit that June. If a student is taking a subject privately/outside regular school, this subject should be noted by the student on the form when they are distributed. As this is the only form of notification that is acceptable by the State Exams Commission such notification cannot be done prior to December/January in 6th year. It should be noted that, if this external subject has a practical component, e.g. History, Design & Computer Graphics, Agricultural Science,

the school is prohibited from signing off on the practical component of this subject. Please check beforehand that the individual/institution providing tuition in this subject has the facility to sign off on the practical component – as it may not be marked by the State Exams Commission. The written/terminal exam for this subject can still be taken in your school in June of the Leaving Certificate provided it is entered in the form referred to above. This does not apply to languages. The oral component of languages can be taken in in your school along with the written exam in June, and again must be register around December/January in 6th year.

11.8 Overlap of Subject Content?

State Exams Commission regulations state that when there is a certain degree of content overlap between two subjects students are prohibited from sitting both of these subjects. For example, students are not allowed sit both Latin and Classics. Another example is students are not allowed sit (the combined subject) of Physics/Chemistry and Chemistry, or sit Physics/Chemistry and Physics. There is a common perception that there is content overlap between Honours Maths and Physics or Physics and Applied Maths or overlap between all three. This is not the case. If it were, students would be prohibited from sitting exams in more than one of these subjects. Similarly, there is a perception that there is content overlap between Biology and Agricultural Science. Again, if there was, students would not be able to sit both exams. (There may be a tiny/very small percentage of content overlap between some of these subjects – but not enough to obtain any advantage). The question needs to be addressed as to why people perceive that there is considerable overlap in content. Nobody considers that there is overlap between English and History.

However, those that obtain an H1 in English tend to well in History (or Religion). Is this because that there is overlap in the skills employed in studying these subjects? Is it that they tap into the same aptitudes? This overlap in skills and aptitude may help to explain why

students think there is an overlap in Honours Maths, Physics and Applied Maths, and indeed, the other examples mentioned above.

11.9 Teacher Driven Selection

In the past some students have selected to study a particular subject in college based on their experience of that subject in 5th and 6th year. When they enter college their opinion of that subject can change. Looking back, they often comment that they mistook the enjoyment of a subject with the enjoyment of the teacher and the atmosphere in the class. This can also occur when selecting subjects for the Leaving Certificate. Indeed, it is acknowledged that having a particular teacher can greatly help the success of students. However, caution needs to be taken. Selecting a subject on the basis of a certain teacher's style or the atmosphere in that class *only* can result in a negative experience for the next two years if there is not also an aptitude and interest in that subject.

11.10 Restricted Courses

When checking the details of courses it should be noted that some courses are referred to as *restricted*. This means that to enter these courses the student is required to submit a portfolio and/or sit an aptitude test and/or attend an interview. These additional requirements also explain why some courses require more than 600 points. For example, Animation in the Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design, and Technology requires 699 points. This consists of points from the Leaving Certificate, a portfolio, and possibly an interview. In D.I.T. Architecture requires 590 points; 100 can be obtained from an aptitude test, 100 from an interview (at which it is recommended that portfolio is shown) and the remainder from the Leaving Certificate. It is strongly recommended that the preparation of a portfolio should be spread over two years, i.e. 5th year and 6th year. It is not possible to prepare a portfolio in 6th year only. If necessary, a student could attend a portfolio preparation course (check N.C.A.D. & I.A.D.T.) during the summer at the end of 4th year or end of 5th year, or at night-time during 5th year. Portfolio preparation courses can be found on Qualifax.ie using the "*all courses search*" and type in "*portfolio*".

11.11 Checking Previous Exam Papers

Care needs to be taken when checking the content of previous exam papers. Below are examples from the Business exam paper and the Physics exam paper. The immediate response to the Business question might be “*that’s easy – I can do that*”, and the response to the Physics question might be “*I don’t know how to do that – that’s hard*”. This is not an appropriate response. The previous exam papers should be viewed with the following in mind, “*Would I be interested in finding out how to answer/solve that problem/question*”.

8. Write *True* or *False* after each of these sentences.

	Sentence	True or False
1.	The role of the IDA is to attract foreign direct investment into Ireland.	
2.	Privatisation is the transfer of ownership from the private sector to the government owned public sector.	
3.	A code of ethics is a set of moral rules clarifying expected behavior of individuals in business.	
4.	An environmentally conscious business uses clean production processes and packaging which can be recycled.	
5.	An increase in the value of the euro € against the US dollar \$ is good for Irish exporters to the US.	

- (c) A simple merry-go-round consists of a flat disc that is rotated horizontally. A child of mass 32 kg stands at the edge of the merry-go-round, 2.2 metres from its centre. The force of friction acting on the child is 50 N.

Draw a diagram showing the forces acting on the child as the merry-go-round rotates.

What is the maximum angular velocity of the merry-go-round so that the child will not fall from it, as it



11.12 What Other People Say

'My sister did not like Accounting',

'My cousin says Chemistry is too hard'.

'My mates say Business is easy.'

'My mother says Economics is interesting'.

'My brother says History is too long'.

These are some of the common things people say when advising others about picking subjects. In response the following should be considered.

The sister may not have liked Accounting because it did not suit ***her*** interests and aptitudes and person characteristics. There are just as many who did like Accounting.

The cousin may have found Chemistry too hard because it did not match ***their*** interest, aptitudes and personal characteristics. There are many people who enjoy Chemistry because it matches ***their*** interests, aptitudes, and personal characteristics.

Business was easy for their mate because it may have matched ***their*** interests, aptitude and personal characteristics. ***For others*** Business is not easy.

Economics can be interesting for ***one person*** but to the ***next person***. If Economics was interesting as stated by people interested by Economics, everybody would do it.

The brother may have found History too long because he did not find essay writing and reading coming naturally to him. For others History is not long because it matches their aptitudes. It should be noted that the length of all courses are the same. They have to be. It has to be so that an H1 in Economics equates to the same amount of work as an H1 in History.

11.13 Honours Maths at Leaving Cert - Who Gets Bonus Points?

What do 3 years of Maths results tell us?

3rd Year Hon. Maths	
J. Cert →	L. Cert Result
28 A's →	15 A's
	9 B's
	3 C's
	0 D's
	1 Ordinary Level
48 B's →	3 A's
	23 B's
	12 C's
	3 D's
	7 Ordinary Level
52 C's →	0 A's
	2 B's
	9 C's
	7 D's
	34 do Ordinary
18 D's →	18 Ordinary
4 E's →	4 Ordinary



1/3 of C's at J. Cert get bonus points in L. Cert honours Maths.

2/3 of C's at J. Cert don't, and end up doing ordinary level at L. Cert.

Questions.

Was it a struggle to get the C?

Was a grind needed to get the C?

Was a C achieved without much work?

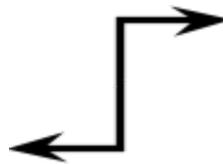
The optimum time to drop to ordinary level and to maximise chances of O1 at ordinary level, is January in 5th year, just after Christmas exam results.

NOTE

- If one other subject increased from e.g. H2 to H1, this is 12 extra points.
- If a second subject increased from e.g. H4 to H3, this is 11 extra points.
- Total for both subjects = 23 points.
- Will other subjects drop by 23 points because of the time devoted to Maths?

'Bonus Points' or 'Extra Points'?

- All students achieving a H6 or higher will have 25 points added to their total score for honours Maths. The Maths grade itself does not change.
- This is a standard 25 points regardless of the grade achieved. The same points are awarded for an H1 as a H6. There are no bonus points for Ordinary Level Maths.
- **There are no bonus points for a H7 in Honours Maths.**
- If Maths is not included in the top 6 subjects, the bonus points are not included.



12. Subjects

12.1 Physics

Physics has a very strong Maths component and requires learning off many formulae. It develops students understanding of many of the ordinary things that surround us including heat, light, electricity and magnetism. It uses maths and equations to describe and predict

phenomena. Physics develops an analytical way of thinking that is very useful in *all* science courses as well as computer courses. Engineering courses have a high physics component particularly electrical and electronic engineering. Some pharmaceutical course will involve the study of physics for example, radiography and physiotherapy.

Subject Content

The study of Physics for Leaving Certificate is broken down into 8 sections or topic areas:

(a) Six compulsory sections

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

Compulsory sections

1. **Optics / Waves:** the study of light and sound and real life applications of the theory.
2. **Mechanics:** time, space, distance, speed and acceleration.
3. **Heat:** changes of state, energy conversions and mathematical problems.
4. **Electricity:** develops on from simple circuits to more detailed concepts.
5. **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.
6. **Atomic Physics:** cathode rays, x-rays, radioactive decay, fission and fusion, nuclear reactors and real world applications.

Option sections

1. **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.
2. **Applied Electricity:** detailed study of electricity and the working of a motor developing from electricity already studied.

At Higher Level, there is a deeper, more quantitative treatment of physics. The two option sections are omitted from the Ordinary Level Leaving Certificate course.

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

Exam Structure

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.

The Leaving Cert Physics exam is three hours in duration:

Section A:

- Answer 3 out of 4 questions
- 120 marks: 40 marks per question
- Questions are based on experimental procedures and use of results

Section B:

- Answer 5 out of 8 questions
- 280 marks: 56 marks per question
- Questions are more broad and theory based

12.2 Chemistry

Chemistry is the study of the composition of matter and the changes they undergo. The scientific principles underpinning chemistry involve everything in everyday life, from the clothes we wear, to the food we consume, the materials we use, the DVD we watch – absolutely everything around us, including everything we are made of. It is very useful for *all* science courses as well as engineering courses and all medical and pharmaceutical courses. Please note if a student is likely to study science, or engineering, or a medical course, it is highly unlikely that he will be able to avoid Chemistry and Physics at third level. Chemistry is

also seen as an important component in medicine, pharmacy and veterinary science. Indeed, Chemistry is compulsorily for Veterinary in U.C.D. and Human Nutrition and Dietetics in D.I.T. and will reduce a medicine degree by one year in R.C.S.I. and U.C.D.

Subject Content

Leaving Cert. Chemistry 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 fifty 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.

Students who have done honours Maths at Junior Certificate level and will continue to do it at Leaving Certificate level should have an aptitude for Chemistry and/or Physics. Students who did honours maths for junior certificate but who will easily get an H1/H2 at ordinary leaving certificate level (without a grind) should have an aptitude for Physics and/or Chemistry provided they put in a little extra effort. Students who did ordinary level maths for junior certificate and those that will struggle to get a D/C at ordinary Leaving Certificate level will struggle greatly with physics and/or chemistry.

12.3 Biology

Biology is the science all living things. It includes the study of the main systems in the human body, which is very useful in terms of general knowledge relating to health issues. It forms the knowledge base for many science based courses including Nursing, Medicine, Physiotherapy, Dentistry, Veterinary, Genetics, Environmental Science, Food Science and many other technology based courses. It would be a mistake to view Biology as an easier science than Physics or Chemistry (see table of results). Doing well in Biology requires a good memory and a willingness to *learn off*. 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.

Subject Content

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 and Science. An ecology portfolio has also to 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.

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.

If a student is sure they will be doing some form of science/technology/engineering course it is recommended that he take two sciences. Taking no science subject for the Leaving Certificate can rule out a large number of third level courses. Please check *Directory Of Leaving Certificate Entry Requirements*. Also, it should be remembered that some courses require two sciences.

12

Business is concerned with understanding the environment in which business operates. It covers areas such as consumers, producers, investors, employers, employees, industrial relations, entrepreneurial skills, management, human resources, marketing, and the different types of business. Students will learn, to make informed business decisions, understand the structure of management, use commercial principles and knowledge, and appreciate the ethics of business. In addition, students will practice communication, literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills. This subject is very similar to the junior certificate business (without the bookkeeping component) and is very useful for careers/courses in Marketing, Commerce, Finance, Accounting, Actuarial Studies. For more information please

Subject Content

- This subject is concerned with understanding the environment in which business operates in Ireland and the wider world. It also involves equipping the students with a positive view of enterprise and its applications in the public and private sectors.

- There are 7 core units covering: 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.

Higher Level – 3 hour paper (400 marks); 3 sections.

Section 1 – Short questions (8/10) 80 marks.

Section 2 – Applied Business Question – 80 marks (compulsory).

Section 3 – Long Questions (60 marks per question (4/7))

23.5 Accounting

This subject is similar in many ways to the book keeping component of Junior Certificate Business. At Leaving Certificate level analysis and interpretation of accounts is a core activity. It requires the student to think in an analytical, mathematical and logical manner. Although not an essential requirement for most business courses, it can be useful for those wishing to pursue any third level business related course as most business course will have an accounting component. It is also useful for careers/courses in banking, insurance and actuarial studies.

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.

12.6 Economics

Economics is the study of how markets operate, international trade, inflation, national debt, unemployment, taxation, interest rates, government policy and the principles behind how a modern economy operates.

There is no difficult leaving certificate maths in economics but students need to have the ability to think clearly and logically and be able to comprehend abstract ideas. A lot of material is represented graphically and theoretical aspects of the course are then related to current situations in the real economy. All third level business courses contain an economics component. Economics is useful for courses/careers in business, accounting, the civil service, and banking. Economics also develops critical thinking and analytical skills that are useful in Journalism and Law. For more information please

Subject content

- The subject is concerned with understanding the workings of a modern economy from both Macro and Micro level. The main topics covered are:
Demand, Supply, Consumer, Cost of Production, Elasticity, Market Structures, Perfect Competition, Monopoly, Price Discrimination, Imperfect Competition and Oligopoly and Factors of Production – Land, Labour, Capital and Enterprise. Macro consists of Money &

Banking, National Income, Government & Economy, International Trade, Economic Growth & Development and History of Economic Thought.

- There are no projects, practical aspects, field trips, etc.
- There is a common syllabus covering Higher and Ordinary level, which will fulfill the aims and objectives.

It helps students to develop a clear understanding of the role of economics, to encourage the development of appropriate learning skills, and to generate in students a positive and ethical attitude to economics in personal, business and public life

Exam Structure

Higher Level & Ordinary Level

- One Paper – 2.5 hour paper
- Section A – 9 Q's do 6 (100 marks)
- Section B – 8 Q's do 4 (75 each. 300 in total). Large element of choice here.

12.7 History

One of the main skills developed during the study of History is acquiring a critical approach to information. Students learn to develop an informed opinion about issues. Students also learn to recognise the complexity of issues and the need for balance when dealing with controversial and important events. Students will also learn to see issues from a wide variety of perspective (e.g. political, social, economic) and learn to support an argument, organising ideas, express clear opinion, and reach balanced conclusions. Reading and essay writing are central to this subject. Although History at Leaving Certificate is not essential to study History at third level, the skills obtained are useful in courses/careers in English, Journalism, Law, Politics, and Sociology.

Subject Content:

The Leaving Cert History course was recently revised and is divided into two distinct *fields of study*; Early Modern (1492-1915) and Late Modern (1815-1993). Each field is further divided into six Irish topics and six European topics.

Students are encouraged to develop research skills and an appreciation for the society in which they live. It can bring students in touch with human experiences that are very different from their own and present an opportunity to improve their critical thinking.

Assessment consists of two components: A written examination paper (80%) and a research study report (20%)

12.8 Classical Studies

Classical Studies is concerned with the civilisations of ancient Greece and Rome in all their manifestations and focuses on their continuing influence on the modern world. It includes history, literature, art and architecture, drama and philosophy. Students who have studied Classical Studies at Junior Certificate level will have received a good introduction to the Graeco-Roman world. However, it is by no means essential for the study of Leaving Certificate Classical Studies.

Why Study Classical Studies

The ancient world is one of the foundations on which much of our European civilisation is based. This course enables the student to go back to the originals (in translation), and learn the stories and legends which inspired so much in art and literature for the next 2,000 years.

What kind of Student would Classical Studies suit?

- Classical Studies will appeal to those interested in history and those who enjoy reading and writing about the ancient world.
- It can be taken by itself as a Leaving Cert. subject which will broaden the student's outlook and knowledge, as well as helping them to gain points for University entrance. Owing to the nature of the exam, and the material to be studied, it is likely that pupils who are strong in English and History might find themselves best suited to this subject.
- The subject is a popular choice in the Arts faculties of our universities. It is particularly suited to students who have scored highly in the Linguistic and Social areas in their Interest Profiler.
- This subject is helpful in the study of history and religion and even philosophy.

Course Overview

Classical Studies is the study of the ancient Greek and Roman civilisations. Classical Studies remains a choice for a very small proportion of students with less than 600 students sitting the papers last year.

Students are not allowed to take Classical Studies with Latin or ancient Greek.

- **Ancient Epic** (The Odyssey; Homer and The Aeneid; Virgil)
- **Roman Art and Architecture** (Buildings, Sculpture and Paintings from Rome and the Empire)
- **Alexander the Great** (based on the accounts of Arrian and Plutarch)
- **Greek Drama** (Oedipus the King; Sophocles and Medea; Euripedes)

All the textbooks are in English/Irish, so knowledge of Latin or Greek is not necessary. There is also no need to have done Classical Studies at Junior Cert. There is no coursework / project work in this subject and final assessment consists of one essay-based three hour examination. The Greek Drama section would be very similar to how pupils might study Shakespeare in English, and although the Ancient Epics were originally long poems, they are taught in prose form and are similar to adventure novels. While the Alexander section is in the main part History, the Art and Architecture is really a mixture of so many of the different things which make classical culture so enduring. Being strong in History and particularly English would be indicative that Classical Studies might be a good choice at Leaving Cert. However, all pupils can prosper in this subject purely because they find the material so

interesting and it is this, above all else, which seems to be most important for pupils making a success of choosing Classical Studies.

Exam Structure

Leaving Certificate Classical Studies is assessed at Ordinary and Higher levels, through a written examination. There is no coursework / project work in this subject and final assessment consists of one essay-based three hour examination. Students are required to answer 6 questions, doing at least one question from each of the four sections listed above.

12.9 Geography

This subject covers areas such as the interrelationship between activities and the physical environment. It also includes the study of populations, farming, volcanoes, earthquakes, landscapes and other aspects of both physical and human and social geography. Geography is considered a science subject for some science courses in T.C.D. (It needs to be remembered that other 3rd level institutes do not consider Geography to be a laboratory science). Geography will be useful for career/courses in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, architecture, tourism, urban planning, environmental studies, weather forecasting, overseas development, and some science/environmental areas.

Subject content:

Three Core Units:

1. Patterns and processes in the physical environment
2. Regional geography
3. Geographical investigation

Two Elective Units (pick one):

4. Patterns and processes in economic activities
5. Patterns and processes in the human environment

Four Optional Units (pick one; higher level only):

6. Global interdependence
7. Geoecology
8. Culture and identity
9. The Atmosphere-Ocean environment

The Institute of Guidance Counsellors

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.

Exam Structure:

Leaving Certificate Geography is assessed at Ordinary and Higher level in ascending order of difficulty. There are two assessment components:

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

Students complete two questions on the core units, one question on an elective unit, and one question on an optional unit.

12.10 Religion

Religious Education explores issues of relevance in an informed and academic way, issues such as - meaning and values, the nature of morality, the development and diversity of beliefs, the principles of a just society and the implications of scientific progress. Religious Education offers deep insight into the evolution of religion since ancient times. This will inform your understanding of modern culture. Religious Education examines the Christian tradition as well as other traditions. Students who have studied R.E at Leaving Cert level have learned to be: critical thinkers, independent, objective, open-minded, balanced, informed and focused, yet aware of a variety of perspectives. In addition, they also develop the skills of research, communication, and to analyse issues, trends, and problems in an unbiased manner. These skills are valued in a number of professions, including, the fields of education, teaching (at both primary and post-primary) Law, Journalism, Human Resources, administration, Civil Service and many other occupations.

The course aims to explore issues such as meaning and value, the nature of morality, the development and diversity of belief, the principles of a just society, and the implications of scientific progress.

The course consists of three units:

1. Unit One The Search for Meaning and Values
2. Unit Two - Any two of: Christianity: Origins and Contemporary Expressions World Religions Moral Decision Making
3. Unit Three - Any one of: Religion and Gender Issues of Justice and Peace Worship, Prayer and Ritual The Bible: Literature and Sacred Text Religion: The Irish Experience Religion and Science

Assessment consists of two components

1. Coursework, 20%
2. Terminal written paper, 80%

Students' personal faith commitment and/or affiliation to a particular religious grouping will not be subject to assessment. Possible future courses/careers: Arts, Law, Journalism, Education, Social Work.

12.11 Physical Education

The purpose of the physical education course is to develop the student's ability to participate in physical education and physical activity. The course is suitable for students who have a strong interest in sports, physical fitness or physical activities such as dancing. It develops the student's performance levels, as well as introducing the student to insights into physical activity from the social and life sciences. Students choose from a wide variety of physical activities and will work to improve their performance in these activities.

As the written assessment comprises 50% of the marking, ability in the physical activity alone will not be sufficient, students will need to engage with the classroom portion of the course. The course is structured so that knowledge learned in the classroom, such as how to analyse skills and improve nutrition, will directly benefit the student's physical performance goals. The course recognises the importance of promoting physical activity and the demands an active lifestyle can place on students and adults. The course equips students to be proponents of active lifestyles equipped with the knowledge to maximise their own and others potential.

Why Study Physical Education

- For students with a talent for a physical activity, the course could be a valuable source of leaving cert points. However, students will need good attention to detail to work on the required skills for the physical assessment and a willingness to study the classroom sections of the course.
- For students faced with sacrificing sports or other activities to make time for their leaving cert preparation, the Physical Education course offers a way to balance the two.

What kind of student might Physical Education suit?

- The course should suit physically active students who are engaged in individual or team sports as well as activities such as dance and gymnastics.
- Students who plan to pursue a career in sports and fitness occupations, such as physiotherapy, physical training or sports coaching, will benefit from the course.
- Sports need not be a career goal to justify taking the course, the course content will benefit any student for whom participation in sports or dance makes up a significant part of their day to day lives

Course

The physical education course features theoretical and practical sections. The two sections are interlinked, with the knowledge gained in the theoretical section enabling the student to improve his/her performance in the practical assessments.

In the theoretical section students will study the factors that impact on physical performance, the relationship between sport and society and examine the benefits of participation in physical activity. The topics studied are varied, they include learning how to maintain fitness, nutrition, develop skills, the ethics of sport and the promotion of active lifestyles.

In the physical section, students will be assessed on their skill level in three activities. There is a wide range of physical activities that can be selected, such as football, rugby, sailing, swimming, dance, running and weight training. Students will then work on improving their preparation, participation and performance in their chosen activity.

The theoretical section is separated into two strands, students will study 4 topics in each strand for a total of 8 topics studied.

Strand 1 Towards optimum performance

In this set of topics students study the factors that influence physical performance, including how they can be applied to their own performance.

1. Learning and improving skill and technique
2. Physical and psychological demands of performance
3. Structures, strategies, roles and conventions
4. Planning for optimum performance

Strand 2 Contemporary issues in physical activity

Students learn about the culture of sports, it's role in society and how people experience physical activity and sport. There are six possible topics, but only four are set for each Leaving Cert cycle.

These topics are run every year

5. Promoting physical activity
6. Ethics and fair play

These topics rotate, with two of the following four appearing in each Leaving Cert cycle

7. Physical activity and inclusion
8. Technology, media and sport
9. Gender and physical activity
10. Business and enterprise in physical activity and sport

For the physical section students will select three activities. There are 6 categories of physical activity and students must select one from three different categories.

The six categories of physical activity are:

- Adventure activities – Orienteering, Kayaking, Rock-climbing, Sailing, Rowing/Sculling
 - Artistic and aesthetic activities – Artistic gymnastics, Rhythmic gymnastics, Dance
 - Athletics – Running, Throwing, Jumping
 - Aquatics – Lifesaving, Survival swimming, Two swimming strokes, Water-polo, Synchronised swimming
 - Games – Gaelic football, Hurling/Camogie, Rugby Union, Soccer, Basketball, Hockey, Netball, Olympic handball, Badminton, Tennis, Volleyball, Table tennis, Handball, Squash, Cricket, Softball, Rounders
 - Personal exercise and fitness – training, aerobics, spinning, indoor rowing, weight training, core stability, circuit training
1. Students will focus on three goals in the three selected physical activities.
 1. Develop the standard of their performance

2. Be creative in their personal performance as an individual performer and/or as a member of a team/group.
3. Be consistent in the quality of their performance.

Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of the Leaving Certificate Physical Education Students will have developed:

- level of performance in physical activity
- ability to reflect on performance in physical activity
- knowledge and understanding of the factors which influence performance and participation in physical activity
- appreciation of the benefits of physical activity for lifelong health and wellbeing
- capacity to undertake different roles in physical activities
- understanding of the principles underlying ethical participation in physical activity
- understanding of the role of physical activity and sport in the social and cultural life of Ireland.

Exam Structure

As the course is still being formulated, it is not possible to say with certainty the content of the assessments, however the general structure is available to us.

Students will be assessed in three ways,

- Written examination, worth 50% and which will have higher and ordinary level versions
- Physical activity project, worth 20% and which will have higher and ordinary level versions
- Performance assessment, worth 30% with common format for both higher and ordinary level.

Written examination

Half of the marks available for the course will be determined by a written examination, areas it will cover include the following

- Understanding of the factors which affect participation and performance in physical activity and the relationships between them
- A case study requiring students to apply their learning to a physical activity.

Physical Activity Project

Students will choose an activity from one of the six activity categories and select one of the following two roles

- performer
- coach/choreographer.

They will then develop their personal performance in their chosen role and activity by applying the knowledge and skills developed during the course.

The physical activity project should cover eight to ten weeks and will involve a project report completed in a digital format. This report will describe the student's progress in the project under four headings.

1. Performance analysis

2. Identification of four performance goals
3. Evidence of ongoing training/practice and reflection
4. Concluding analysis.

Performance Assessment

Students will select a physical activity and demonstrate their ability in a range of skills, techniques and/or compositional elements. In addition, they will be required to demonstrate understanding of the rules, conventions and safety practices of the chosen activity.

Assessment will be via recorded footage of the student performing the chosen activity, the footage should demonstrate the student's ability in the activity. Schools will supply recording devices to students suitable for capturing the required footage, paid for by a government grant. The footage will then be sent to the State Examinations Commission.

12.12 Technology, Music and Art

These subjects are normally only taken by those that have studied these subjects at Junior Certificate Level. In addition, for students to continue with these subjects to Leaving Certificate level it would be important to have developed a natural liking and aptitude towards these areas. Although Art is not a necessary requirement for third level course it is highly recommended for those intending to do an Art course particularly those that require a portfolio. Art will lay a solid foundation for many third level courses including, graphic design, advertising, Architecture and Industrial design. Preparation of a portfolio should not be left until 6th year. Art can be used to replace the basic requirement of a language in the National College of Art & Design. Art is useful for careers/courses in architecture, graphic design, photography, advertising, media production and areas of design such as, painting, interior design, fashion design, and graphic design.

12.13 Applied Maths

Applied Maths is the study of the practical applications of mathematics to the real world and physical problems. It is typically associated with engineering and physics, but also finds use in economics, finance, business, environmental studies, and even chemistry and medicine.

Why Study Applied Maths

- If you are getting A or B grades in Maths and Physics, you should be capable of getting similar grades in Applied Maths, thus enabling you to increase your points in the Leaving Cert.
- There is overlap between some parts of the Leaving Cert Physics course and the Applied Maths course, such as Linear Motion, Newton's Laws, and Circular Motion. Thus it will also help you to have a deeper understanding of these topics in Physics.
- As there is a high maths content in the course, it will also give you a better understanding of some parts of the Honours Maths course – especially Trigonometry, Calculus (Differentiation and Integration) and Vectors.
- It is ideal for students who may be weak at other subjects (such as languages), and good at Maths, as they can do honours Applied Maths to increase their points.
- It is very possible to cover the whole course in one year if a student is committed. Thus if you are starting Leaving Cert year, it is not too late to start.

- If you are considering studying any kind of engineering in college, Applied Maths is very important – all engineering students have to study Applied Maths in first year in college and you will have a head start if you have the Leaving Cert course done.

What kind of student might Applied Maths suit?

- This subject comes highly recommended for students considering a career in any area of Engineering, Science, Information Technology, Business, Finance, Architecture or Education.
- Students who are studying Leaving Cert higher level Maths. This course also helps students studying physics, due to some overlap in the course content.
- Students who need high entry points to get into university. In the last 5 years, on average 1,800 candidates sat the exam at higher level and upwards of one third of students achieved the equivalent of a H1 or H2 grade.
- Aside from niche languages such as Latin, Russian, and Japanese, this means that Applied Maths has the **highest percentage of H1 grades** in the Leaving Cert.

Recommendations/Tips

- A very suitable subject for the student taking higher-level maths and physics. Some students complete the programme as an additional after-school subject, taken in one or two periods per week, over the two years of Senior Cycle.

Course Overview

The Applied Mathematics course at Leaving Certificate is called 'Theoretical Mechanics' or 'Mathematical Physics' in third level courses. It is one of many branches of the more general field of Applied Mathematics.

Course Content

The course essentially covers the mathematics behind the behaviour of objects when placed in various situations, such as being thrown as projectiles, bounced off walls or other objects, immersed in fluids, or swung around on a rope. There are 10 questions on the exam paper, each covering one of these topics in detail. However, the exam only requires the student to complete six questions, so it is not uncommon for teachers to focus on six or seven topics, which makes the course and workload more manageable.

The course tends to avoid theory-heavy questions (such as proofs and manipulating formulae) which are found on the Mathematics paper, instead offering practical problems with numerical solutions, such as computing the volume of fluid in a container, or finding the optimal angle to throw a projectile at so that it will travel as far as possible. As a result, Applied Maths is excellent for developing strong problem solving skills, which are very valuable for future employment.

There is a separate examination paper for Ordinary level and Higher level:

Higher Level Paper

This is a 2.5 hour paper (150 minutes) and carries 300 marks. You are required to answer 6 out of 10 questions. Each carry 50 marks.

Don't Forget To

- Reflect on your experience of this subject at Junior Cycle level.
- Reflect on what was taught in the 4th year module.
- Talk to individual subject teachers.
- Browse a current textbook with a view to the level of interest in the material rather than the level of difficulty.
- Check www.examinations.ie and look at previous exam papers with a view to the

Subject A
Subject B
Subject C
Subject D
Subject E
Subject F
Subject G
Subject H

The student now has to pick 3 more subjects from

Subject A
Subject B
Subject C
Subject D
Subject E
Subject F
Subject G
Subject H

The student now has to pick 3 more subjects from

Subject A
Subject B
Subject C
Subject D
Subject E
Subject F
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Subject D
Subject E
Subject F
Subject G
Subject H

The student now has to pick 3 more subjects from

Subject A
Subject B
Subject C
Subject D
Subject E
Subject F
Subject G
Subject H

If not selecting a 3rd language, e.g. French, follow the same logic and select a 4th preference.

1.	Irish	
2.	Maths	
3.	English	
4.	French	
5.	Subject C	1 st ref.

6.		
7.		

1.	Irish	
2.	Maths	
3.	English	
4.	French	
5.	Subject C	1 st Pref.
6.	Subject F	2 nd Pref.
7.		

Each student should now ask themselves, *'if I was*

only allowed pick one other subject, what would it be? Let's say this student chooses subject F. This subject does not have as many positives as subject C, but still has more positives and the less negatives compared to the other available subjects. Let's call subject F the 2nd preference.

Each student should ask themselves, *'if I was only allowed pick one more subject, what would it be?* Most can answer this question. Let's say this student chooses subject C. This subject has the most positives and least negatives compared to the other available subject. Let's call subject C the 1st preference.

The student now has to choose one more subject from subjects A, B, D, E, G. When asked what they think of each of the remaining subjects, students start listing what is wrong with the remaining subject, and/or start to explain why subjects C & F are better. While this may be a valid exercise, it prevents the last subject being chosen. Students should not compare the remaining subjects with subjects C & F - of course they are better, that's why they are the 1st and 2nd preference. Students should compare the remaining subjects with each other. None of these subjects will be perfect, otherwise they would have already been chosen. The last subject should be the best of the rest. It should be the one with the least negatives and most positives from the remaining subjects.

1.	Irish	
2.	Maths	
3.	English	
4.	French	
5.	Subject C	1 st Pref.
6.	Subject F	2 nd Pref.
7.	Subject A/B/D/E/G	3 rd Pref.

*Assume a student chooses Irish,
English, Maths, and French.
They now have to choose 3 more subjects.*

1.	Irish
2.	Maths
3.	English
4.	French
5.	
6.	
7.	

The student to pick the 3 subjects from

- Subject A
- Subject B
- Subject C
- Subject D
- Subject E
- Subject F
- Subject G
- Subject H



1.	Irish	
2.	Maths	

3.	English	
4.	French	
5.	Subject C	1 st ref.
6.		
7.		

Each student should ask themselves, *'if I was only allowed pick one more subject, what would it be?'* Most can answer this question. Let's say this student chooses subject C. This subject has the most positives and least negatives compared to the other available subject. Let's call subject C the 1st preference.

The student now has to pick 3 more subjects from

Subject A
Subject B
Subject C
Subject D
Subject E
Subject F
Subject G
Subject H

The student now has to pick 3 more subjects from

Subject A
Subject B
Subject C
Subject D
Subject E
Subject F
Subject G
Subject H

The student now has to pick 3 more subjects from

Subject A
Subject B
Subject C
Subject D
Subject E
Subject F
Subject G
Subject H



The student now has to pick 3 more subjects from

- Subject A
- Subject B
- Subject C
- Subject D
- Subject E
- Subject F
- Subject G
- Subject H

The student now has to pick 3 more subjects from

- Subject A
- Subject B
- Subject C
- Subject D
- Subject E
- Subject F
- Subject G
- Subject H

The student now has to pick 3 more subjects from

- Subject A
- Subject B
- Subject C
- Subject D
- Subject E
- Subject F
- Subject G
- Subject H



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that's why they are the 1st and 2nd preference. Students should compare the remaining subjects with each other. None of these subjects will be perfect, otherwise they would have already been chosen. The last subject should be the best of the rest. It should be the one with the least negatives and most positives from the remaining subjects.

Each student should now ask themselves, 'if I was

only allowed pick one other subject, what would it be? Let's say this student chooses subject F. This subject does not have as many positives as subject C, but still has more positives and the less negatives compared to the other available subjects. Let's call subject F the 2nd preference.



1.	Irish	
2.	Maths	
3.	English	
4.	French	
5.	Subject C	1 st Pref.
6.	Subject F	2 nd Pref.
7.	Subject A/B/D/E/G	3 rd Pref.



1.	Irish	
2.	Maths	
3.	English	
4.	French	
5.	Subject C	1 st Pref.
6.	Subject F	2 nd Pref.
7.		



If not selecting a 3rd language, e.g. French, follow the same logic and select a 4th preference.

13. LEAVING CERTIFICATE VOCATIONAL PROGRAMME

An aptitude test is an instrument used to determine and measure an individual's ability to acquire, through future training, some specific set of skills. There are several aptitude tests on the market, and the one chosen is called the *Differential Aptitude Test*. This test covers several areas including, Verbal Reasoning, Numerical Ability, Abstract reasoning, Perceptual Speed and Accuracy, Mechanical Reasoning, Space Relations, Spelling, and Language Use. The tests are performed under exam conditions and are strictly timed. All questions have a definite right or wrong answer. Very few candidates usually complete the entire test and the questions usually become progressively more difficult. The test is also age related.

These tests can be used to help an individual

1. Choose among educational and career options based on strengths and weakness
2. Help an individual understand why they do well or poorly in certain subjects.
3. Can suggest new career options not previously considered.
4. Change or raise educational and career aspirations.

They cannot however, pinpoint one *specific* career or one *specific* subject that an individual should pursue.

All test of this nature should be viewed with extreme caution. Under no circumstance should the score be interpreted as final indisputable evidence of an individual's characteristics. The results provide only one small part of the information needed to help an individual make informed and realistic decisions and cannot be judged in isolation from other aspects of a

person's character including, job and other experiences, interests, goals, personality, values, family and environmental influences. Other factors that can also influence an individual's scores are; a hearing, visual, or physical disability or a poor command of English, as well as poor health or fatigue or an emotional disturbance on the day. In addition, an individual can lose his place on the answer sheet or may simply not be interested in cooperating with the exercise, or indeed, may simply be in bad humour on the day. Finally, it needs to be remembered that an individual can have an aptitude for a particular area but have no interest in it, and conversely, may have a low aptitude in area a have an extreme interest or liking for it.

Percentile and Stanine

When an individual takes a test the results a produced are raw scores. For example, if a candidate scores 17 in a test it has very little meaning unless it is know how this score relates to the total possible score. It is common therefore, to convert scores to percentages as this gives an indication as to how the candidate performed relative to a total possible score. However, percentages can themselves be misleading. For example, if a candidate scores 90% in a test, this might seem to be a very good score, but, if all the other candidates score 95%, this puts a different perceptive on this score of 90%. Therefore two systems are used to convert raw scores to a system that gives meaning to the result in terms of (i) the total possible score, (ii) the score relative to the score obtained by other candidates. These two systems are referred to as, *percentiles* and *stanine*.

A percentile score indicates the percentage of candidates who fall below a particular raw score. A score, which falls at the 65th percentile, means that an individual's score is better than 65% of the students. A 95th percentile score means that an individual's score is greater than 95% of the students, or, that this student's score is in the top 5% of students.

Stanine scores is a range expressed as a series of single digits numbers between 1 and 9, were 4 to 6 represents an average score. Percentile scores can be used in conjunction with stanine score as outlines below.

Verbal Reasoning

This test measures the ability of a student to see relationships among words. The test consists of analogies.

For example:is to bark as cat is to

Select one of the following answers.

- A maiow ----- kitten
- B dog -----miaow
- C dog -----scratch
- D seal ----- kitten
- E tree ----- Scratch

This test assesses the ability to infer the relationship between the first pair of words and apply the relationship to the second pair of words.

Verbal reasoning may be useful in helping to predict success in academic courses as well as in occupations where accurate communication is important. This includes business, law, education, marketing, public relations, the arts, and journalism. It has particular relevance for English, Irish, and other languages, as well as History. In these areas of study a great deal of reading is involved. Those with well-developed verbal reasoning will usually be good at finding the words to explain ideas and will be able to interpret written and spoken instructions. They will also be able to absorb lectures without losing concentration or becoming confused or left behind.

If a percentile in verbal reasoning is below 10, a student may be entitled to learning support from within the school. If the score is below 9 he should apply for a waiver in state exams, if below 2, he should apply for resource hours.

Numerical Ability

This test measures the ability to perform mathematical reasoning tasks. In order to ensure that reasoning rather than a computational facility is stressed, the computational level of the problem is low.

For example: $16x^2 + 4y^2 + 3x^2 =$

- A $19x^2 + 4y^2$
- B $19x^4 + 4y^2$
- C $23x^2y^2$
- D $23x^4y^2$
- E None of these

Numerical reasoning is important for success in courses such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, accounting, actuary, economics, engineering, trades such as electrician, and carpentry as well as banking, insurance, computing, and surveying. For general business courses – all of which have some mathematical component – good numerical reasoning can prove valuable. Those with high numerical reasoning will enjoy using numerical/statistical data and use these creatively and accurately. The numerical score alone is not enough to predict ability in honours Maths which also requires a high level of abstract reasoning

Abstract Reasoning

This test is a non-verbal measure of reasoning ability. It assesses how well individuals can reason geometric shapes or design. Each test item is a geometric series in which the elements change according to a given rule. The student is asked to infer the rule/s that are operating and predict the next step in the series. For example

Problem Figures

Answer Figure

Select the next figure in the sequence

This type of abstract reasoning is a measure of an individual's logical, analytical, and conceptual skills. This skill is important in courses or occupations that require the ability to see relationships among objects in terms of their size, shape, position, and quantities, and where the ability to analyse dynamic changes and project them forward in time. Examples include mathematics, computer programming, architecture, and mechanics, as well as law, medicine and economics. It is also useful in courses such as economics that requires an individual to envisage cause and effect in situations where it is important to predict the future based on past events and trends, for example, market trends in the financial sector. Individuals with good abstract reasoning will usually work out problems for themselves and will often challenge ideas that fail to be convincingly thought through or explained.

Perceptual Speed and Accuracy

This test measures the ability to compare and mark written lists quickly and accurately. This test may predict success in certain kinds of routine clerical tasks, such as filing and coding. Good scores are also desirable for certain jobs involving technical and scientific data. Example: The following list is given to the student. The list is then repeated on the answer sheet. The student is instructed to mark off the underlined combination on a separate answer sheet.

A	<u>AB</u> AC AD Ae AF
B	aA aB Ba BA <u>Bb</u>
C	A7 7A B7 <u>7B</u> AB

This aptitude tests can also be used to predict hand eye coordination and is carried out under strict time conditions. A high score can be useful in areas such as secretarial work, administration, pilot, computing, accounting, and finance related areas.

Mechanical Reasoning

This test measures the ability to understand basic mechanical principles of machinery, tools, and motion. Each item consists of a pictorially presented mechanical situation and a simply worded question. Items require reasoning rather than special knowledge.

Example: When the handle is moved in the direction of the arrow, in which direction will the paddle turn, A or B.

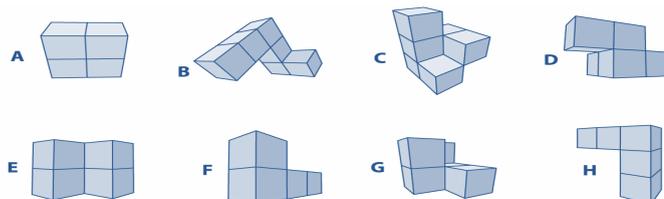


Those who do well in this test find it easy to learn how to repair and operate complex devices. Occupations such as carpenter, mechanic, engineering, electrician, physics, chemistry, and machine operator are among those that require good mechanical reasoning.

Space Relations

This test measures the ability to visualise a three-dimensional object from a two-dimensional pattern and to visualise how this object would look if rotated in space. Each problem shows one pattern, followed by four three-dimensional figures. The student is asked to choose the one figure that can be made from the pattern.

Example: The student is show a 3 D shape and asked to fold it (in his mind) and the select the resulting shape from the options below.



Occupations in which an individual is required to imagine how an object would look if made from a given pattern include, architecture, design courses, carpentry, civil and mechanical engineering, medicine, physiotherapy, and dentistry. Individuals can have a high score in space relations and not be good at art; however, a good art student would normally have a high score in space relations. This aptitude is not a measure of artistic creativity.

Spelling

This test measures how well the student can spell common English words. The words are presented in a format that includes three correctly spelled words and one misspelled word. The misspelled words reflect the most plausible and commonly made errors identified by a major research study.

Example: Which word is *not* spelled correctly?

- A cycle
- B gurl
- C arrow
- D wrote

The ability to spell is a basic skill necessary in many academic and vocational pursuits. It is also a helpful skill in courses that requires written reports. A low score can cause difficulties in courses where essay writing is an important component.

Language Use

This test measures the ability to detect errors in grammar, punctuation, and capitalization. The test consists of sentences that divide into four parts. The student must choose whether one part has an error in punctuation, capitalization, or grammar, or whether the sentence is correct as written.

Example:

Jason and Carl / will be mowing / the lawn / this Weekend

A B C D E No error

Well-developed language skills are needed in most jobs requiring a college degree. Careers in writing and teaching require a high level of ability in this area. Other areas include, secretarial work, law, writers, librarian, and editors.

Educational Aptitude (Verbal Reasoning and Numerical reasoning)

This combines the scores from verbal and numerical reasoning above. The resulting score provides the best general measure of educational aptitude or the ability to learn from books and teachers and to perform well in academic subjects.

Caution

Here are some examples of scores from past students (A to J) and the resulting points scored in their Leaving Certificate. Therefore, there must be something else contributing to exam success and, more importantly, success in a career.

	A	B	C	E	F	G	H	I	J
Verbal reasoning	90	37	92	93	25	10	5	80	56
Numerical Ability	91	94	97	99	17	17	50	78	60
Abstract Reasoning	89	42	96	98	42	66	38	50	94
Speed & Accuracy	90	92	68	80	60	90	55	89	21
Mechanical Reasoning	95	58	99	82	4	54	11	90	65
Space Relations	96	51	95	99	45	89	11	88	96
Spelling	88	99	99	81	60	23	32	87	40
Language Use	90	90	85	76	47	27	23	88	40
Educational Aptitude	90	70	97	99	18	12	20	90	45
<i>Points In The Leaving Cert.</i>	600	580	490	450	405	330	310	250	220

Each year 50,000+ students sit the Leaving Cert. and the average points scored nationally is 310 to 320

Remember aptitude tests do not measure many other qualities that are vital in successful careers such as,

- Determination to succeed
- Enthusiasm and confidence
- Energy to work long hours to achieve objectives
- Determination to identify and find solutions to problems
- Integrity, loyalty, and honesty
- Commercial and entrepreneurial instinct
- Initiative, creativity, and inventiveness
- Ability to persuade and motivate others
- Team spirit
- Leadership
- Ability to help others succeed
- Empathy
- Forward planning
- Refusal to accept defeat
- Sense of humour
- Intrapersonal skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Being socially responsibility
- Having the skill to make friends
- Independence

People will enjoy working with you, because you don't dodge work, you don't manipulate others to do your work, you admit your mistakes, you don't seek to take all the credit, you don't talk about people behind their backs, and you are not always negative about what is happening or what others do.

Success is not about how smart you are, it is about what you are smart at!

(and it is not usually measurable by a test)

Don't let what you can't do interfere with what you can do!

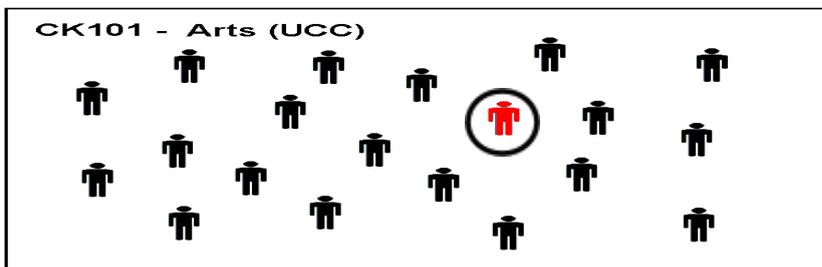
- Impulse control
- Stress tolerance
- Being realistic
- Optimism
- Self-regard
- Flexibility and adaptability

14. C.A.O. – How It Works

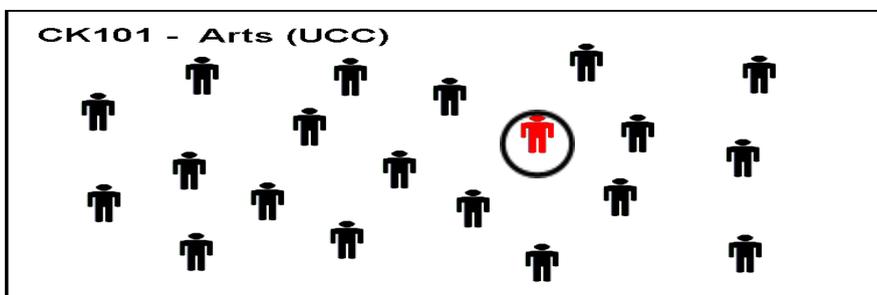
The C.A.O. (Central Applications Office) administers admissions into third level institutes throughout the country. Here is a mock-up of a C.A.O. application form. Applicants can choose up to ten level 8 Honours Degree courses and ten level 7 Ordinary degrees and/or ten level 6 Higher Certificate courses, or a mixture of 6 & 7.

Here is an explanation as to how the system operates. This candidate (circled) has applied for Arts in U.C.C. as their first preference. The candidate is then grouped with all other students who have applied for this course. They are in no particular order until the Leaving Certificate results of these students are published.

Round One

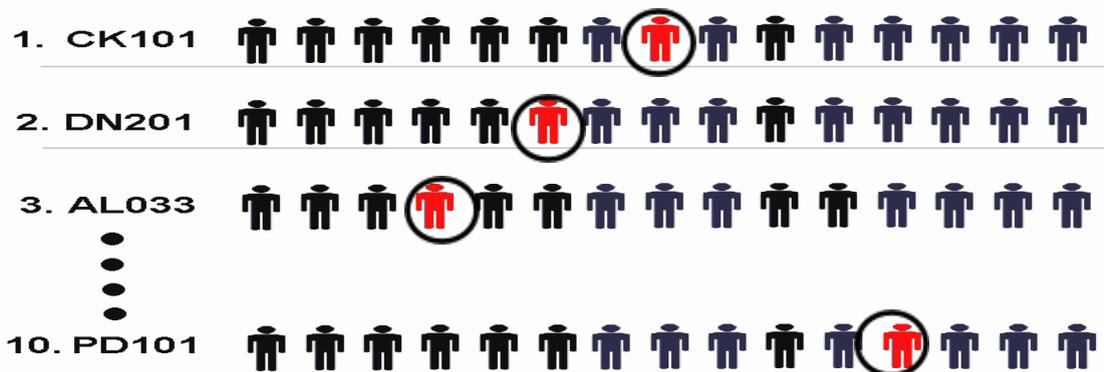


Once the results are published, the students' results are scanned to see who has all the minimum requirements. For example, one student failed English and another failed Irish. These students are now excluded from the rest of the process.

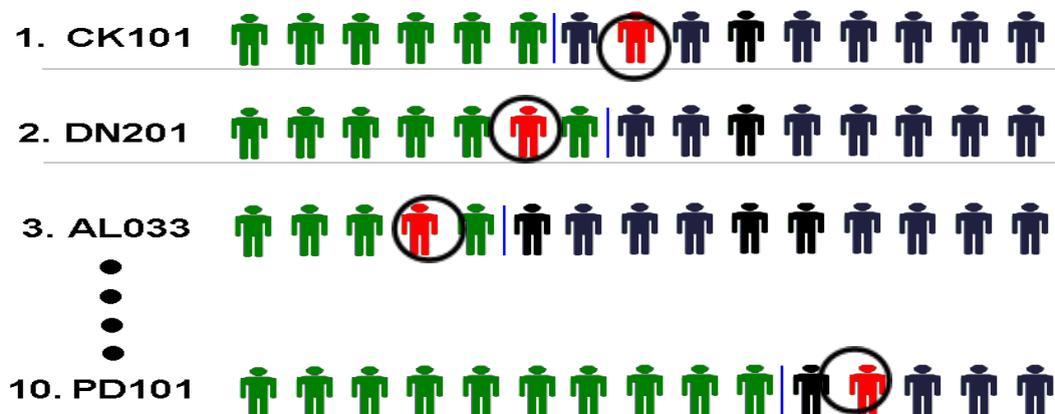


Excluded

Those students who have all the minimum requirements and who applied for Arts in U.C.C. (CK 101) are then ranked in order of points obtained. The student who obtained the highest number of points is placed at the top of the queue and the student who obtained the second highest number of points is placed second in the queue, and so on. This process is carried out for all the candidates' choices. The position in the queue for each of their courses is indicated above.



The colleges where each course takes place is then asked how many students will be taken into each course. This is then deemed to be the cut-off point as indicated below. For example, in U.C.C. Arts there are 6 places for 15 students in the queue. The points obtained by the 6th student in the queue are then the points published. **These are the points that are deemed to be the cut-off point and this is where the points that are published originate.** Our candidate is 8th in the queue and will not gain admission. For the 2nd, the college (DN 201), have indicated they will take the 7th student and above. Our candidate is 6th in the queue. For the 3rd, the college has indicated they will take the 5th student and above. Our candidate is 4th in the queue. This process is carried out for all of the courses applied for.



The computer will then scan and select the highest preference course the candidate is eligible for. In this case, it is the second choice, DN 201. Even though the candidate is eligible for the third choice, they will not be offered a place as they have indicated that they would prefer DN 201 above AL 033 by placing DN201 above AL 033 on their application. Indeed, all preferences from 3rd down are now wiped from the system. These courses from 3rd choice down will never be considered again. The student will now receive an offer of a place on DN 201 in round one. If eligible, they will receive two separate offers, one Level 8 (Honours Degree) and one level 7/6 (ordinary degree/certificate). Both offers are independent of each other but they can only accept one. If they receive, for example, their 3rd preference on level 8 in round one, all preferences below this will be deleted from the system and you will never be offered any course from 4th preference down. If they accept this offer they can still be offered their 2nd /1st preference/s in round two – if the points drop and they become eligible. If they do not accept this 3rd preference offer, they can still be offered their 2nd /1st preference/s in round two – if the points drop and they become eligible. However, if the points do not drop they cannot change their mind and ask for the original round one offer. They will be left with no offer. The same system operates independently for levels 7/6.

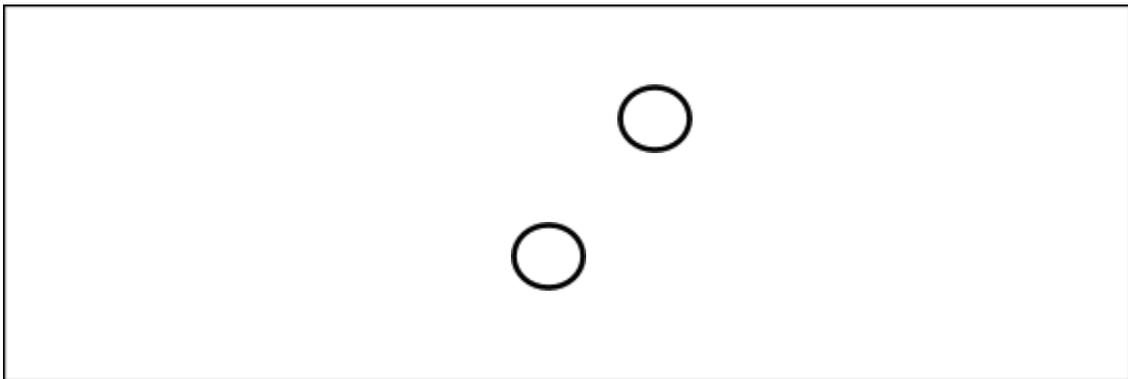
Accepting an offer on level 8 in round one does not preclude you receiving a higher preference offer on level 7/6 in round two. Similarly, accepting an offer on level 7/6 in round one does not preclude receiving a higher preference offer on level 8 in round two.

For example, if a student is offered course C on level 8 and course Y on level 7/6, they will never be offered courses D,E,F,G, nor, courses Z,P,Q,R,S. in future rounds. If they accept course C they can still be offered one of A or B or X in the second round. If they accept course Y they can still be offered course A or B or X in the second round.

Level 8		Level 7/6	
1	A	1	X
2	B	2	Y - Offered
3	C - Offered	3	Z - Deleted
4	D - Deleted	4	P - Deleted
5	E - Deleted	5	Q - Deleted
6	F - Deleted	6	R - Deleted
7	G - Deleted	7	S - Deleted

Round Two

The student's first preference was course CK101 and they did not achieve enough points. This candidate is two positions from being offered a place. Six students were offered a place on CK 101 in round one. If two of the students in the queue for CK 101 do not accept their first round offer, two places will become available. These two places will then be offered on Round 2 and our candidate will be offered a place. Therefore, in round one our student was offered DN 201 and in round two, roughly a week later, was offered CK 101. Our candidate can now decide to hold onto his first round offer and decline the second round offer, or can accept the second round offer and discard the first round offer. It is worth repeating, that accepting an offer on round one from level 8, does not prevent a higher round 2 offer from either level 8 or indeed level 7/6. Similarly, accepting a round one offer on level 7/6 does not prevent a higher round two offer from level 7/6 or indeed level 8. No candidate will ever be offered a course below the course offered in round one.



Restricted Courses

When checking the details of courses it should be noted that some courses are referred to as *restricted*. This means that to enter these courses the student is required to submit a portfolio and/or sit an aptitude test and/or attend an interview. These additional requirements also explain why some courses require more than 600 points. For example, Animation in the Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design, and Technology requires 699 points. This consists of points from the Leaving Certificate, a portfolio, and possibly an interview. In D.I.T. Architecture requires 590 points; 100 can be obtained from an aptitude test, 100 from an interview (at which it is recommended that portfolio is shown) and the remainder from the Leaving Certificate. Interviews, portfolio assessment, and aptitude testing are normally carried out during Easter time. As a result, some restricted courses cannot be added to an application after the 1st February. Even during the change of mind period (first week in May to 1st July) it is not possible to add most restricted courses to an application.

15. D.A.R.E & H.E.A.R.

D.A.R.E.

- The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a supplementary admissions scheme for school leavers with disabilities which operates on a reduced points basis.
- The C.A.O. application system is open from the first week in November.
- It is recommended that you register on line in early November.
- This will generate a C.A.O. application number.
- When you tick the disability/learning difficult box a series of application forms must be completed.
- The first part, Section A, needs to be completed by the student/school.
- The second part, Section B, needs to be completed by the school.
- The third part, Section C, needs to be completed by a medical professional/educational psychologist.
- Supporting documentation will need to be provided.
- All parts need the C.A.O. number. Therefore it is recommended that this process should be started in early November.
- It is also important to start this process in early November to give time for all mentioned above to complete the relevant sections and to source the relevant supporting documentation.
- Copies of all forms should be made and kept safely.
- Blank copies of the forms can be obtained on cao.ie. Click on "Downloads" and go to the "Supplemental Information Form" section.
- It is possible to start an application and generate an application number without inserting or selecting any courses. These can be selected and inserted later (before 1st February).
- Section A needs to be completed by 1st March.
- Section B & C need to be completed and sent to the C.A.O. by 1st April.
- More information can be found on accesscollege.ie and check DARE scheme.

H.E.A.R.

The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is a third level admissions scheme for school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. All documentation is completed by parent/s, and the school does not have to fill in any section. Full details on accesscollege.ie.

16. Irish & Language Exemption

NUI Exemptions

The National University of Ireland is an umbrella organisation for the following third level colleges.

University College, Dublin

University College, Cork

National University of Ireland, Galway

Maynooth University

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

National College of Art & Design

Shannon College of Hotel Management

Milltown Institute, Dublin

Institute of Public Administration

The colleges have some courses that require Irish and a third language as a minimum requirement. If a student has an exemption from studying Irish at secondary school, an application needs to be set to the NUI for the exemption from Irish and the third language to be carried over college course. Details can be found on www.nui.ie.

Non - N.U.I. College Exemptions

If a candidate has an Irish and is applying for a course or courses in a non-NUI college where Irish is an essential requirement, an application for that exemption needs to be made to each college. Contact each college for their individual application process.

17. Post Leaving Certificate Courses – P.L.C.

Further Education institutes through the city and county of Dublin provide post Leaving Certificate courses. These courses prepare candidates for employment or entry to Higher Education.

These courses do not operate a points system and most courses require passes in five Leaving Certificate subjects. In addition, an interview may also take place along with a portfolio submission in the case of some Art & Design courses. The official closing date is normally late February or March, however, a large number of courses will accept applications in September after the Leaving Certificate results are published. There are however, some very popular courses that fill all their places in February/March, for example, art, media, and music courses in Ballyfermot College of Further Education.

Students undertake these courses

- (i) For their educational value,
- (ii) To enhance employment opportunities,
- (iii) Gain entry to their original first choice in college for which they did not obtain the necessary points (back door entry)
- (iv) To gain entry to colleges in the U.K. which will accept the P.L.C. course in addition to, or instead of, their Leaving Certificate results.

When searching for a suitable course, it might be useful to *work backwards*, i.e. check if the degree course you really want accepts applications from P.L.C. courses. Then check what P.L.C. courses they will accept, and then find where that P.L.C. course is run. For example, D.I.T. hold 3 places on their Forensics & Environmental Science course for those who have completed an Applied Science/Lab Technicians P.L.C. course. They also hold 7 places on their Business & Marketing course for candidates who have complete one of four different types of P.L.C. courses. U.C.D. hold 20 places on their General Science degree, 25 on their Arts degree, 7 on their Nursing degrees, and 3 on their Commerce degree for those candidates who have completed and reached a certain standard in certain P.L.C. course. The I.T. in Tallaght hold off 10% of places on most of their courses for P.L.C. graduates.

P.L.C. Colleges In Dublin (www.etb.ie)

- College of Further Education, Dundrum
- Collinstown Park Community College, Clondalkin
- Deansrath Community College, Clondalkin
- Dundrum College
- Grange Community College, Donaghmede
- Greenhills College, Walkinstown
- Stillorgan College of Further Education
- Crumlin College of Further Education
- Pearse College of Further Education
- Colaiste Eoin, Finglas
- Colaiste Ide, Finglas
- Inchicore College of Further Education
- Killester College of Further Education

Below, is an example of how to search for the correct P.L.C. course.

This example shows how to search for the correct P.L.C. that can gain you entry into Media Studies in N.I.U.M. (MH109).

cao.ie

Click on
Student Resources
Click on
FETAC Information
Then FETAC
Requirements

Key in
'MH109'

Central Applications Office

Search Site...

HEI contact details
Downloads
Important Dates
Student Resources
Access Routes
DARE / HEAR
Restrictions
Mature Applicants
About Change of Mind
Information for Parents
Information for Schools
Media and Statistics
About CAO
Useful Links
FAQ
Contact Us

Central Applications Office

The Central Applications Office processes applications for undergraduate courses in Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Decisions on admissions to undergraduate courses are made by the HEIs who instruct CAO to make offers to successful candidates.

Visit the CAO Applicant News page for regular updates.

Need Help?
Click here for demonstration videos, guides and answers to frequently asked questions.

Demo Application
Try the online Demo Application to become more familiar with the application process.

Important Dates:
Change of Course
Deadline dates (17-18)
Deadline for completion of HEAR and DARE forms (17-18)

Central Applications Office Ltd. - Registered in Ireland Number 53983 - Registered Office: Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway.

Student Resources

All applicants must carefully read the CAO Handbook and take note of the important deadlines and any restrictions that may apply. Applicants must treat all correspondence from CAO as extremely important and notify CAO immediately through this website if there are any errors or omission recorded in application documents.

CAO Applicant News
CAO Video Guides
CAO Handbook
Online Applicant Checklist
Paper Applicant Checklist
Application Demo
About Change of Mind

FETAC Information
Alert Lists
Applicant Scoring
Points by Year
Entry to Medicine
FAQ

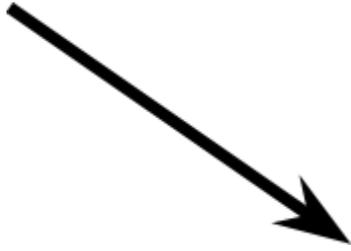
2011 FETAC Requirements Look-up (CAO Courses only)

FETAC (NCVA) awards are made up of a number of modules. Different sets of modules lead to different awards.

The applicant must be getting a **FULL** award. Certain courses require a specific award and/or a specific grade in specific modules.

For information on the evaluation of FETAC qualifications, click here.

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Arabic
MERGE FOR
MAT 102



Each of these codes represents a different P.L.C. course

EMPXX
ERPXX
ETFPX
EPJXX

Course	Course Title	Level	Essential FETAC awards	Essential FETAC Modules	Notes (Info)
MH109	Media Studies	8	EMPXX ERPXX ETFPX EPJXX	5 modules at distinction level. The qualification must include a distinction in E2008	GP8/MAN/ONE/-

Specific Module Requirement

It is now necessary to find which P.L.C. colleges offer these courses. The example below searches for EMPXX. The same search can be carried out for the other codes/courses.

www.qualifax.ie

Student

THE NATIONAL LEARNERS' DATABASE

Home Students Adult learners Guidance professionals Parents / Family News NFQ

You are here: Home > Students > Course Finder

Courses in Qualifax

Searching courses is one of the most important parts of Qualifax. There are a number of searches available on the left hand side menu. Most people will use [All Courses](#). You may however, prefer to look at one of the course types



**Code
EMPXXC**

**Can be
narrowed to a
county
e.g. Dublin**

PLC Post Leaving Cert - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=134

Course Title/Keywords:

Course:

Award Name:

Course Provider:

Career Area (alphabetical):

County:

Search

The Institute of Guidance

List of all the

PLC Post Leaving Cert - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=134

Showing 1 to 12 of 12 results for Course Code: EMPXX, County: Dublin, Course Type: PLC Post Leaving Cert

Compare	Tag All	Code	Course	Course Provider	NQO Level	NQO Classification
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IPAGE 102

Check List

- ✓ Find the C.A.O. code for the 3rd level college course you wish to enter.
- ✓ Search cao.ie to find the necessary P.L.C. code/s and any necessary modules.
- ✓ Search qualifax.ie using the P.L.C. code/s.

18. Teagasc

Teagasc is the Agriculture and Food Authority that provides training in the agricultural and foods services. As well as providing course within the C.A.O. system, they also provide course outside this system that do not require points. Please check their website for further details, www.teagasc.ie

19. Irish Fisheries Board

Irish Sea Fisheries Board is the state agencies with the responsibility for developing the Irish Sea Fishing and Aquaculture industries. They provide training and course outside the C.A.O points system. Please check their website for further details, www.bim.ie

20. Private Colleges

Although some of the private colleges operate within the C.A.O. system, they may also accept applications even if a candidate did not include their college/course on the original C.A.O application. In addition there are many other private colleges that operate outside the C.A.O. system.

Here is a list of some of the private colleges listed in the CAO handbook.

- Griffith College, Cork www.gcc.ie
- American College, Dublin www.amcd.ie
- College of Computer Training, Dublin www.cct.ie
- Dublin Business School www.dbs.ie
- Grafton College, Dublin www.graftoncollege.ie
- Griffith College, Dublin www.gcd.ie
- Independent College, Dublin www.independentcollege.ie
- IBAT College, Dublin www.ibat.ie
- ICD Business College, Dublin www.icd.ie
- Portobello Institute, Dublin www.portobelloinstitute.ie
- Irish College of Humanities & Applied Sciences, Limerick www.ichas.ie
- Griffith College, Limerick www.gcl.ie

All these colleges charge full fees and are not subsidised by the state. Please check their website for further details.

21. Non-College Options

21.1 Defence Forces, An Garda Síochána, & the Emergency Services

Who is recruited by these organisations? A large number of the individuals recruited to these organisations are in their mid-twenties and have a degree. Some have a degree that equipped them with skills that are useful to these organisations. For examples, computer degrees are useful to all of these organisations. Engineering or Science degrees can be useful in the Defence Forces and Garda, a sociology or Law degree can be useful to An Garda Síochána.

Some of those recruited by these organisations have a degree that may not seem directly useful when embarking on a career with these institutions, for example, History or English. However, those with these degrees have something that makes them more attractive to these organisations than those without a degree. They have demonstrated that they have the self-discipline and drive to commit to, and complete, a three or four year programme of study and they have shown that they have learned how to learn.

However, not all of the individuals recruited to these organisations have a degree. Some may have finished school recently or in that last two or three years. Why were these recruited? They may have a very impressive C.V. that include a Gaisce Silver or Gold Medal, an intermediate or advanced certificate in lifesaving or first aid, or volunteering in the community, or captain of a sports team or other impressive activities that makes them stand out from students who have the Leaving Certificate only.

21.2 Apprenticeships

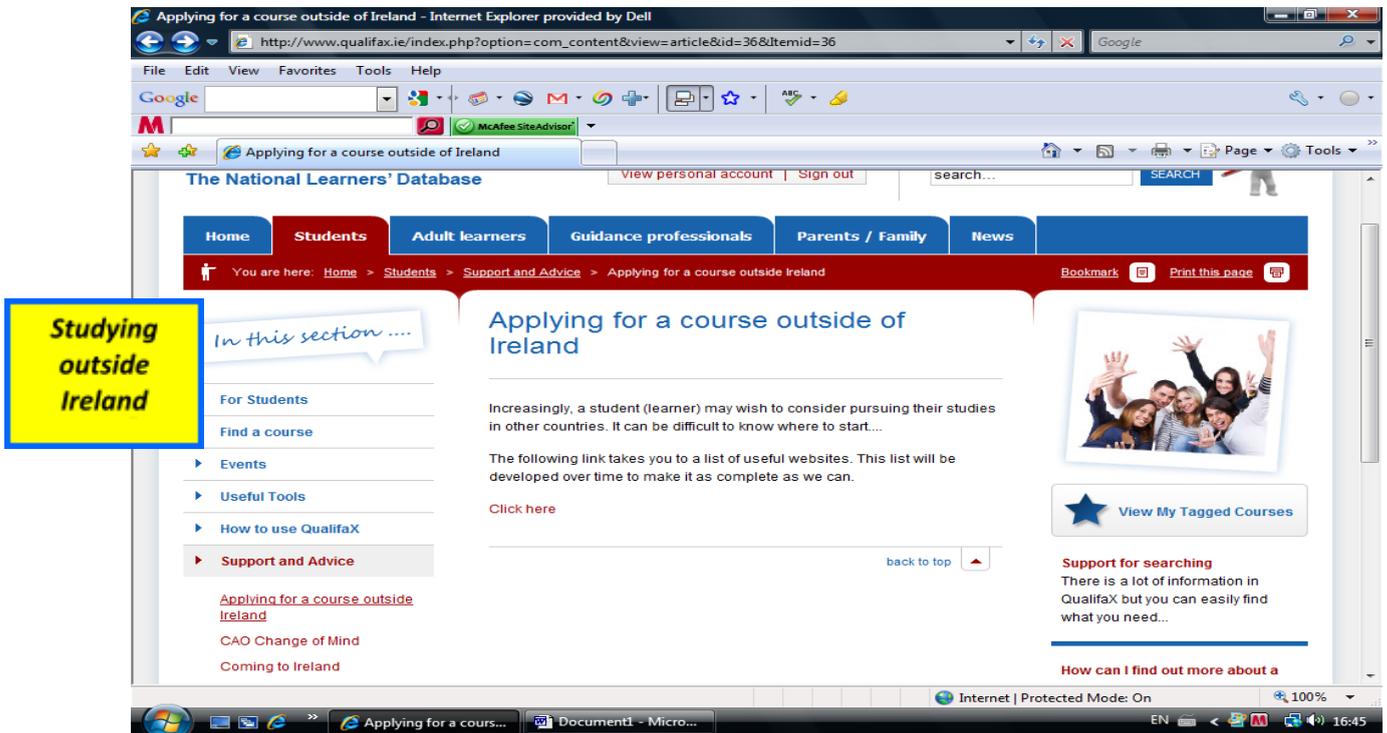
An apprenticeship is defined as a programme of structured education and training which formally combines and alternates learning in the workplace with learning in an education or training centre. It is a dual system, a blended combination of on-the-job employer-based training and off-the-job training.

Apprenticeships open up exciting and rewarding careers, with learning grounded in the practical experience of undertaking a real job and it allows apprentices to earn while they learn and build valuable work-ready skills in a chosen occupation. Apprenticeships in Ireland lead to an award at Levels 5 to 10 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and are between 2-4 years in duration with a minimum 50% on-the-job learning that allows for flexible delivery – online, blended, off-the-job learning in increments/blocks. Apprentices are employed under a formal contract of apprenticeship and employers pays the apprentice for the duration of the apprenticeship.

There are over 70 different types (www.solas.ie) of apprenticeships ranging in areas from Construction, Engineering, Electrical, Biopharmaceuticals, Motor, Hospitality, Computers, Logistics, Aircraft Maintenance and Financial Services. Some individuals select a particular apprenticeship because of family tradition or because of family or other connections. However, it might be useful to do the following. Study the various types of apprenticeships and assess the differences between them. Assess your own interests and aptitudes and try and find the optimum match between these and the characteristics of the particular apprenticeships. In other words, an individual can select an apprenticeship that can be easier to organise, or select one that may be more fulfilling.

22. Studying In Other Countries

Information regarding studying in other countries can be obtained from www.qualifax.ie and the relevant embassies.



23. United Kingdom – U.C.A.S.

The United Kingdom operates a similar system to the C.A.O. system. This is referred to as U.C.A.S. Any student interested in attending college in the Britain, or indeed anywhere else outside the

The Institute of Guidance Counsellors

Republic should let the careers office know **towards the end of 5th year**. The following points are worth noting:

- The system allows for a maximum of five courses in any order on an application.
- A candidate can only apply for Oxford or Cambridge but not both.
- Oxford and Cambridge operate an interview process and an assessment test procedure.
- Other colleges also operate an interview process for their more popular courses such as Medicine, Veterinary and Dentistry.
- No more than four choices allow in (i) Medicine, (ii) Dentistry, (iii) Veterinary.
- Closing date for Oxford and Cambridge is mid-October.
- Closing date for Medicine, Density, and Veterinary is mid-October.
- Closing date for most other courses is mid-January.
- Closing date for Art & Design courses is mid-March.
- The courses you apply for are described as being “invisible”. There is because each college is not aware of the other colleges/courses you have applied for.
- Once the application is sent it cannot be returned or amended if errors are found later.
- The website for applications is [www.ucas.co.uk](http://wwwucas.co.uk)
- A personal statement (4000 character essay, 47 lines, about 1¼ A4 pages) is required when making an application, along with a reference for the school Principal.
- Entrance qualifications are as follows, (i) based on points (U.C.A.S. not C.A.O.), (ii) Exam grades, e.g. ABBC is any or specific subjects, (iii) a combination of either (i) or (ii).
- You may be offered anywhere from one to all five choices. You can only accept two, the one you want most, a firm offer, the other is referred to as an insurance offer. The offers may be unconditional or conditional subject to results obtained.
- To study the courses listed below you must sit the **BMAT** aptitude test.

University of Cambridge:	Medicine Graduate Medicine Veterinary Medicine
Imperial College London:	Medicine Biomedical Science Pharmacology & Medical Science
University of Oxford:	Medicine Physiological Sciences
Royal Veterinary College:	Veterinary Medicine Combined Degree Programme
University College London:	Medicine
- Other Universities/Colleges in the U.K. use the **UKCAT** aptitude test. These tests take place in Dublin from July to October. You need to register on www.ukcat.ac.uk. Practice questions and answers can be downloaded free on this website. (Questions cannot be printed).
- Those wish to apply to Cambridge or Oxford should check out www.admissions.cam.ac.uk and www.admissions.ox.ac.uk.
- **The personal statement and course searches should be carried out over the summer holidays in 5th year so as to not interfere with study time in September/October in 6th year.**
- You will need three numbers/codes to begin the application process. You will be provided with these in September in 6th year. You do not need these numbers to search for courses or write your personal statement.

UCAS

24. Studying In The U.S.

Students who are interested in applying for courses in the U.S. should start the research and application process in 5th year. Full



details on the U.S. application process see www.fulbright.ie and the SAT's see www.collegeboard.org. Leaving this work until September/October in 6th year will interfere with the time that needs to be allocated to study. Please let the careers office know early in September of 6th year if an application for the U.S. is being made.

25. Studying In Europe Through English



Students who are interested in applying for courses in the Europe should start the research and application process in 5th year. Full details on www.eunicas.ie. Leaving this work until September/October will interfere with the time that needs to be allocated to study. Please let the careers office know early in September of 6th year if an application for the Europe is being made.

26. Grants & Scholarships

Eligibility criteria for state grants can be found on www.susi.ie
Some other of the grants and scholarships that are available are:

- Local Authority maintenance grants
- The Millennium Partnership Fund
- Student Assistance Fund
- Scholarships for Ethnic Minorities (Bank of Ireland)
- Irish Institute of Taxation Scholarships
- National Building Agency Foley Scholarship for architecture
- Science Foundation Ireland Engineering Scholarship
- Credit Union Scholarships
- Guinness – Liberties & Coombe Scholarships
- Dublin Docklands Development Authority Scholarship
- Donogh O'Malley Scholarships
- National University of Ireland (N.U.I.) Equal Education Opportunities Scholarships
- SIPTU Education Scholarships
- Details available on www.studentfinance.ie

27. Conclusion

Success is ...contentment

The processes described in this booklet are exactly that, *a process*. It can result in frustration and disappointment for an individual if they seek out a single event or activity they believe

can provide a definitive exact answer as to what career to follow. If a definitive answer is not yet available patience is required. The individual may have not yet have engaged in, or been exposed to, or given the opportunity to be involved in an activity that allows for a match with their interests, aptitudes and personal characteristics. Indeed, it can be argued that for most – but not all – to try and find the answer to what they will do for the rest of their lives is mis-guided.

Consider that, at the age of 4 months, a soother provided us with the satisfaction we needed at that developmental stage. At 4 years of age this progressed to a cuddly toy. At 10 years of age this progressed to a more sophisticated toy and at the age of 14 this changed again as it did at the age of 17. These changes do not stop once we have reached the age of 18 or adulthood. A 22 year old will be satisfied going on a camping holiday with friends despite the rain and mud. At 30 years of age this progress onto a B & B, and later this progress on to hotel with all its mod-cons that we need to satisfy us. Therefore, it can be argued that the changes that take place with regard to stimuli that we needed up to the age of 18 will continue – albeit at a slower pace – for the rest of our lives. Therefore, if considering doing a degree, it might be advisable to do a degree based on what interests the individual has *now* and allow the experiences during the years doing that degree determine the next step. In other words, do a degree you enjoy and do a postgrad to get a job.

At the beginning of this booklet it was stated that;

We all know people who go to work each day and enjoy the challenges and tasks associated with their chosen occupation. These are individuals who, generally, have fulfilling working lives, and for whom work is a meaningful and stimulating experience. However, on the other hand, there are also individuals who, day in and day out, year in year out, struggle to find any real purpose in

their chosen field of work other than the financial reward that is necessary for survival. For them, work is a means to an end, something that facilitates meeting their financial obligations. It can be argued that such outcomes do not happen by chance and that various factors have come into play to determine if an individual enjoys or dislikes their work. For those that find themselves in a fulfilling job are said to be in a working environment that matches their interests, aptitude and personal characteristics. Those that find themselves in a working environment they do not enjoy may have to perform tasks that do not match their interests or aptitudes or personal characteristics or indeed all three.

It needs to be acknowledged that this description highlights either end of a continuous spectrum or people. It is inconceivable to think that every individual will find that perfect job or occupation that provides a 100% match for their interests, aptitudes, and personal characteristics. Therefore, a more practical approach is for individuals might be not to try and find that perfect job, but rather *strive towards* finding an *optimum* fit. This is particularly important given the constraints of the economy, our aptitudes, financial position, and opportunities available.

Finally, consider the blissfully happy individual who is content with life despite their job having tasks that are not challenging or stimulating. What makes this individual perfectly happy with their lot? It may be because they derive their satisfaction from elsewhere in their life. Their gratification may be drawn from; their relationships with those that matter to them, the joy of being a good parent and providing for their children, from their involvement in coaching the under 7's and the quiet reflective moments they relishes when pursuing their hobby. Sometimes all we need are the simple things in life to make us happy, or should that be *content*.

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NOTES