



SUBJECT CHOICE FOR LEAVING CERT



There are lots of factors to consider when choosing your subjects for Leaving Cert so it's important to do your research and make an informed decision. Use the [CourseFinder](#) on Careersportal to search courses and explore their individual entry requirements.

Most students will study 7 subjects for their Leaving Cert although some students will decide to study an 8th subject outside of school. These subjects can be taken at either Higher or Ordinary Level. Two subjects can be taken at Foundation Level: Irish and Maths.



Subject choice breaks down into the Core Subjects which most students will take (unless they are exempt)

English, Irish and Maths
and
4 Additional Subjects



There are 3 important points to consider when choosing your additional Leaving Cert Subjects:

- What do I like?
- What am I good at?
- What subjects and grades might I need for the courses/colleges I am interested in?

(The savvy student will do some research on websites like qualifax.ie and careersportal.ie to get a handle on the exact requirements of courses they are interested in.)



You're good at what you enjoy

It's much harder to do well in a subject that you don't enjoy. Choose what you're good at, it will come naturally to you. Studying a subject you enjoy can decrease the pressure and workload immensely.



Leaving Cert Subjects

Practical Group

Construction Studies	Design & Communication Graphics (DCG)	
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Science Group

Biology	Chemistry	Agricultural Science
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Artistic & Creative Group

Art		
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Humanities Group

English	French	Gaeilge
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Social Group

Geography	Home Economics (S&S)	Politics & Society
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Business Group

Business	Economics	LCVP Link Modules
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Subject Requirements



A **third language** is required for entry to [National University of Ireland colleges](#) for most degree programmes in Arts, Human Sciences, Social Science, Medicine and Health Sciences and some other degrees. The following NUI universities and colleges require a pass in a third language for most of their courses:

- UCC
- NUI Galway
- UCD
- NUI Maynooth
- The Royal College of Surgeons
- St. Angela's College, Sligo
- Pontifical University, Maynooth
- Shannon College of Hotel Management



Other colleges have a third language as a requirement for certain courses that have a large language component, e.g. European Studies, Languages & Marketing, Hotel Management, Languages & International Tourism.

***Health Sciences (e.g. Medicine, Pharmacy, etc) do require a third language in NUI universities and colleges.

- Entry to the Cadetships in the Army, Army Equitation, Air Corps and Naval Service require a third Language.
- NCAD require a third language or Art
- Many science and engineering courses include the study of French or German from scratch.



No Third Language is required for the colleges below unless it is a specific course requirement (a pass in Irish will suffice). If you are interested in studying a language in one of these college you do need to check the specific grade required.

- Trinity College
- University of Limerick
- DCU
- TU Dublin
- The Institutes of Technology

*No 3rd language required for Engineering & Science NUI Maynooth

*No 3rd language required for Engineering, Science & Ag Science in UCD (except for DN037- Biomedical, Health & Life Sciences)

*No 3rd language required for Engineering, Science & Food Science UCC

*No 3rd language required for Engineering & Science NUI Galway (except for GY304- Biotechnology)

*No 3rd language required for Gardaí, Nursing, Apprenticeships and most PLC Courses



Science Subjects

Having a lab science (Agricultural Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physics & Chemistry) is a requirement for some courses so it is good to be aware of these before dropping science from your list.

-Be aware that most courses in healthcare professions require a science subject e.g. nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy. Additionally some medical courses require two science subjects such as Dentistry and Medicine.

-Some engineering courses require a science subject but many will accept an alternative e.g. the Leaving Cert subject Technology is accepted as an alternative for Maynooth MH304 and UCC CK600.

Biology is a firm favourite amongst students. Year-on-year the number of candidates taking biology is in excess of the number of candidates taking all the other sciences combined. It is the most popular Leaving Cert optional subject but this doesn't mean it's the easiest. Mathematically minded students may do better in Chemistry or Physics.



Practical Subjects

Practical subjects have project work that accounts for a substantial percentage of the overall grade. This can ease the burden of studying on students. Having a practical focus can also add variety to your Leaving Cert subject combination.

Course Work and Projects

Many subjects now contain a course work or project element and unfortunately the deadlines for these projects fall very closely together. The deadline for the DCG coursework is in mid-January. March sees the deadline for projects in Engineering, Art, Technology and LCVP. Home Economics Food Studies is November, Textile Studies is in April. Agricultural Science coursework deadline is early April and the end of April sees the coursework deadline for History and Geography, as well as Religious Studies, Music, Home Economics (textile elective) and the Construction Studies project.

It is wise to consider the coursework involved in the subject combination you are thinking about before making your final decision.



Complementary Subjects

Everyone wants to reduce the workload so think about what subjects might overlap. Home Economics and Biology, for example, overlap in human anatomy and food study sections. There is a strong correlation between Physics and Applied Maths, and Agricultural Science has some overlap with Geography and Biology. The Link Modules in the LCVP programme are deeply rooted in the Business Studies course; if a student chooses complimentary subjects they might be able to cut down on some of the study.



Maths

If you choose to study higher level maths it is worth noting that you will be rewarded an extra 25 points provided you achieve a H1 - H6 grade (and that it is one of your top 6 achieved grades). Maths is not a requirement for every course and the number of courses now accepting foundation level maths has increased.

Use the 'Accepts Foundation Level Maths' or 'No Maths Required' filters on the Careersportal [CourseFinder](#) to search relevant courses.



A few final tips

- Do your research – organising to meet with me when you have some ideas can be of great value.
- Many subjects are very different from their Junior Cert equivalent so make sure the course is what you imagined it to be.

Pick a broad range of subjects:

- One language
- One business
- One science
- One humanities / applied Science

This combination will allow access to a broad range of courses/ careers.



Option Blocks 2023/24:

Last year students chose ONE from each grouping below, with the addition for this year of Politics and Society in Group 4.

(These blocks are likely to remain for 2024/2025)

GROUP 1	Business	Geography	Art	Politics and Society
GROUP 2	DCG	Construction	Ag Science	Economics
GROUP 3	Biology	Home Economics	Business	French
GROUP 4	History	Chemistry	Physical Education	

Check out the [Subjects and Career Choice](#) page on Careersportal

Also look at the [Subject Explorer page](#) for more detailed breakdowns of each subject

And the Qualifax [Minimum Subject Requirements](#) page

Further detailed info is available on our website and [here](#)



Finally - Here are my eight ACE do's for subject choice for 3rd and 4th-year students:

- Do...Choose subjects you enjoy learning about
- Do...Discuss it with as many people as you can including teachers and peers etc
- Do...Try and keep your options open as much as possible
- Do...Choose subjects you have some kind of a flair for or Interest In
- Do...Research each subject's content on <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/>
- Do...Choose subjects linked to a possible future career you are considering
- Do...Write down the Pro's/Con's when trying to decide between two subjects
- Do...Make the final decision yourself(not your friends, teachers, or parents)

