

**Leaving Certificate Subject Choice
Information Booklet
Patrician Presentation Secondary
School, Fethard.**



Introduction

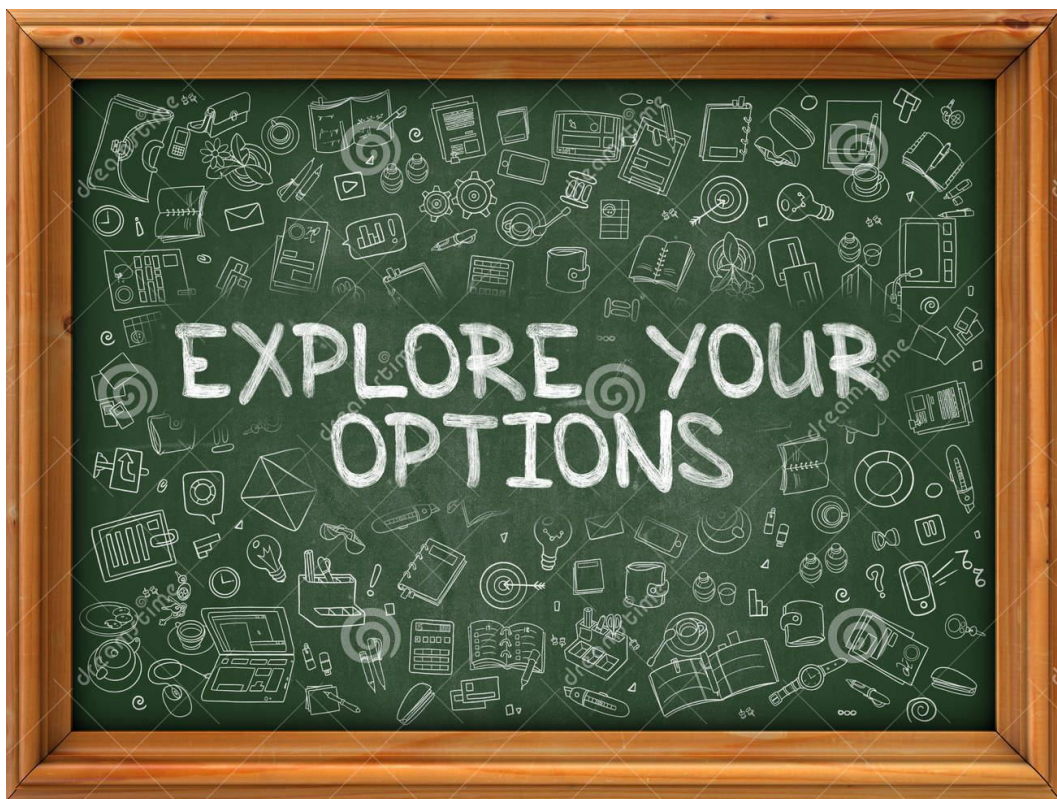
The purpose of this booklet is to provide pupils with the necessary information to choose the subjects for the Leaving Certificate which suit their needs and interests. Choosing subjects to study in the Leaving Certificate is not easy, and pupils must consider their possible future college choices and careers when doing so. Consultation with teachers, parents, pupils and guidance staff is essential.

PUPILS SHOULD READ THIS BOOKLET FULLY!

Students should never choose a subject without knowing what they will be studying. It is important to note that some future careers require certain subjects at leaving certificate (e.g., medicine requires a strong knowledge of chemistry).

We pride ourselves here in Patrician Presentation Secondary School, Fethard on our academic excellence. We believe that informed subject choices are crucial to this success. The remainder of this booklet will try to explain the process involved in making subject choices in our school and will provide detailed information on each subject available in the school, both compulsory and optional.

Justin McGree
Guidance Counsellor



Subject Choice Process in Patrician Presentation Secondary School

In general, pupils at our school study seven subjects for Leaving Certificate.

English, Mathematics and Irish (unless exempt) are compulsory. The remaining subjects on offer are organised into blocks based on pupil preferences. Much work goes into the development of these blocks in order to best suit the requirements of the pupils. In order to derive maximum benefit from the process it is important that pupils give some thought to their strengths, abilities and, where known, future career and university aspirations in advance of making their subject choices.

Parents and students will be invited to attend a **Subject and Programme Information Evening** that will give detailed information on the Leaving Certificate (LC), LCVP, Transition Year and Subject Choice specific information.

In addition to the seven main subject groupings, pupils will also benefit from classes in RE, PE and Careers.

Subjects are placed in blocks to allow the greatest choice possible whilst also providing for timetabling requirements.



Factors to Consider When Choosing Your Leaving Cert Subjects

Third Language

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

Science Subjects

Choosing a subject in the field of science is also a popular choice. Having a lab science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) 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.**

Chemistry is a required subject for Pharmacy in RCSI and UCC. Trinity also requires Chemistry but will accept Physics/Chemistry as an alternative. Veterinary Science (UCD), Dentistry (UCC), Medicine (UCC), Medical and Health Sciences (UCC), Human Nutrition and Dietetics (TU Dublin) all require Chemistry.

Many engineering courses require a science subject e.g. MH304 and UCC CK600.

A lab science is required for entry to many Science courses. However, some courses accept alternative subjects. Some of these include the following:

- UCD (DN200) accepts Geography
- TU Dublin (DT201) accepts Engineering, Technology or Applied Mathematics.
- Maynooth University (MH201) accepts Applied Mathematics, Computer Science.

[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. Biology is a long course that requires a lot of rote learning. Mathematically-minded students may perhaps do better in [Chemistry](#).



Compulsory Subjects in Leaving Certificate:

- English
- Irish (Unless exempt based on a number of criteria)
- Mathematics

Optional Subjects available in Patrician Presentation Secondary School:

- Art
- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- Construction Studies
- Design Communication Graphics
- Economics
- French
- Geography
- History
- Home Economics
- Politics and Society
- Spanish (ab initio only in order to satisfy LCVP language requirement)

Additional Timetabled Subjects

- Careers
- LCVP (Dependent on meeting the required Vocational Subject Groupings **VSG's** for that Year)
- Physical Education
- Religious Education

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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Core Subject: English

Course Overview:

English is a core subject and is compulsory in all schools.

The exams at both higher and ordinary level require students to sit two papers. Junior Certificate results are often a good indication of what level a student should choose for Senior Cycle English. A large number of students take English at higher level but you should not underestimate the amount of work required to obtain a high grade

Language

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

1. The Language of Information.
2. The Language of Argument.
3. The Language of Persuasion.
4. The Language of Narration.
5. The Aesthetic use of Language.

Literature

- Students are required to study one literary text from a list of prescribed texts.
- Students are required to study three other texts in the Comparative manner, according to the comparative modes prescribed for that year.
- Students are required to study at least six poets from the eight poets prescribed at Higher Level. At Ordinary Level 36 poems are prescribed.

Compulsory elements: At Higher Level a Shakespearean Play must be one of the texts chosen for study on its own or as an element of the Comparative study.

Optional Elements: At Ordinary Level the study of a Shakespearean play is optional.

Exam Structure

Paper I Higher and Ordinary Level - 170 mins. - 200 marks.

Section I Three texts - one which is visual - are presented to students on a general Theme. Two sets of questions, an A and a B follow each text. Candidates must answer a question A on one text and a question B on a different text. (100 marks)

Section II (Composing) Candidates must write an extended composition in a specific genre of language from a list of seven choices. (100 marks)

Paper II Higher and Ordinary Level - 200 mins. - 200 marks.

Section I The single text (60 marks)

Section II The Comparative study (70 marks)

Section III Poetry (70 marks)

Higher Level

- (i) Unseen poem (20 marks)
- (ii) Prescribed poetry (50 marks)

Ordinary Level

- (i) Unseen poem (20 marks)
- (ii) Four poems will be printed on the exam paper and students must answer questions on one of the four. (50 marks)

Core Subject: Irish (Unless DES Exemption in place)

Course Overview

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

The learner's oral competency is assessed around Easter of the final year, in an oral examination worth 40%, at each level, of the overall mark. The other three skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing are assessed in June. Aspects of literary works must be studied at Ordinary Level while at Higher Level these same works and additional material must be studied in detail.

The [NCCA](#) is currently undertaking a review of the Leaving Certificate Syllabus.

Students at Leaving Cert are introduced to Irish Literature and culture. The Leaving Cert exam takes the form of three parts: oral, aural (listening skills) and written examinations.

Recent revisions to the syllabus mean that there is now a greater emphasis on the spoken word and trying to be more fluent in our native tongue.

The oral exam is now worth 40% of the overall mark. It takes place after the Easter mid-term break. Students engage in conversation with an examiner and discuss different topics in Irish.

The aural exam takes place on the same day as the written paper and has been shortened in length as part of the new syllabus. The aural exam now will last about 20-25 minutes. Students will listen to a series of dialogues/conversations and answer questions about the content.

There are four components to the Leaving Certificate examination: an oral exam, a listening comprehension, a language paper and a literature paper.

A. PRÓS Gnáthleibhéal agus Ardleibhéal

- Prescribed prose for Ordinary and Higher Level

Déantar staidéar anseo ar chúig phíosa phróis; scéal béaloideas, gearrscéal sliocht as úrscéal, sliocht as dírbheatháisnéis, agus scannán nó drama. 5 prose pieces are studied, a folk tale, a short story, an excerpt from a novel, an excerpt from an autobiography:

- Oisín i dTír na n-Óg
- An Gnáth Rud le Deirdre Ní Ghrianna
- Dís le Síobhán Ní Shúilleabháin
- Hurlamaboc le Éilís Ní Dhuibhne
- Cáca milis.

B. FILÍOCHT Gnáthleibhéal agus Ardleibhéal

- Poetry for Ordinary and Higher Level

Déantar staidéar ar chúig dhán.
Five poems are generally studied:

- Géibheann le Caitlín Maude
- Colscaradh le Pádraig Mac Suibhne
- Mo Ghrá-sa (idir lúibíní) le Nuala Ní dhomhnaill
- An spailpín Fánach
- An tEarrach Thiar le Máirtín Ó Direáin

ARD LÉIBHÉAL

Déantar staidéar ar úrscéal, nó dráma, nó cnuasach gearrscéalta nó dánta breise.

In addition Higher level students study a novel, or a play, or a collection of short stories or a selection of poems.

AN SCRÚDÚ CAINTE (Beal) The oral exam

Seo a leanas an leagan amach a bhíonn ar an scrúdú cainte:

This is the order of the examination:

(i) Tugann an dalta: Ainm, Aois, Dáta breiathe, Seoladh Baile, Scrúduimhir don scrúdaitheoir
The pupil must give the examiner their name, age, date of birth, address and examination number

(ii) Léitheoireacht - Reading

Caithfear cúig dhán a ullmhú don scrúdú cainte.

Five poems must be prepared.

Roghnóidh an scrúdaitheoir ceann amháin de na dánta sin,

The examiner will choose one of the poems.

Beidh ar an iarrathóir 12 líne a léamh amach ósard.

The candidate must read 12 lines out loud.

Tabharfar nóiméid amháin don iarrthóir an dán a ullmhú

(iii) Sraith Pictiúr - Picture Series.

Caithfear 20 pictiúr a ullmhú don scrúdú.

20 pictures are prepared for the exam.

Roghnóidh an scrúdaitheoir ceann amháin as 20

The examiner will choose one to examine the student on.

Exam Structure

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

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

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

The Irish exam is divided between two written exams and an oral exam. The written exam carries 60% of the mark and the Irish oral exam carries 40% of the mark.

Core Subject: Mathematics

Course Content

The number of candidates sitting Higher Level Maths has grown steadily since 25 bonus CAO points were introduced in 2012 to successful students who achieve a H6 or better and where it is in the top 6 grades achieved.

Mathematics is available for study at three levels: Foundation; Ordinary; Higher. Each level covers everything in the levels below it.

Aiming for Higher Level:

Mathematics at higher level is designed to suit the needs of all students, whether they are continuing their study of mathematics to third level, studying it as a compliment to another subject (such as Business or Physics), or just looking for points.

The higher-level course familiarises students with the ideas of abstraction and rigorous proof, giving learners a feel for the great mathematical concepts that span many centuries and cultures, as well as covering practical everyday topics which students are meeting in their lives outside school.

Higher level maths is considered the most time-consuming subject of all and often requires more hours of study than other subjects to get a good result. The course is demanding, but very rewarding, both in terms of intellectual achievement and potential career paths opened. However, once you master the skills and concepts, the amount of memory work is minimal. Worldwide, and particularly in Ireland there is huge demand for students who are technically capable, and higher level mathematics trains students in the skills needed to succeed.

Aiming for Ordinary Level:

At ordinary level, students are offered mathematics that is meaningful, relatively accessible, and chosen with the understanding that many of them may go on to use and apply mathematics in their future careers, and all of them will meet the subject to a greater or lesser degree in their daily lives.

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

Most Leaving Cert students sit the ordinary level maths exam, often dropping down from higher level having become more aware of their level of ability and perhaps due to increased pressure in sixth year.

Tip: The most important thing to consider is how much time you are spending on higher maths. If you are spending too much time and but are capable of a H6 grade, you have the benefit of gaining 25 additional bonus points. On the other hand, if you are unlikely to achieve this grade, maybe the time could be better spent on other subjects you are stronger in.

Aiming for Foundation Level:

At foundation level, maths is about developing a body of knowledge and skills that make sense, and can be used in many different ways as good method of solving problems and finding answers. It is intended to equip learners with the knowledge and skills required in everyday life. It is also intended to lay the groundwork for learners who may proceed to further studies in areas in which specialist mathematics is not required.

The course focuses primarily on fundamental skills and providing a basic but solid understanding of mathematical concepts which will remain relevant and useful in the future. As well as numerical problems, students can also expect to be presented with visual and spatial questions, as well as some theory.

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

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

- Statistics and Probability aims to provide an understanding of what probability is and why concepts such as variation and uncertainty are important. Students will also learn how to analyse statistics such as those in newspapers, business reports, and scientific data, so that they can draw meaningful and relevant conclusions.
- Geometry and Trigonometry deals with shapes such as circles and triangles, both on the coordinate plane and otherwise. The skills developed here are useful in areas such as architecture, landscape design, and agriculture, as well as visual design and spatial reasoning.
- Number Learners continue to make meaning of the operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of whole and rational numbers and extend this sense-making to complex numbers.
- Algebra builds on the relations-based approach of junior cycle, which has five main objectives:

- to make use of letter symbols for numeric quantities

- to emphasise relationship based algebra

- to connect graphical and symbolic representations of algebraic concepts

- to use real life problems as vehicles to motivate the use of algebra and algebraic thinking

- to use appropriate graphing technologies (graphing calculators, computer software) throughout the strand activities.

Exam Structure

At Ordinary level and Higher level there are two assessment components

- Mathematics Paper 1
- Mathematics Paper 2

Each paper will contain two sections – A and B.

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

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

Optional Subject: Art

Course Overview

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

This subject requires a lot of work and study for the Leaving Certificate and students need to be creative and/or be able to interpret the creative work of others.

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

Art is examined in three ways:

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

Course Content

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

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

Exam Structure

The exam structure is the same at higher and ordinary level

Candidate will be required to answer all four papers:

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

Option Subject: Biology

Course Overview

Biology remains one of the most popular subject choices. The syllabus requires a lot of memory work.

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

Course Content

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

The syllabus has been developed in response to current knowledge and application of biology. Account has been taken of the need to include contemporary biological technologies such as DNA profiling and genetic screening. It aims to create in students an awareness of the application of biological knowledge to modern society and to develop an ability to make informed evaluations about contemporary biological issues. The course covers a wide range of topics, including cell structure and diversity, metabolism, genetics and human and flowering plant anatomy and physiology. The general principles of ecology are studied, and one particular ecosystem is examined in detail. An ecology field trip is arranged in the 5th Year. Particular emphasis is placed on the practical aspects of biology, and there are a number of mandatory activities that each student must carry out for themselves.

The course is divided into three units

- Unit 1 The study of life (ecology and food science)
- Unit 2 The Cell (Genetics, photosynthesis, respiration and enzymes)
- Unit 3 The organism (a study of body systems, plant biology and microbiology)

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

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

Exam Structure

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

- Section A - Six short questions (answer five) 100 marks.
- Section B - Three questions on practical activities (answer two) 60 marks.
- Section C - Six long questions (answer four) 240 marks.

Comments

- It is recommended that a student taking Leaving Certificate Biology has a good understanding of Junior Science at higher level.
- Each student must have an aptitude and interest for laboratory work.
- A considerable amount of learning and study is necessary to do well in this subject.

Option Subject: Business

Course Overview

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

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

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

Business requires students to stay alert and to be aware of current related business media (e.g. newspapers, TV, radio). The course is theory based and therefore requires a lot of learning.

Leaving cert business has been on offer for many years now, so there are lots of past papers to help the student when revising.

Course Content

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

Exam Structure

Higher & Ordinary Level

Higher Level – 1 x 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))

Ordinary Level – 1 x 2.5 hour paper (400 marks); 2 sections.

Section 1 – Short Question (10/15) 100 marks.

Section 2 – Long Questions (75 marks per question (4/8)).

Option Subject: Chemistry

Course Overview

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

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

Course Content

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

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

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

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

Experimental investigations are an essential part of the leaving certificate course. Each student must complete at least 28 experiments over the duration of the course.

Experimental work is examined as part of the leaving cert exam and forms the basis for a minimum of three questions on the exam paper.

Exam Structure

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

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

There is no element of continuous assessment but experimental copies must be available for inspection by the State Examinations Commission. Students taking chemistry have to memorize the

Option Subject: Construction Studies

Course Overview

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

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

Course Content

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

- Planning and Design
- Drawings and Documents
- Site Preliminaries and Foundations
- Walls, Partitions
- Floors, Roofs
- Fireplaces
- Windows and Doors
- Stairs
- Plastering and Painting
- Plumbing and Heating
- Services Drainage

Exam Structure

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

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

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

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

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

Option Subject: Design Construction Graphics (DCG)

Course Overview

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

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

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

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

Quick Facts

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

Course Content

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

Part One – Core Areas of Study

Plane and Descriptive Geometry

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

Communication of Design and Computer Graphics

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

Part 2 – Optional Areas of Study

You will be required to study two of the optional areas listed below:

Applied Graphics

- Dynamic Mechanism
- Structural Forms
- Geological Geometry
- Surface Geometry
- Assemblies

Exam Structure

One Terminal Exam Paper: 60%

Student Assignment: 40%

Terminal Exam: 3 hours duration.

Student Assignment Emphasis on:

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

Different theme for higher and ordinary level

May take the form of:

- A design investigation and modification
- A concept design

Option Subject: Economics

Course Overview

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

Economics is regarded as the most practical business subject and is the study of how people manage limited resources such as money to meet their goals. By understanding the reasons why people spend their money in certain ways, economists can try to introduce incentives to change their behaviours. As a discipline, economics is divided into two broad categories:

Microeconomics considers how individual people decide what goods they are willing to buy or not buy based on maximising their personal 'utility' (getting as much benefit as possible from their money), and how firms and businesses will try to take advantage of consumers' habits to maximise profit. It also examines how multiple businesses in a market will price their goods based on their competitors and their various costs.

Macroeconomics considers how governments handle the economy as a whole - how they select policies which meet their goals, such as stable economic growth (avoiding recessions), minimising the national debt, and encouraging employment. How the government handles issues such as fiscal policy (how much money flows in the economy), international trade, and banking all have implications for economics stability and growth.

Course Content

The subject is concerned with understanding the workings of a modern economy from both Macro and Micro level. Leaving Cert economics consists of eight main examination question areas:

Subject content

1. Demand, supply, equilibrium, utility and elasticity
 2. Costs and market structures
 3. Factors of production (including economists)
 4. National income and the multiplier
 5. Inflation, money, banking and monetary policy
 6. International trade, balance of payments and the euro
 7. Fiscal policy and taxation
 8. The Government in the economy (including economic development and growth, population and emigration)
- Separate questions on elasticity and costs are also possible, and questions on broader topics such as the national income, Government policy - the list above is just a general guide
 - There are no projects, practical aspects, field trips, etc. Teacher may include project work but it is not a requirement of the syllabus.
 - There is a common syllabus covering Higher and Ordinary level, which will fulfil the aims and objectives.

Exam Structure

The exam can be taken at both Higher Level and Ordinary Level

- One Paper – 2.5 hours duration
- Section A – 9 Q's - Students do 6 (100 marks each)
- Section B – 8 Q's - Students do 4 (75 marks each and 300 in total). There is a large element of choice here.

Option Subject: French

Course Overview

Leaving Certificate French aims to develop learners' communicative skills in French, to develop their strategies for effective language learning and raise their awareness of cultural, social and political diversity.

Assessment is by means of a written examination, and an aural and oral examination at two levels, Ordinary level and Higher level.

Course Content

Course content for Higher and Ordinary levels is similar. However, oral and written skills are particularly important at higher level. A grade 'C' at higher level in the Junior Certificate is usually a minimum requirement for higher level French at Leaving Certificate.

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

Oral/speaking
Written
Aural/listening
Reading

A wide variety of themes are covered, for example:

Family
School
Hobbies
Sport
Current affairs

Grammar and Cultural Awareness are essential elements of these courses.

Exam Structure

Mark Allocation for Leaving Certificate French:

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

Optional Subject: Geography

Course Overview

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

Course Content

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

Core Unit 1 - Patterns and processes in the physical environment

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

Core Unit 2 - Regional geography

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

Core Unit 3 - Geographical investigation and skills

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

Elective Unit 4 - Patterns and processes in the economic environment

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

Higher Level

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

Geographical skills

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

- Map and aerial photograph interpretation
- Satellite imagery
- Figure interpretation
- Census of population data
- Weather maps and data.

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.

Subject content:

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 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.

Option Subject: History

Course Overview

The Leaving Cert History course is divided into two discrete *fields of study*:

- Early Modern (1492-1815) 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.

The Leaving Certificate History Syllabus gives teachers a choice of 4 topics which will be studied from a selection of 12 topics in modern Irish and modern European history.

The study of history at Leaving Certificate fulfils many of the general aims and principles of the Leaving Certificate programmes.

- It emphasises the importance of individual thought.
- It fosters a spirit of inquiry and critical thinking.
- It helps to prepare students both for further education and for adult and working life.
- It helps to prepare students for their role as active and participative

citizens. History is a good all round education.

It is crucial when studying history to pay attention to the evidence presented, and to keep in mind factors such as bias and propaganda. Students are encouraged to consider the validity of different interpretations of evidence to develop a more balanced and grounded judgement.

The course is quite large and requires constant attention throughout the year. Research skills such as drawing on a wide variety of sources of evidence (such as maps, public records, political cartoons, and memoirs) are developed throughout the course. When writing, students are taught to produce focused, logical, and supported arguments.

Note that Leaving Cert History is ***completely different*** from the Junior Cert course!

Assessment

Leaving Certificate history is assessed at two levels, Ordinary level and Higher level. There are two assessment components: a research study report (submitted prior to the examination) and a written examination.

Course Content

The Leaving Certificate History Syllabus gives teachers a choice of 4 topics which will be studied from a selection of 12 topics in modern Irish and modern European history.

The topics are arranged in two discrete fields of study:

Early Modern, 1492-1815

Later Modern, 1815-1993

Students will study topics from one of the fields of study.

Within each field of study, there are six topics from Irish history and six from the history of Europe and the wider world.

Students will study two topics from Irish history and two from the history of Europe and the wider world from the selected field of study.

Two topics will be prescribed for documents-based study: one from the Early Modern field of study and one from the Later Modern field of study.

Students will engage in a documents-based study of the prescribed topic from their selected field of study.

Research Study

Students undertake a Research Study which will take the form of a report to be submitted around Easter time before the Leaving Certificate exam in June.

This Research Study can be about any aspect of history, in any period. The teacher will help and oversee this work but the choice of subject matter is that of the student. This part of the assessment carries 20% of the total marks.

Exam Structure

The History exam will last 2 hours 50 minutes and pupils will answer the documents-based study and three essays (one from each topic studied).

Ordinary level students follow an identical course, with a different emphasis in the way questions are asked on exam papers.

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

The marks are to be weighted as follows:

Authentication procedures

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

The terminal examination

Mark allocation

The percentage of the total marks to be allocated to this component will be 80%.

- The Higher level paper
Candidates will answer four questions, one on each of the four topics studied. All four questions will be of equal value. One of the questions will be documents-based.
- With the exception of topics nominated for the documents-based study, a specified number of questions will be asked on each of the topics.
- In the case of each topic, at least two of the three perspectives will be examined each year.

The Ordinary level paper

- Candidates will answer four questions, one on each of the four topics studied. All four questions will be of equal value. Three of the questions will be general questions, while one will be documents-based.
- One question will be set on each topic.
- An element of choice will be "built in" to each of the general questions.

A common format will apply to each of the general questions and each will be stimulus-driven.

The stimulus is intended to facilitate candidate recognition of the topic and as a reasonably gentle lead-in to more testing examination of knowledge and understanding. The common format will include stimulus-driven questions (testing comprehension and/or identification) and paragraphs or short essays linked to the key personalities and case studies.

Option Subject: Home Economics

Course Overview

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

Course Content

The syllabus consists of Core Areas and Three Electives:

The Core Areas

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

Electives

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

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

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

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

Exam Structure

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

1. **Written Exam paper** – 80%

The written examination consists of three sections:

Section A

12 short questions – Students answer 10.

These deal mainly with all the core areas of practice. (60 marks allocated)

Section B

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

Section C

3 questions - Students are to answer 1.

Elective question, based on which Elective was chosen to do in class. (80 marks allocated)

2. **Practical Coursework** - 20%

This is worth 20% of the final mark; this is submitted in journal form earlier in the Leaving Certificate year.

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Option Subject: Politics and Society

Course Overview

A new specification for Politics and Society was launched on 1st February 2016 and was introduced in a small number of schools in September 2016. Politics and Society aims to develop the student's ability to be a reflective and active citizen, in a way that is informed by the insights and skills of social and political science. It is a full Leaving Certificate subject, requiring the same amount of class time (180 hours) as all other subjects. The Department of Education and Skills introduced this specification as part of the commemoration of 1916. It also contributes to the commitment to education for sustainable development.

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

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

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

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

Course Content

Strand 1: Power and decision-making

Topic 1 Power and decision-making in school

Topic 2 Power and decision-making at national and European level

Strand 2: Active citizenship

Topic 3 Effectively contributing to communities

Topic 4 Rights and responsibilities in communication with others

Strand 3: Human rights and responsibilities

Topic 5 Human rights and responsibilities in Ireland

Topic 6 Human rights and responsibilities in Europe and the wider world

Strand 4: Globalisation and localisation

Topic 7 Globalisation and identity

Topic 8 Sustainable development

Exam Structure

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

1. Report on a citizenship project (20% of the total marks).
2. Written examination (80% of the total marks).
 - Assessment will be based on the aims, objectives and learning outcomes as outlined in the specification.
 - The citizenship project will be based on a brief issued annually by the SEC. The brief will outline a number of topics, from which students will choose one for their citizen project. The brief will also outline the parameters for the project and for the report which will be submitted to the SEC for assessment.
 - The report on a citizenship project will assess the ability to use the knowledge and concepts of Politics and Society to make judgements as to how to be active in communities, and the student's capacity to reflect upon and evaluate what they have learned or achieved from being an active participant in civil, social and political life.
 - The terminal written examination will assess the ability to apply the knowledge and concepts of Politics and Society to make arguments about political and social issues and the skills of analysing and interpreting qualitative and quantitative data on social and political issues.

Option Subject: Spanish (ab initio)

Course Overview

Spanish follows a common syllabus framework for the teaching and examining of modern languages in the Leaving Certificate but, from a beginners' level. The syllabus aims to develop learners' communicative skills in Spanish, to develop their strategies for effective language learning and raise their awareness of cultural, social and political diversity.

No assessment for LC.

Course Content

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

- (a) a communicative competence in the target language
- (b) awareness about language and communication
- (c) an understanding of how to go about learning a foreign language
- (d) a level of cultural awareness

1. To foster in learners such communicative skills in the target language as will enable them to:

- take a full part in classroom activities conducted in the target language;
- participate in normal, everyday transactions and interactions, both spoken and written, both at home and abroad;
- extract information and derive enjoyment from the mass media and the more accessible literature of the target language community;
- consider as a realistic option the possibility of pursuing leisure activities, further study and/or career opportunities through the medium of the target language.

2. To give students a critical awareness of how meaning is organised and conveyed by the structures and vocabulary of the target language, and thus to contribute to their understanding of the workings of human language in general.

3. To help learners develop strategies for effective language learning.

4. To equip learners with a broad acquaintance with the cultural, social and political complexion of contexts in which the target language is a normal medium of communication and thus to help raise their awareness of cultural, social and political diversity generally.

Exam Structure

No examination as this course has an attendance requirement only to allow students, without and alternative modern European language, to take LCVP as an option.

SUBJECT CHOICE GUIDELINES

Decisions, decisions, decisions

Depending on what you want to study after the Leaving Cert, some subjects are a matriculation requirement for certain courses. This means that they are mandatory to gain entry into a given college course.

For example, a minimum H5 in higher level chemistry is required for veterinary; a minimum H4 in higher level mathematics is required for Engineering – Common Entry in the University of Limerick. (See https://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=77 for minimum subject requirements page)

- It's important not to lock yourself out of a course you want to study by not choosing a required subject.
- Do your research.
- Different colleges have different requirements for the same course.
- Check each college prospectus and make sure you've covered the course requirements for what you want to study after the Leaving Cert.

You're good at what you enjoy

It's much harder to do well in a subject that you don't enjoy or aren't naturally good at. Make sure to choose your favourite subject(s). When it comes to studying each subject, it is important you find them interesting to be able to excel at them. Studying a subject you enjoy can decrease the pressure and workload immensely.

If you're good at a subject it will come naturally to you. Take all of the budding engineers we have; these students tend to be naturals at mathematical subjects.

Adopt a strategy

Always pick the subjects you want to do and that you think you'll be good at. If you find an area that you are particularly good at, you could boost your ability by choosing subjects which complement each other.

Some subjects can contain an overlap with other subjects, such as biology and agricultural science. Approaching subject choice in this style may help to lighten your work load. For example, if you study both biology and home economics, you'll only have to learn about biomolecules once.

Test your compatibility

If you're unsure of what subjects to choose, there are aptitude tests available in school or even online e.g. www.qualifax.ie. These often include a series of questions related to your personality. Your answers are then calculated to match what subjects or career is best suited to you.

It might also be very useful to do an interest test at this point. An interest test can be the first indication of what career paths might appeal to you. (www.careersportal.ie) If you're very unsure of what subjects to choose, aptitude tests or interest tests can often be a great starting point.

Advice is only a question away

If you're wondering about whether or not to choose a particular subject, it's important to do some investigating. First and foremost ask your teachers, and also friends or family members already studying the subject. Read the subject outline, browse through the text book, look at the chapters and headings and see if they appeal to you. Arrange to meet the teacher of the subject and ask them what will be covered in the subject. Ask questions about project work, practical exams and the terminal exam.

Organising to meet with your Guidance Counsellor can be of great value. Your Guidance Counsellor will have experience in helping students choose subjects that suit their desired career path, or subjects that complement each other. Your Guidance Counsellor will also have knowledge of subject requirements which are necessary to gain entry into particular college courses.

FINAL TIPS:

Do	Don't
Choose subjects you enjoy	Choose a subject because your friend is taking it
Choose subjects you are good at	Choose a subject just because you like or dislike the teacher
Choose subjects you need for your chosen career	Choose a subject because you think it will be easy
Keep your options open for the future by making a balanced choice now	Choose a new subject without finding out more about it
Talk to your Guidance Counsellor and your teachers	Make a decision at the last minute without thinking about it
Talk to your parents or guardians	Don't panic

Irish Leaving Certificate Examination Points System

Leaving Cert Grades	% Mark	Points Higher Level	Points Ordinary Level
H1/O1	90 - 100	100	56
H2/O2	80 < 90	88	46
H3/O3	70 < 80	77	37
H4/O4	60 < 70	66	28
H5/O5	50 < 60	56	20
H6/O6	40 < 50	46	12
H7/O7	30 < 40	37	0

Leaving Certificate Vocational Link Modules (LCVP)	Grade	Points
	Distinction	66
	Merit	46
Pass	28	

Option Blocks 2021/22:

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 2022/2023)

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