

2024 Information on SUBJECT CHOICE FOR LEAVING CERTIFICATE



Scoil Mhuire
Community School

Choosing Subjects

Subject choice for Senior Cycle can be a daunting task. The following information and subjects outline should help with the decision making process.

Students generally study 7 subjects for examination; only **6 of these can be counted for points for college entry.**

These include the core subjects of Irish, English, Maths, and four option subjects.

When choosing subjects, consider three questions carefully:

What subjects am I interested in?

What subjects am I /might I be good at?

What subjects might I need?

Please be aware of the importance of Maths for getting into college and training programmes.

There are two very important things to know about college entry-

1. Each college has minimum entry requirements and
2. Each course has specific course entry requirements

(See college websites or www.qualifax.ie or www.careersportal.ie)

Some courses also require specific grades and levels.

Some examples include: Primary Teaching requires a minimum grade of H4 in Irish

H4 in Maths is a minimum entry for many Engineering honours degree courses

Veterinary Medicine in UCD requires a H4 in Chemistry & some work experience hours – Biology is recommended also but not a requirement – CHECK ON www.qualifax.ie

This highlights the absolute need to familiarise yourself with college and course requirements before making subject choices.

Your subject choices should try to **balance** your strengths & interests with the requirements of colleges and universities.

Core Subjects

English

The course aims to develop:

- The ability to critically analyse information in preparation for the responsibilities and challenges of adult life.
- A respect and appreciation for language used accurately and appropriately and a competence in a wide range of oral and written language skills.
- An awareness of the value of literature for widening horizons, for enhancing their sense of cultural identity and for personal enjoyment.
- Grade H4 is essential for only a small number of college courses – DCU: Multi- Media and Communications, Journalism in DIT etc most courses require minimum of O6 in ordinary level English

Irish

The course is taught in conjunction with the four main skills of learning a language: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Attendance at a Gaeltacht course in the Summer of fifth year would be hugely beneficial to students. **Students wishing to do higher level must have a merit or**

higher in Junior Cert.

Exam: Oral Irish 40%, Aural 10%, Paper 1 & 2 50%

Maths

Project Maths provides students with the opportunity to gain an understanding of and familiarity with several branches of mathematics, as well as developing their overall appreciation of the subject. The branches, or 'strands' in question have been chosen because they have applications in everyday life, are useful in other disciplines, and provide a foundation for further education. As a result, maths is very accessible to students at all levels. Ordinary level maths is required for almost all jobs and courses. There are now 25 bonus points for Higher level maths from **Grade H6 upwards.**

Option Subjects –

French

French as a Leaving Cert subject aims to bring students closer to fluency in the French language, as well as developing a good knowledge of literature, culture, geography, and national history to provide a context for communication.

Exam for L.C. French

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

German

German as a Leaving Cert subject aims to bring students closer to fluency in the German language, as well as developing a good knowledge of literature, culture, geography, and national history to provide a context for communication. Exam for L.C. German is the same breakdown as French above.

PLEASE CHECK REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THIRD LANGUAGE FOR ANY COURSE YOU ARE INTERESTED IN. (www.qualifax.ie)

Humanities

History

Students of history need an interest in the world. The subject embraces the world of politics, society, economics, religion and philosophy. 20% of overall marks are allocated for a research paper on a subject chosen by the student. There are three essays at higher level and a document question. Students should enjoy reading and watching relevant television programmes. **Assessment consists of two components:**

1. **A written examination paper (80%)**
2. **A research study report (20%)**

Geography

This subject studies the relationship between human activity and the physical environment. It encourages sensitivity toward the environment including topics such as climate change, energy conservation and eradication of poverty. Geography highlights how daily living is influenced by social, cultural and political opportunities and constraints. Students submit a **geographic investigation worth 20% of the exam** in April of 6th year. For some colleges, Geography is accepted as a science subject.

Physical Education

This subject aims to develop the learner's capacity to become an informed, skilled, self-directed and reflective performer in physical education and physical activity in senior cycle and in their future life. It allows students to develop their performance in physical activity, gives students the ability to reflect on performance and appreciate the benefits of physical education for lifelong health and wellbeing.

There are three parts to the assessment of the subject:

Physical Activity Project: 20% done before Christmas in sixth year
Performance Assessment: 30% done after Christmas in sixth year
Written Exam: 50% done in June with Leaving Cert exams

Science Subjects:

Biology

Biology is the study of life and living organisms. The course covers a wide range of topics including cell structure and diversity, metabolism, genetics and human and flowering plant anatomy and physiology. An ecology field trip is arranged. The course demands consistent study and revision over two years. Biology is a requirement for many third level

courses including: Medicine, Veterinary Science, Nursing, Biotechnology and Sports Science.

Examination: Section A - Short Questions 25%, Section B – Experiment Questions 15%, Section C – Long Questions 60%

Physics

Physics teaches students to think logically and enables them to express their thoughts in a concise manner. The skills and knowledge developed in Physics are very useful to students considering a career in any mathematical or scientific field, such as finance, statistics, engineering, physics, or computer science. Topics include; mechanics, heat, optics, waves- light and sound, electricity, magnetism and particle physics.

Students are required to complete and write reports of 24 practical experiments throughout the two years. While there is an element of maths in the physics course, honours maths is not a requirement to do honours physics.

Chemistry

Chemistry helps students to understand a lot of processes that occur in our everyday lives such as the Greenhouse Effect, getting rid of a wasp sting etc. It is highly recommended that a student looking to study the following courses would have Chemistry as one of their Leaving Cert Subjects: Pharmacy, Nutrition and Dietetics, Veterinary, Dentistry, Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. Students should have a good understanding of maths.

The Leaving Cert Exam is a 3 hour paper worth 100%, divided into two sections. Section A examines the 28 practicals that have been carried

out over the two years and is worth 33%. Section B comprises of eight questions which are mainly theory and calculation questions.

Agricultural Science

Agricultural Science involves the study of the science and technology underlying the principles and practices of agriculture. It aims to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that promote the sustainability of agricultural resources, and places emphasis on the managed use of these resources.

Plants and animal types associated with agriculture are studied, and investigations are undertaken into such aspects as soil, ecology, plant and animal physiology, farm crops, farming practices, genetics and microbiology.

Assessment:

75% exam at Higher & Ordinary Level

- Very practical based
- Relates to experience gained over the two year course
- Great flexibility & choice

25% Project at Higher & Ordinary Level

- Combination of research & experimental skills

Business Subjects: - Accounting, Business, Economics

Accounting

Accounting covers aspects of business and social life which are concerned with the preparation, recording, extraction, presentation and analysis of financial information for the purpose of making economic decisions. The course also involves a Management Accounting section where the student will learn how to analyse business costs and how to prepare budgets.

Exam : 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.

Economics

Economics 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 their change their behaviours. 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. Students do a **Project worth 20%** which is a 1500 word report.

Business

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. Ideally, students would have an interest in business and current affairs and would have an up to date knowledge of economic environment.

Practical Subjects

Construction Studies

Construction Studies introduces students to the knowledge and skills associated with construction technology, construction materials and practices. This is achieved through theoretical study and integrated practical projects which provide a basis for the thorough exploration of

materials and processes. **Exam – 3 hour Written paper 50%, 4 hour Practical exam 25%, Project 25%**

Design and Communication Graphics

This has replaced Technical Drawing at Senior Level. There is great emphasis on comprehension, analysis and problem solving. You must be able to understand what has to be done, analyse how you are going to approach it and proceed to solve the problem.

The course includes the study of design, freehand drawing, elevation and plans, problem solving, 3D drawing, perspective drawing, CAD, model-making and engineering drawing.

Assessment is 3 hour drawing exam 60% and assignment 40%.

Engineering

Engineering involves the study of a wide range of mechanical engineering processes. It encompasses practical and theoretical aspects of engineering. It forms the basis of all first year engineering courses in University.

Project – 25%, Practical 25%, Theory 50%.

Art

Art at Senior level is a broadly based course which strives to create a sense of unity between the practical based section and art history. Experimentation with a wide variety of media is encouraged to enable pupils to find expression best suited to their own artistic style. Individuality is fostered and students are encouraged to feel free to express their own opinions in practical and art history classes. Pupils are exposed to a huge range of Art, both through course work and organised

trips and it is hoped that their exposure to Art and artists will help develop them as artists.

Examination: Written - Art History 30%, A 10 week project 50% & a full day Practical 20%

Music

A primary aim of the syllabus is to cultivate musicality and its expression in all its participants. The Music syllabus contains three essential activities:

Performance 25%, Listening 25%, Composition 25% (Elective HL 25%)

Home Economics

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.

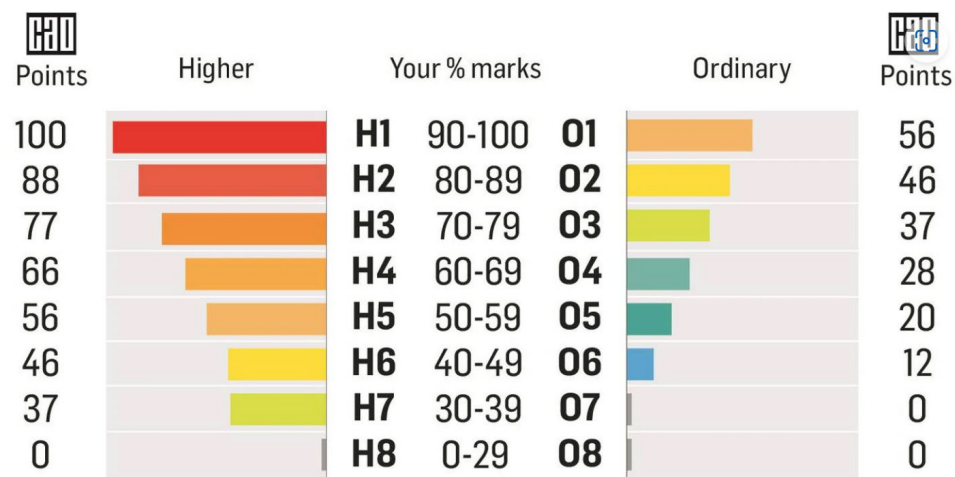
Written exam 80%, Journal 20%

Possible Extra 8th Subject - Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme LCVP – Link Modules

This is an extra subject that students may take. It comprises a portfolio (60%) and written exam (40%). Work experience is an integral part of the programme and is done in 5th year. Items on the curriculum include: C.V., Career Investigation, Enterprise Action Plan, Work Experience, Visits out and Guest Speakers.

LCVP is awarded either Distinction -66points, Merit – 46 points or Pass – 28 points and qualifies as one of the six subjects only for counting points but not for matriculation – you need 6 along with LCVP.

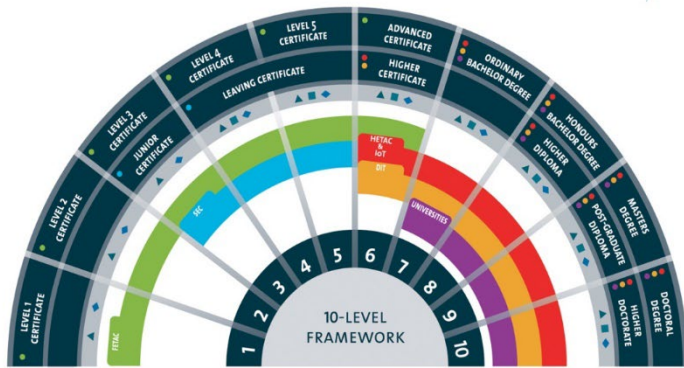
Leaving Cert Points



+25 Bonus points for H1-H6 maths

LCVP link modules ■ Distinction 66 ■ Merit 46 ■ Pass 28

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS



Level 5 = One year PLC Course – applied for directly on-line

Level 6 = Two year Higher Certificate CAO application-

Level 7 = Three year Ordinary Degree CAO application

Level 8 = Three or four year Honours Degree (CAO).

On completion of 6th yr students will have reached Level 5 on the framework of qualifications and may progress further as follows:

Leaving Certificate Applied students can apply to a PLC Level 5 course and may progress further to higher level courses if links apply.

Leaving Certificate students may apply to a PLC Level 5 course or may progress directly to a Level 6, 7, or 8 course through the CAO points system.

Advice to Parents & Guardians:

Your teenager is embarking on a two year course of academic study and learning culminating in the Leaving Certificate examination.

Leaving Certificate is a big step up from 3rd year or Transition year therefore it is essential to follow a regular study pattern from September of fifth year and continue with this over the next two years.

Students who do well are those who work consistently and steadily over two years. A lot of core work is done in fifth year so it is essential for students to be fully engaged and working to the best of their ability FROM THE START OF 5TH YEAR. Consider attending after school study also.

See www.examinations.ie for information on each subject curriculum.

Looking beyond school:

It is advisable also for you and your teen to **attend as many college open days as possible in 5th & 6th yr**. These are usually held annually from October to December. A visit to a college is a valuable instrument in the career decision making process and offers opportunities to explore a campus, meet with students and lecturers and get a feel for a course/ training programme. Fifth year is an ideal time for a lot of career & college research.

College and Apprenticeship and Training speakers are also invited to the school to inform students about courses and college life.

Useful Websites:

www.qualifax.ie www.careersportal.ie
www.accesscollege.ie www.nui.ie www.cao.ie
www.eunicas.ie www.ucas.com
www.apprenticeship.ie www.military.ie www.fetchcourses.ie

see also www.scoilmhuireclane.ie for subject outlines

All students will have Careers classes and one to one career interviews with a Guidance Counsellor in 5th & 6th yr and are welcome to seek guidance at any time by making an appointment with Ms. Travers, Ms. Stanley or Ms. McGee.

Students are embarking on a journey of Career Exploration working towards a career or course decision. It is their journey, they must take ownership of the research and explore the many options available to them and immerse themselves in the process from the start of Senior Cycle. Please assist and guide your son/daughter with this process.

Summary:

Ask yourself:

- What do I like?
- What am I interested in ?
- What might I need in the future?

To help you decide:

- Talk to the Guidance Counsellors
- Check out the course content
- Have a look at the syllabus
- Look at the text books
- Look at past exam papers.
- Think about college requirements.
