



Sandymount Park ETSS

A Guide to Senior Cycle Subject Choice 2022

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Making a Choice

The purpose of this booklet is to provide students with the necessary information to choose subjects for the Leaving Certificate which suit their needs and interests.

It is important to consider the implications these choices may have on your future third level and career choices.

Is subject choice really that important?

The simple answer is YES! Subject choice for Senior Cycle is a time for making some serious decisions. Considerable time should be put into choosing your subjects carefully, as the wrong choices here may have some unintended consequences in a couple of years' time when choosing your college courses.

Pay special attention to the information discussed in Guidance class re the various subject requirements necessary to gain entrance into particular college courses (all information has been uploaded on OneNote), seek advice from your subject teachers to ask what the subject entails and if they feel it would suit you and finally the [Leaving Cert Subjects area](#) on careersportal.ie has all of the information that you need in relation to all of the Leaving Certificate subjects and more.

How many subjects do I have to do?

The majority of students in the country will study **SEVEN** subjects for their Leaving Certificate. These will comprise of the three core subjects of [Gaeilge](#) (unless you are exempt), [English](#) and [Maths](#), which leaves **FOUR** more subjects to choose from.

Some students may decide to study an extra subject(s) outside of school in their own time. It is worth noting at this stage that when it comes to calculating CAO points for entry to college, it is only your **BEST SIX** in one sitting of the Leaving Certificate that can be counted.

What happens if I do not take a 3rd Language?

The term 3rd language is essentially another language other than Gaeilge and English. National University of Ireland (NUI) Colleges require a pass in a 3rd language for entry into many of their courses. These are Maynooth University, UCD, NUI Galway and UCC. (There are also associated constituent colleges listed on the NUI website at www.nui.ie).

If you want to keep as many options open to you at this stage then you should consider choosing to study a language for your Leaving Certificate. Generally, the 3rd language requirement is no longer needed for engineering and science programmes and UCD has also dropped it for their social science and agricultural programmes. Nursing also does not require a 3rd language.



Trinity College Dublin will accept Irish as their language requirement. University of Limerick, DCU and the Institutes of Technology do not require a 3rd language for most of their courses, apart from those where language forms part of the degree. A 3rd language is also a requirement for entry into the cadetship in the army or air corps. Students who were born outside of the state, but are studying Gaeilge, can use it as their 3rd language.

Should I choose a Science Subject?

In order to keep your options open, students should strongly consider including a science subject in their subject choice. Science subjects are required for entry into a wide range of college courses. Most scientific, engineering, medical and healthcare courses require at least one laboratory science subject at Leaving Certificate. Many degrees in Medicine, Pharmacy, Dentistry, and some related fields of study will require **TWO** science subjects, so interested students are urged to check out the specific entry criteria for these courses. Use [CourseFinder](#) on careersportal.ie or [CourseFinder](#) on Qualifax.ie to locate these courses and check out their entry requirements.

Are some subjects easier to get high grades than others?

Students are more likely to do well in subjects that they have a flair for and the ones they enjoy. There are however, some subjects that students statistically achieve higher grades in. It can also be comforting for students to have some project and practical work to undertake before the exams so they can have some marks already 'banked'. The Careersportal [Subject Grades Explorer](#) is an excellent tool that contains a breakdown of the grades and average points for every subject at Higher and Ordinary Level over the past 10 years.

Do I need to choose my levels now and are they important?

Students should always look to study subjects to the highest level that they can manage. It stands to reason that Higher Level subjects command more CAO points than Ordinary Level. The [CAO points calculator](#) is a very useful tool to illustrate this. Choosing whether to do Higher or Ordinary level is a decision that should be informed by your past performance and can be guided by your teachers. If you are unsure of your capabilities, it is always best to start at Higher Level and give it a go. If you find the workload is too much you can always drop to Ordinary Level and the work completed at Higher Level will have helped.

Levels can be very important when it comes to admission into college courses. Two H5's is a standard entry requirement for all Level 8 degrees. There may be other specific entry requirements needed. For example, a H4 in Gaeilge is a requirement for Primary School Teaching and similarly a H4 in Maths is a requirement for a lot of Engineering, Science and Computing degrees, so take the time to explore the entry requirements.



I don't know what I want to study in 3rd Level. What subjects should I choose?

Firstly, this is more the rule rather than the exception, as most 15/16 years olds do not know what they want to study in college. College is still over two years away after all! However, the choices that you make now can have a bearing on the options that will be open to you and this is why subject choice is seen as being so important. The best advice is to keep your options open and to not block off any potential pathways for yourself. Generally, **a third language and a science subject** will keep most options open. For the other two subjects, choose ones that you enjoy and are good at.

Finally, here are the top tips for Subject Choice!

- You can keep your options open by choosing a 3rd language and a science
- Choose subjects that you will enjoy doing
- Choose subjects that you know you are good at
- Discuss with your guidance counsellor, parents/guardians, teachers and friends
- Research about each subject and its content [HERE](#)
- Choose subjects linked to a possible future career



Senior Cycle Subjects at Sandymount Park ETSS

The following subjects are **compulsory exam subjects**:

- English
- Irish*
- Maths

*(*If you have an Irish exemption, you will only take English and Maths)*

The following subjects are **compulsory non-exam subjects**:

- Career Guidance/ RSE/ Ethical Education
- P.E

The following subjects may be offered as **optional exam subjects**:

- Art
- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- Economics
- French
- Geography
- History
- Music
- LC Physical Education (PE)
- Physics
- Politics and Society
- Spanish

Students study 7 exam subjects for Leaving Certificate. 3 compulsory exam subjects English, Irish and Maths, plus 4 Optional subjects*



A Guide for Third Level Colleges

I.T.	Institute of Technology
M.T.U.	Munster Technological University (formerly Cork IT and Tralee IT)
A.T.U.	Atlantic Technological University (GMIT, IT Sligo, LYIT)
T.U.D.	Technological University Dublin
U.L.	University of Limerick
D.C.U.	Dublin City University (Glasnevin)
T.C.D.	Trinity College Dublin
N.C.I.	National College of Ireland
I.A.D.T.	Institute of Art Design and Technology (Dun Laoghaire)

NUI Colleges

U.C.D.	University College Dublin (Belfield)
U.C.C.	University College Cork
N.U.I.G.	National University of Ireland, Galway
N.U.I Maynooth.	Maynooth University
R.C.S.I.	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

Courses at Third Level

- **Level 6 - Higher Certificate Courses:** Available at ITs and TUD- usually 2 Years.
- **Level 7 - Ordinary Degree:** Available at ITs and TUD- usually 3 years.
- **Level 8 - Honours Degree:** Available at all Universities, TUD, and ITs -usually 3-6 years depending on the Degree.

There are two types of requirements for Third Level Colleges. These are Matriculation Requirements and/or Course Requirements. You must check both.

- **Matriculation requirements** refers to the minimum entry requirements for university.
- **Course Requirements** refers to the minimum grades a student must achieve in order to be admitted to his/her particular course in university.



NUI COLLEGES

- All NUI colleges have a minimum entry requirement of a pass in 6 Leaving Certificate subjects including English and Irish. **In 2 of these subjects, students must have achieved grade H5 at Higher Level and at least Grade H7 (Higher Level) or O6 (Ordinary Level) in four subjects.** **Foundation Level Irish** will not be accepted for Matriculation purposes. **Foundation Level Maths** will be accepted for Matriculation purposes, but you must check if a particular grade in Maths is required for the course you want. Some courses may require a third language. There will be additional course requirements. It is the student's responsibility to check these course requirements.

Note: The colleges that form part of the NUI are: UCD, UCC, NUI Galway, and NUI Maynooth.

- **University of Limerick** has a minimum entry requirement of a pass in 6 Leaving Certificate subjects, including English and either Irish or another language. In two of these subjects' students must have achieved grade H5 at Higher Level. You must also have a pass in Maths (Foundation Level is acceptable for some, but not all courses). There will be additional course requirements for specific courses.
- **Trinity College Dublin** has a minimum entry requirement of a pass in 6 Leaving Certificate subjects, with grade H5 on 3 Higher Level Papers and a pass in English, Maths and another language. There will be additional course requirements for specific courses.
- **Dublin City University** has a minimum entry requirement of a pass in 6 Leaving Certificate subjects, with a grade H5 on two Higher Level papers and a pass in Maths and either English or Irish. There will be additional course requirements for specific courses.

INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY / TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

- Each Institute of Technology can set its own entry requirements. However, the general entry requirement for Level 6, 7 and 8 courses are set out below:
 - **Level 8 (Honours Degree) courses:** The minimum entry requirement is 6 Leaving Certificate subjects, with a grade H5 in two subjects at Higher Level and a grade H7/O6 in four other subjects including Maths and either English or Irish. There may be additional course requirements for specific courses.
 - **Level 6 and 7 (Higher Certificate and Ordinary Degree):** The minimum entry requirement is 5 Leaving Certificate subjects at H7/O6 level, including Maths and either English or Irish. There may be additional course requirements for specific courses.



COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

- Colleges of Education provide specific training for primary school teachers. They require a minimum of 3 grade H5 on Higher Level papers including Irish (H4), and three grade H7/ O6. There are specific minimum grades for Maths and English.

PLC COURSES

- Places on PLC courses are not allocated on the basis of points, but applicants must be of Leaving Certificate standard. **Many PLC courses now require that students have one or two grade H5's.** Most colleges interview candidates to determine their eligibility.



Irish

Please check the individual college to confirm **Irish requirement** for a particular course.

- **Students must pass Irish for entry to all NUI colleges (06 on Ordinary Level Paper)**
- Applicants to the **Garda Siochana** are **no longer** required to be proficient in two languages, Proficiency will now only be required in one language - which can be English or Irish.
- It is not essential to pass Irish for entry to TUD, TCD, U.L or Institutes of Technology/Technological Universities.
- Honours Irish **is essential** for all Primary Teaching Courses-at least a grade H4 at Higher level in needed (from 2019).

EXEMPTION FROM IRISH

- Students who have an official exemption from Irish will not have to present it for Matriculation purposes.
- Students who do not have an official Department of Education and Science exemption from Irish but who are specified by a professional psychologist as having a Specific Learning Disability affecting basic language skills in the mother tongue (a dyslexic condition warranting exemption) **may** be entitled to an exemption from Irish for matriculation purposes.
- These applications will be considered on an individual basis.
- Candidates granted an exemption from Irish in accordance with the above **may** also be granted an exemption from the Third Language Requirement.



Languages

Please check individual colleges for Language requirement.

A third language is required to be presented as part of the entry requirements for approximately 171 of over 1,750 third level CAO courses

- A modern foreign Language is essential for entry to many courses in the following colleges: UCD UCG, UCC, NUI Maynooth, UCC, RCSI, St. Angela's College, Sligo, Pontifical University, Maynooth, Shannon College of Hotel management.
- There is **no** foreign language requirement for **Engineering or Science** in the above colleges.
- There is **no** foreign language requirement for Business or Law in Maynooth.
- There is **no** foreign language requirement for Social Science in UCD.
- **Irish can be substituted as a second language for Trinity and UL.**
- A foreign Language is no longer essential for Nursing.
- **Students entering Art college may present Art in place of the third language.**
- Candidates granted an exemption from Irish may also be granted an exemption from the Third Language Requirement (See specific college guidelines).
- There is **no language requirement** for any courses in **Institutes of Technology / Technological Universities** UNLESS the course you choose involves the study of a language e.g., Business with a language.
- A third language is no longer required for entry to Teacher Training Colleges for Primary School Teaching.
- **RCSI-** A third language is required for entry into **Medicine, Physiotherapy and Pharmacy.** (Visit <http://www.rcsi.ie>)
- The Defence Forces: Cadetship, Air Corps & the Naval Services, a third language is required.

*Please log on to www.qualifax.ie or www.careersportal.ie for courses requiring Languages.



Maths

UCD, DCU, NUI Galway, Trinity, UCC, UL, NUI Maynooth, RSCI and TUD award bonus points for Higher Level Maths. 25 bonus points are awarded to students who achieve H6 or above in Higher Level Maths. The 25 bonus points must be counted as one of your 6 best subjects.

A PASS IN MATHS IS VERY IMPORTANT IN THE LEAVING CERTIFICATE

Please check individual colleges for Maths requirement

- It is possible to get into some Third Level courses without Maths, although it is an essential entry requirement for practically all courses in many Third Level colleges and Colleges of Education.
- UCC, UCG and Maynooth-Maths is not needed for entry to Arts, Social Science, Law, Human Sciences, Philosophy, Celtic Studies in these colleges but is needed for all other faculties.
- Entry to Bachelor of Social Science Degree at UCD a minimum H7/O6 in Maths is required

Higher Level Maths

At least a Grade H5 in Higher Level Maths is essential for many courses in Universities and Institutes (individual colleges may have higher requirements). Some of the courses include the following:

- To study Maths in all Universities.
- Computer Science in TCD.
- Computer Science, Actuarial/ Financial Studies in UCD.

All Honours Engineering Degree Courses in all Universities and some colleges require a H4 in Higher Maths for Engineering courses.

Honours Maths is **not** required to study Engineering in Institutes of Technology or Technological Universities at Higher Certificate or Ordinary Degree Level (6 and 7). Ordinary Maths is usually acceptable; **some will want a specific grade.**

*Please log on to www.qualifax.ie or www.careersportal.ie for courses requiring Higher Level Maths.



Science

Students must present a science subject for approximately 144 of the 1721 third level CAO courses

- Dentistry, Medicine, Human Health and Disease (TCD), Medicine and Dentistry (UCC) all require TWO Science subjects.
- Physics is strongly recommended for anyone considering Engineering or Computer Science at Third Level.
- A Science subject is essential for entry to Nursing.
- **Two Science subjects** is highly recommended for anyone considering Medicine as it **may** reduce your study time by one year (5 years instead of 6 in NUI Galway & R.C.S.I). **Entrants to Medicine must also complete a HPAT (Health Professionals Aptitude Test)**. Information available from the Guidance Counsellor.
- Medicine in UCD is a 6-year programme regardless of whether you have 2 Science subjects.
- **Chemistry is essential** for entry to Dietician, Pharmacy and Veterinary.
- A Science subject is recommended for Beauty Therapy (**although Home Economics is usually acceptable**) and Sports Courses.
- **Geography* may be used as a science subject for entry to Science in UCD and Archaeology and Geology in UCD.**
- Geography may be regarded as a second science subject in TCD for Science based courses. Please check with the college.
- Agricultural Science is accepted by most colleges as meeting the 'Science Entry Requirement'

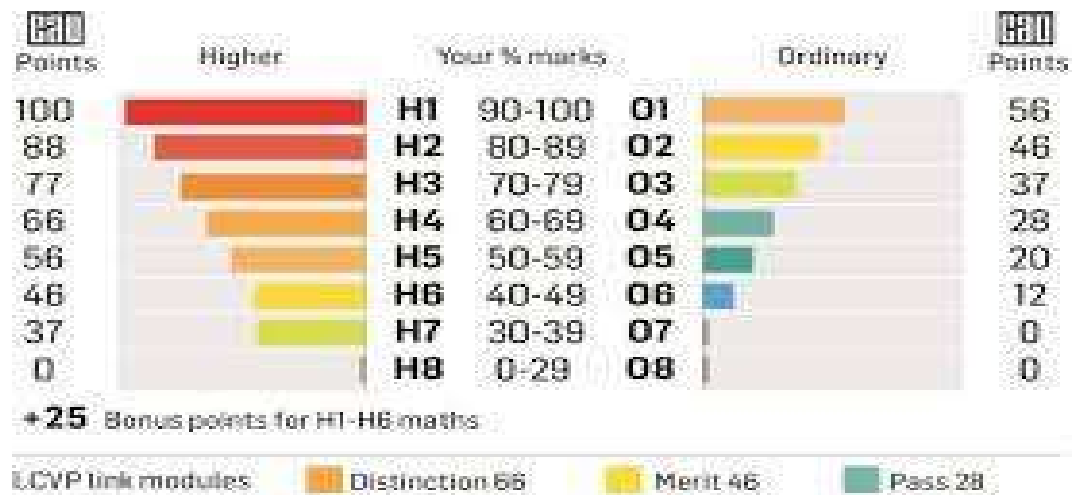
*Please log on to www.qualifax.ie or www.careersportal.ie for courses requiring Science.



The Points System

The points system controls entry to Third Level Courses. A student is awarded points for their best **SIX** grades in one sitting of the Leaving Cert.

Please see chart below to help you calculate points:



+25 Bonus points for H1-H6 maths

Please note that you now get points for achieving a H7 grade.



Other options after leaving cert

Apprenticeships

Many students are interested in securing an apprenticeship after Leaving Certificate. The basic requirement for a recognised apprenticeship is 5 passes at Junior Cycle Level. **In reality, however, almost 80% of apprentices now have a Leaving Certificate or Leaving Cert. Applied.**

With the Leaving Certificate, the subject grades most employers will look closely at for practical apprenticeships are **Maths** and **Practical subjects** such as Engineering, Constructions Studies or DCG.

Apprenticeships last for 4 years. There are regular exams set by SOLAS and continuous assessment along the way. Students with a good Leaving Certificate rarely have difficulty with these exams.

A number of **New Apprenticeships** have been introduced since 2016, with several more due to come on stream between now and 2022. These new apprenticeships can lead to an award between Level 5 and Level 10.

Some of the new apprenticeships include:

- Accounting Technician
- Auctioneering and Property Services
- ICT Software Developer
- ICT Network Engineer
- Laboratory Technician
- Manufacturing Engineer
- Chef de Partie
- Financial Services

All students who are considering apprenticeships should be aiming to get good Leaving Certificate results. It is unrealistic to assume you will get an apprenticeship with minimum entry requirements.

Further information can be found on <http://www.apprenticeships.ie>



Post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLCs)

For some students, direct entry into a third level college may not be possible on completion of the Leaving Certificate. Another popular progression route is the PLC route. These are one year courses (some have a second year option) in a range of specialised areas and are available in schools and colleges of further education nationwide.

PLC courses offer a mixture of "hands-on" practical work, academic work and work experience and they help students develop vocational and technological skills in order to get a job or to go into further education and training. They are designed as a step towards skilled employment and, as such, they are closely linked to industry and its needs.

Post Leaving Certificate courses adopt an integrated approach, focusing on technical knowledge, core skills and work experience. Almost 50% of the time spent on these courses is devoted to knowledge and skill training related to employment, with a further 25% on relevant work-based experience.

Over 90% of PLC courses are delivered by ETBs (Education Training Boards). At present, over 1,200 courses are on offer in some 229 centres. A wide range of disciplines are covered including business, electronics engineering, computing, catering, sport and leisure, theatre and stage, performance art, art craft and design, equestrian studies, multi-media studies, journalism, tourism, marketing, childcare and community care, hairdressing and beauty care, applied science, horticulture etc.

P.L.C. courses can be used as an entry route to Third Level Studies if students do **particularly well** in their course of study. The maximum points a student can get from a PLC is 390 (8 distinctions)

The entry level for most P.L.C. courses is **5 passes at Leaving Certificate Level** plus an **interview**. Many P.L.C. courses now require higher grades than this. Students are often required to present with one or two H5's.

Some courses will look closely at levels/grades in particular subjects. For example, most **Computer courses** will expect students to have passed **Ordinary Level Maths**, while **Beauty Therapy** courses will expect a pass in **Biology or Home Economics**.

Most **Animal care courses** will expect students to have **Biology**.



Subject Descriptors

Art

The Art course for LC consists of two main parts: the practical part and the theory part (Art History). The practical part is about developing the student's ability in a range of artistic fields and disciplines. The syllabus permits a huge range of skills within fine art, craft, and design such as drawing, painting, printing, ceramics, batik, embroidery, calligraphy, sculpture etc.

Third Level Entry Requirements

- Leaving Cert Art is not a specific Entry Requirement into Art College (except WIT – courses in Visual Communications & Visual Art)
- However, a PORTFOLIO is required for entry into Art courses. It is therefore an advantage to have studied LC Art.

L.C. Exam Structure

- All students, both at ordinary and higher level, follow a common course.
- Coursework and practical exam 70%. Takes place in class after Christmas in 6th year. Students have to complete a project during a 10-week period and create a final outcome during a 5-hour exam. This work is submitted for examination.
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- Written exam 30%: Takes place in June. Divided into 3 content areas
 - Area 1: Europe and the wider world
 - Area 2: Ireland and its place in the wider world
 - Area 3: Today's world

What kind of student would Art suit?

- Students who have shown an aptitude for Art, by getting high grades in the Junior Cycle and who are willing to work hard & enjoy a creative environment.
- Anyone considering a career in a creative discipline such as Architecture, Engineering, Marketing, Film and Entertainment, Web Design, Fashion, Game Design, or Advertising.
- Art Education benefits all students as it fosters creative thinking.
- Students who have an interest in Art History and art in the world around them as 30% of the course is Art History.

Click [here](#) for more information



Biology

Biology is the study of life. 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 life.

The Biology 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 course is divided into three units:

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

Third Level Entry Requirements

- Many courses require at least one science subject and some even require two (see third level entry requirements).
- Those considering medicine, nursing and related courses will find that this subject will be of huge benefit in their studies.

L.C. Exam Structure

3-hour duration at higher and ordinary level. 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

What kind of student would Biology suit?

- Students who enjoyed and had a good understanding of Science at Junior Cycle Higher Level.
- Students should have an aptitude for and interest in laboratory work.
- Biology requires a lot of memory work so is a good choice for students with attention to detail and excellent memory work.

Click [here](#) for more information



Business

This is a subject concerned with understanding the environment in which business operates in Ireland and the wider world.

- There are seven core units covering the following topics: Introduction to people in business, Enterprise, Managing 1 and 2, Business in action, Domestic Environment and International Environment.
- There is a common syllabus covering Higher and Ordinary Level.

The course sets out to create an awareness of the importance of business activity and to develop positive and ethical attitude towards it. The course explains 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 structure and the national economy.

Third Level Entry Requirements

Business is not an essential subject for any course in the CAO system.

L.C. Exam Structure

- Higher level: 1 X 3-hour paper – 3 sections
- Ordinary level: 1 X 2,5-hour paper – 2 sections

What kind of student would Business suit?

- Business is useful for careers in a wide range of areas including banking, Finance, Marketing, Law enterprise, Insurance and Management.
- Students should have an interest in business and current affairs.
- Would suit students who have an organised mind and who like to answer questions in bullet points not in long essay format.
- This subject is suited to students who are willing to work hard and caters for all abilities.
- Suit a student who would like to set up his/her own business in the future.

Click [here](#) for more information



Chemistry

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

The major topics included in Leaving Certificate Chemistry are:

- Atomic Structure
- Volumetric analysis
- Organic Chemistry
- Water Chemistry
- Reaction Mechanisms.

There is also 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 course. Each student must complete at least 28 experiments over the duration of the course. Experimental work is examined as part of the leaving certificate exam and forms the basis for a minimum of three questions on the exam paper.

Third Level Entry Requirements

- Chemistry is an essential requirement for study of Dentistry, Medicine, Pharmacy (UCC), Pharmacy (TCD), Human Nutrition and Dietetics (TUD), Public Health Nutrition (TUD), Veterinary Medicine (UCD)
- It is also strongly recommended for the study of the following third level courses: Pharmacy, Dentistry, Biomedical Science, Physiotherapy, Nursing.

L.C. Exam Structure

- Final Exam is three hours long. Eleven questions in total (50 marks each)
- There is no element of continuous assessment, but experimental copies must be available for inspection by the State Examinations Commission.

What kind of student would Chemistry suit?

- Students should have a good understanding of Junior Cycle Science at Higher Level.
- Students should have an aptitude and interest in laboratory work.
- Students should have a reasonable level of Junior Cycle Maths, either at Higher or Ordinary Level.

Click [here](#) for more information



French

French as a Leaving Certificate 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. Grammar and Cultural Awareness are essential elements of studying a foreign language such as French.

Third Level Entry Requirements

This subject is a requirement for entry to a number of third level courses.

It is frequently a requirement for Arts based courses. Please go to www.qualifax.ie to get a comprehensive list of courses for which a modern language is a requirement or check with the guidance counsellor.

L.C. Exam Structure

Note: Course content at Higher and Ordinary Levels is similar

Higher Level

Speaking-25%/listening-20%/Reading Comprehension-30%/Writing-25%

Ordinary level

Speaking-20%/Listening-25%/Reading Comprehension-40%/Writing-15%

- Oral exam takes place in March/April of 6th year-13 minutes.
- Aural/Listening: 40 mins.
- Written exam: 2½ hours

What kind of student would French suit?

- Anyone who has an interest in French culture, history, and language.
- Students who are willing to learn new vocabulary and practice using the language regularly.
- Students who are willing to spend some time in France.
- Students who are considering working abroad or in international relations in the future.
- Students who have shown an aptitude in French at Junior Cycle Level are encouraged to continue with it at Leaving Cert.

Click [here](#) for more information



Geography

Geography is the study of people, their environment, and the interaction between the two. The course follows on from Junior Cycle Geography and covers very similar topics such as rocks, soils, oceans, population movements, map reading and economic activities in a lot more detail. There are many optional sections on the course allowing students to focus on the sections of the course they enjoy the most.

Third Level Entry Requirements

This subject is not an essential requirement for any course in the CAO system.

It may be accepted as a science subject in some colleges in order to meet the Entry Requirements, example; Trinity accepts geography as one of the two science subjects for entry into Science and Pharmacy. UCD accepts Geography as a science subject into Science.

L.C. Exam Structure

Leaving Certificate Geography is assessed at Ordinary and Higher Level. There are two assessment components:

- Written exam - 80%
- Geographical Investigation (completed before the final written exam): 20%
- Students complete two questions on the core units, one question on an elective unit and one question on an optional unit.

What kind of student would Geography suit?

- Students interested in exploring and understanding the physical features of the earth and discovering the relationships between people and their environments.
- Students who enjoyed geography at Junior Cycle and obtained good results in their exam as this will offer strong foundations for further learning within geography at Leaving Certificate level.
- Students who are interested in pursuing a career in areas such as geography, economics, environmental science, environmental engineering, or politics.
- Students who are keen on applying their knowledge of how the world works and challenging themselves to enhance sustainability for the future.

Click [here](#) for more information



History

History aims to record and analyse things which have happened in the past, with an emphasis on both how and why events occurred. It is often studied out of personal interest, but also develops important skills such as self-discipline and critical thinking, which are of life-long importance.

The Leaving Certificate course is divided into **six Irish topics** and **six European topics**. Students concentrate on two Irish and two European topics. One of the topics in each field will be a **document-based question** which will involve examining evidence and drawing conclusions. History develops an ability to think independently and is very useful for third-level education.

Third Level Entry Requirements

- This subject is not an essential requirement for any courses in the CAO system.
- History is valuable as a background to studies in Law, Town Planning, Architecture, Politics, Economics, Sociology, Art, Museum and Library work.

L.C. Exam Structure

Assessment consists of two components:

- A written examination paper - 80%
- A research study report (submitted around Easter before the June exam) -20%

What kind of student would History suit?

- Students must have a genuine interest in the subject.
- A good knowledge of English, an ability to write and an interest in current affairs are essential.
- Students should be self-disciplined as they need to research as they need to research material.

****Students should note that the Leaving Certificate History course is completely different from the Junior Cycle History course****

Click [here](#) for more information



Music

The Music course consists of three main components:

- Composing
- Listening
- Performance.

Up to 50% of the course can be designated to musical performance.

The Leaving Certificate Music provides continuity and progression from Junior Cycle Music. Students are required to be able to read music to study this subject. A working knowledge of a musical instrument (piano, guitar, voice, etc.) is essential.

Third Level Entry Requirements

This subject is not an essential requirement for any course in the CAO.

However, students may be expected to undertake an entrance test, interview, or audition for many Music courses.

L.C. Exam Structure

Ordinary Level-students will choose one of the three activities to represent 50%

- Performing 50%, Composing 25%, Listening 25% **or**
- Performing 25%, Composing 50%, Listening 25% **or**
- Performing 25%, Composing 25%, Listening 50%

Higher Level-students will undertake additional studies - A Higher-Level elective in one of three activities: e.g., **Performing 25% Composing 25%, Listening 25% + one elective 25%**.

This will allow Ordinary and Higher-Level students to gain up to 50% of the total marks in the musical activity that best suits their talent.

What kind of student would Music suit?

- Students need not have studied Music at Junior level; however, it is an advantage. If they did not study Music at J.C they should have attained a competency in their practical musical ability (singing or playing an instrument)
- Because of the practical nature of the subject, students should feel comfortable performing in front of others.

Click [here](#) for more information



Physical education

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 assessment.

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 side, students are assessed on their skill level in three activities. Students will then work on improving their preparation, participation, and performance in their chosen activity.

Third Level Entry Requirements

- This subject is not required for entry into any CAO course.
- Useful in careers in Health and Fitness, Nutrition, Physiotherapy, or Sports administration, and Sports Management or coaching.

L.C. Exam Structure

- FINAL EXAM (50%) – Factors which affect participation and performance. Learners' engagement with a case study. Application of learning in a particular activity.
- PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROJECT (25%) – Analyse performance, set four performance goals and plan, implement and reflection.
- PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (video) (30%) – the learner completes a structures performance video in a chosen activity.

What kind of student would PE suit?

- Someone who likes being active and is interested in performance.
- Students who plan to pursue a career in sports and fitness occupations, such as physiotherapy, physical training or sports coaching.

Click [here](#) for more information



Physics

The physics course is broken into eight topics:

6 Compulsory sections are:

- Optics/Waves: the study of light and sound and real-life applications of the theory.
- Mechanics: time, space, distance, speed and acceleration.
- Heat: changes of state, energy, conservations and mathematical problems.
- Electricity: develops on from simple circuits to more detailed concepts.
- Electricity and Magnetism: gravity, relationship between electricity and magnetism, study of how a motor works, ac and dc, circuits and phenomena with real world applications.
- Atomic Physics: cathode rays, x rays, radioactive decay, fission and fusion, nuclear reactors and real-world applications.

Two option sections are (Higher Level only):

- Particle Physics: studying fundamental particles leading to a better understanding of the formation of the universe and how it had developed.
- Applied Electricity: detailed study of electricity and the working of a motor developing from electricity already studies.

Third Level Entry Requirements

Physics is a requirement for a number of third level colleges. (Examples; Technology, Radiography, Physiotherapy).

L.C. Exam Structure

3 hour written exam and 24 mandatory experiments.

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

What kind of student would Physics suit?

- Students considering a career in any mathematical or scientific discipline such as finance, statistics, engineering, physics or computer science, game design or animation.
- Students who were successful in their Junior Cycle science examination, particularly in the Physics section of the course and who like using maths.

Click [here](#) for more information



Politics and Society

The Politics & Society Leaving Certificate programme is about the social systems within which people act locally, nationally, and more widely.

Students who take this course will look at the concepts underpinning contemporary systems of government and the roles of groups such as multinational companies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and intergovernmental bodies, in shaping the world we live in.

Third Level Entry Requirements

- This subject is not an essential requirement for any courses in the CAO system.
- Politics & Society is a useful subject to take if you want to study politics or sociology or other courses such as law, anthropology, philosophy, development studies, media studies, and many more.

L.C. Exam Structure

- The Politics & Society course consists of 4 main areas covered in topics as follows: Power and decision-making, Active citizenship, Human rights and responsibilities, Globalisation, and localisation
- Politics & Society can be taken at Ordinary or Higher level.

Assessment is based on the course aims, objectives and learning outcomes. There are two assessment components at each level:

- A citizenship project report which accounts for 20% of the total marks.
- A written examination which accounts for 80% of the final grade

What kind of student would Politics and Society suit?

- Politics & Society is a challenging and rewarding subject. It will suit any student who is interested in areas such as human rights, equality, diversity, sustainable development, power, and democratic decision-making.
- If you want to become a more informed and active global citizen, then this subject will be of interest to you.
- Studying Politics & Society gives students a real insight into people, power and how society works.

Click [here](#) for more information



Spanish

Spanish is the second most used language on the internet. It is the official language in 27 countries. As it is widely spoken it would benefit the student both professionally and personally. Spanish has widespread use in international business.

The Leaving Cert course examines the reading, writing, listening and speaking skills of the individual but also endeavours to engage the student in the countries culture, literature, geography and history.

Third Level Entry Requirements

- A third language (i.e. English, Irish and a modern foreign language) is a requirement for a number of courses in NUI colleges. It is no longer required for Science, engineering or agriculture in these colleges. (not required for Law or Business in Maynooth)
- TCD and UL require one language – either Irish OR a modern foreign language.

L.C. Exam Structure

Oral exam: 25% at Higher Level / 20% at Ordinary Level

Listening exam: 20% at Higher level/ 25% at Ordinary Level

Reading and writing: 55% of final exam.

What kind of student would Spanish suit?

- Anyone with an interest in Spanish culture, history, and language.
- Students with an interest in travel or broadening their career possibilities.
- The standard of Spanish expected at Higher Level is very high.
- It is recommended that the student spend time in a country where the target language is spoken.

Click [here](#) for more information



