

MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE:

THE NEXT STAGE OF YOUR CCA JOURNEY



A Guide to Senior Cycle Options 2026

STRONG ROOTS FOR TALL FUTURES

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this booklet is to help you to make informed decisions in relation to your Senior Cycle subject choices. In Coláiste Chraobh Abhann (CCA), we offer a number of different pathways after Junior Cycle:

1. Transition Year

Transition Year is a one-year programme. It provides a bridge to enable students to make the transition from Junior to Senior cycle. It encourages personal and social development and recognises the need for students to grow in independence. Transition Year fosters academic achievement as students prepare for a Leaving Certificate Programme, further study and adult and working life. It encourages the development of critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills. National research has shown that Transition Year students do significantly better at the Leaving Certificate. It is also a great opportunity for students to enrich the experience of school and their adolescent life.

Full details of the programme on offer at Coláiste Chraobh Abhann are comprehensively outlined in the school's Transition Year Programme prospectus which may be viewed online at www.colaisteca.ie

2. Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

The Leaving Certificate Applied is a distinct, self-contained two-year programme aimed at preparing students for adult and working life. This programme is not designed for direct progression to Third Level Institutions.

The structure of regular assessment in the Leaving Certificate Applied programme is suited to those students who like to get their work done in stages. It is available to students who wish to follow a practical or vocationally orientated programme. After completion of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme, students usually go directly into a job, undertake a PLC course, or get an Apprenticeship. Full details of this programme can be viewed online at www.colaisteca.ie

3. Leaving Certificate Established (LCE)

It is expected that almost all students on this programme will transfer to 3rd level. Therefore, students should keep further studies at 3rd level in mind when selecting their subjects for Leaving Certificate. Please read the summary information on the following pages of this booklet about LCE and subject choice.

NOTE: Further information on Leaving Certificate Subjects and NCCA curriculum can be found on the careers portal website by following the link below – Parents – Leaving Cert subject guide:

<https://careersportal.ie/>

MAKING A CHOICE

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:**

SPHE (including RSE)

P.E

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

Accounting

Agricultural Science

Applied Maths

Art

Biology

Business

Chemistry

Construction Studies

Design & Communication Graphics (DCG)

Engineering

French

Geography

History

Home Economics

Music

LC Physical Education (LCPE)

Physics

Spanish

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

WHO OR WHAT CAN HELP YOU WITH YOUR CHOICE?

- As a general rule, choose subjects which you like and are good at.
- Your test results, your teachers and your parents will help you to choose the subjects which are most suitable for you.
- Your Guidance Counsellor will help you to choose subjects which are relevant to your possible career.
- TY Career Interest and Aptitude test results.

A GOOD GENERAL RULE FOR YOUR CHOICE

- Choose one Science subject (Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Agricultural Science) as this widens your choice later for Third Level. Agricultural Science is accepted as a lab science subject for most 3rd level courses.
- Some college courses may require a particular Science subject. You need to check this.
- Choose one foreign language because many courses after school have a language element and it is required for entry into some colleges. This is changing however, and many courses have now dropped the language requirement. **If you have not studied a language at Junior Cycle Level, you cannot take it at Leaving Cert. Level.**
- Choose two more subjects depending on your personal interest, enthusiasm, and aptitude for the subject.

A GUIDE TO THIRD LEVEL COLLEGES

MTU	Munster Technological University ((Tralee, Kerry, Cork)
ATU	Atlantic Technological University (Galway, Mayo, Sligo)
TUD	Technological University Dublin ((Tallaght, Blanchardstown, Bolton Street, Aungier Street, Grange Gorman)
SETU	South East Technological University ((Carlow, Waterford, Wexford)
TUS	Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (Limerick, Athlone, Ennis, Thurles, Clonmel)
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
UL	University of Limerick
DCU	Dublin City University (Glasnevin)
NCI	National College of Ireland
IADT	Institute of Art Design and Technology (Dun Laoghaire)
<u>NUI Colleges:</u>	
UCD	University College Dublin (Belfield)
UCC	University College Cork
UG	University of Galway
MU	Maynooth University
RCSI	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
NCAD	National College of Art and Design (UCD)

COURSES AT THIRD LEVEL

- **Level 6 - Higher Certificate Courses:** Available at Technological Universities- usually 2 Years.
- **Level 7 - Ordinary Degree:** Available at Technological Universities - usually 3 years.
- **Level 8 - Honours Degree:** Available at all Universities and Technological Universities -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.

MINIMUM COLLEGE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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, University of Galway, and Maynooth University.

- **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.

TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

- Each Technological University 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 (Colleges of Further Education)

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

NOTE: Compensatory Mechanism

One Grade H8 at Higher Level will be accepted if the candidate has among his/her subjects three Grade H5 awards on Higher Level Papers or at least one Grade H3 and one Grade H5 on Higher Level Papers in the Leaving Certificate. (Please note that this mechanism applies to basic matriculation purposes only. Students must still satisfy the course requirement).

STRUCTURE OF AWARDS

Level	Award	Duration
Level 8	Honours Degree	3-6 years
Level 7	Ordinary Degree	3 years
Level 6	Higher Certificate	2 years
Level 5	Post Leaving Cert	1 year

IRISH, LANGUAGES, MATHS AND SCIENCES

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

IRISH

- Students must pass Irish for entry to all NUI colleges (06 on Ordinary Level Paper)
- It is not essential to pass Irish for entry to TUD, TCD, UL or Technological Universities.
- Honours Irish is essential for all Primary Teaching Courses-at least a grade H4 at Higher level in needed.

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 (DES) 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 college for Language requirement.

A third language is required to be presented as part of the entry requirements for approximately 189 of over 1,800 third level CAO courses

- A foreign Language is essential for entry to many courses in the following colleges: UCD UCG, UCC, MU, UCC, RCSI, St. Angela's College, Sligo, Pontifical University Maynooth, Shannon College of Hotel management.
- There is no Third Language requirement for **Engineering or Science** in the above colleges.
- There is no foreign language requirement for Business or Law in Maynooth (unless through Arts).
- There is no foreign language requirement for Social Science in UCD.
- **Irish can be substituted as a second language for Trinity and UL.**
- 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 **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.** (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 *.

Careers portal - Students - Useful tools - minimum subject requirements

MATHS

UCD, DCU, University of Galway, Trinity, UCC, UL, Maynooth University, RSCI, TUD, and the Technological Universities 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 college 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 University - 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

HONOURS MATHS

At least a Grade H5 in Higher Level Maths is essential for many courses in Universities and Technological Universities (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 (L8) in all Universities and some colleges require a H4 in Higher Maths for Engineering courses.
- Honours Maths is not required to study Engineering in 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 to see a comprehensive list of courses requiring Honours Maths. * For further information follow the link below: [Careers portal - Students - Useful tools - minimum subject requirements](#)

SCIENCE

Students must present a science subject for approximately 144 of the 1800 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 **University of Galway & RCSI 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. *. For further information follow the link below:

[Careers portal - Students - useful tools - minimum subject requirements](#)

THE POINTS SYSTEM

The points system controls entry to Third Level Courses. A student is awarded points for his/her best 6 grades in **one sitting of the Leaving Cert.** Please see chart below to help you calculate points:

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

+25 Bonus points for H1-H6 maths

Note: You get points for achieving a H7 grade. H7 is considered a pass.

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 2026. 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 |
| * Hairdressing | * Wind Turbine Technician |

- **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 www.apprenticeships.ie

POST LEAVING CERTIFICATE COURSES (PLCs)

- These are one-year courses which may lead to a second year Higher National Diploma in Colleges of Further Education, such as Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE). They involve a combination of work experience and course work in a particular area, e.g. Childcare, Tourism, Social Care, Computers, Animal Care, to name but a few.
- PLC 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 PLC courses is **5 passes at Leaving Certificate** Level plus an **interview**. Many PLC 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**.
- **Leaving Certificate Applied** is acceptable for most but not all PLC courses. Some may require a **Distinction or Merit Level** for entry.

NOTE: If a student has taken an Ordinary Level paper at Junior Cycle Level it is extremely unlikely that he/she will be able to take a Higher-Level paper in this subject at Leaving Certificate Level.

*Further Information can be found on www.careersportal.ie or www.qualifax.ie *

ACCOUNTING

What is Accounting?

Accounting is a business subject which covers aspects of business and social life. It is 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.

Topics covered include:

- *Financial Statements preparation
- *Club accounts
- *Manufacturing accounts
- *Budgeting
- *Cost Classification
- *Farm accounts.
- *Company accounts.
- *Financial Statement Analysis and Interpretation.
- *Break-even analysis.
- *Accounting Theory and Principles

THIRD LEVEL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

To check if this subject is a requirement for entry into third level courses go to www.qualifix.ie or ask the Guidance Counsellor.

L.C. EXAM STRUCTURE

3 hour written exam in June: 3 Sections to paper

Section 1 & Section 2:

Financial Accounting

Section 3:

Management Accounting

WHAT TYPE OF STUDENT MIGHT SUIT ACCOUNTANCY?

- Comfortable with numbers but does not need to be taking Higher Level Maths.

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE

What is Agricultural Science?

Agricultural Science is the study of the science and technology underlying the principles and practices of agriculture. The leaving certificate Agricultural Science course covers a broad scope of farming-based practices. It is focused on specific learning outcomes, specific practical activities and an experimental research project set by the State Examinations Commission. There are four main strands of focus including scientific practices, soil, crops, and animals. These four strands are looked at under various linking lenses such as environment, technology, sustainability and health and safety. There are a number of investigations which are also carried out.

THIRD LEVEL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- Science generally relates to Biology, Chemistry & Physics. However, 'Agricultural Science' is accepted by many of the colleges as meeting the 'science entry requirement'.
- All the courses accepting Agricultural Science are listed on the Qualifax site (under the heading 'useful tools- CAO subject requirements'). www.qualifax.ie

L.C. EXAM STRUCTURE

- Individual investigation Study: 25% of final marks.
- Written exam paper: 75% of final marks.

WHAT KIND OF STUDENT MIGHT SUIT AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE?

- Some experience of Farming/Gardening would be an advantage.
- The students need to have regular access to a farm to be able to complete their project.
- Good memory skills are essential to be able to name and identify the different animals and plant types.
- Tip: Good to study with Biology and/Geography due to overlap in course content.

Note: Please refer to page 14 of this Handbook – Science

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

APPLIED MATHS

What is Applied Maths?

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

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

THIRD LEVEL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- This subject is not an essential requirement for any courses in the CAO system.
- **Note:** Trinity College Dublin (TCD) accepts Applied Maths as a science subject for entry into both the science and pharmacy faculties.

LC EXAM STRUCTURE

- Written Paper: 80% of Marks
- Practical Modelling Project: 20% of Marks
- The Practical Modelling Project will require students to present a solution to an authentic modelling problem, and to report on the work and process involved.
- Applied Maths can be taken at Ordinary or Higher level.

WHAT TYPE OF STUDENT MIGHT SUIT APPLIED MATHS?

- If you are getting high grades in Maths and Physics, you should be capable of getting similar grades in Applied Maths, thus enabling you to increase your points in the Leaving Cert.
- There is overlap between some parts of the Leaving Cert Physics course and the Applied Maths course, such as Linear Motion, Newton's Laws, and Circular Motion. Thus, it will also help you to have a deeper understanding of these topics in Physics.

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

ART

What is Art?

- 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.

THIRD LEVEL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- Leaving Cert Art is not a specific Entry Requirement into Art College (except SETU – 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

<u>Art</u>	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	1 Paper - 30% of Marks	1 Paper - 30% of Marks
Practical	1 Paper - 20% of Marks	1 Paper - 20% of Marks
Project	1 Paper - 50% of Marks	1 Paper - 50% of Marks

The exam structure is the same at higher and ordinary level

WHAT KIND OF STUDENT MIGHT SUIT ART?

- 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.

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

BIOLOGY

What is 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 new Biology syllabus, which is being rolled out for the first time in September 2025, is divided into three units: 1. The organization of life (The Cell, Genetics and Evolution) 2. The Structure and Processes of Life (Photosynthesis, Respiration, Enzymes, Body Systems and Plant Systems) 3. Interactions of Life (Ecology, Microorganisms, and Genetic Engineering)

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

- Individual Investigation Study: 40% of final marks.
- Written exam paper: 60% of final marks.

WHAT TYPE OF STUDENT MIGHT SUIT BIOLOGY?

- 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.

Note: Please refer to page 14 of this Handbook – Science

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

BUSINESS

What is Business?

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

- The course is made up of four strands and a unifying strand Investigating Business - Exploring the business environment, understanding enterprise, leading in business, being informed and making informed decisions.
- 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 a 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

Written paper – 60% of marks

Business Alive Investigation Study – 40% of marks

WHAT TYPE OF STUDENT MIGHT SUIT BUSINESS?

- 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.

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

CHEMISTRY

What is Chemistry?

The Leaving Cert Chemistry syllabus is divided into five strands: "The Nature of Science" (the unifying strand), "The Nature of Matter," "Behaviour of Matter," "Interactions of Matter," and "Matter in Our World". It includes a significant component of pure chemistry (around 70%), with the remainder covering the social, applied, and citizen aspects of chemistry. Parts of the course is heavily experimentally based, requiring students to complete mandatory practical experiments in addition to written exams on theory and applications

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

- Individual Investigation Study: 40% of final marks.
- Written exam paper: 60% of final marks.

WHAT TYPE OF STUDENT MIGHT SUIT CHEMISTRY?

- Students should have a good understanding of Junior Cycle Science.
- 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.

Note: Please refer to page 14 of this Handbook – Science

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

CONSTRUCTION STUDIES

What is Construction Studies?

Construction Studies introduces students to the knowledge and skills associated with construction technology and construction materials and practices. The course is essentially about the study of buildings and the built environment. The theory part of the course examines all parts of buildings from the planning stage 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 and roofs
- *Fireplaces
- *Windows and doors
- *Stairs
- *Plastering and painting
- *Plumbing and heating
- *Services
- *Drainage

THIRD LEVEL ENTRY REQUIREMENT

- This subject is not an essential requirement for any third level course.
- Studying this subject will be useful for anyone thinking of working/studying in the following areas: Architecture, Renewable Energy Sector, Civil Engineering, Construction Management, Sustainable Management, Skilled Trades, Quantity Surveyor, Building Management, Planning, Woodwork Teacher etc.

L.C. EXAM STRUCTURE

Assessment Component	Weighting	Level
Exploring the Constructed Environment	30% of Marks	Common Brief
Craft Skills Assessment	20% of Marks	Common Prescribed Task
Written Examination	50% of Marks	Higher and Ordinary Levels

WHAT TYPE OF STUDENT MIGHT SUIT CONSTRUCTION?

- Have a general interest in building and the built environment.
- An aptitude and interest in design and practical work.
- Have taken Woodwork or Technical Graphics at Junior Cycle but this is not compulsory.

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

DESIGN & COMMUNICATION GRAPHICS

What is Design & Communication Graphics?

This subject provides the student with the opportunity to visualise and understand information presented both verbally and graphically. Problem solving and creative thinking are developed through the analysis of both two- and three-dimensional graphics. For graphics, students use freehand sketching, traditional draughting equipment and CAD. There is a big emphasis in the Leaving Certificate on **understanding, analysis and problem solving**. In simple terms, you must understand what has to be done, analyse how you are going to approach it, and then proceed to solve the problem. The subject consists of a core section comprising (a) plane and solid geometry (b) communication computer graphics. There is also an options section of applied Graphics.

- DCG helps to further students cognitive and practical skills with modules like graphic communication, problem solving, spatial visualisation, design capabilities of computer graphics and much more.

THIRD LEVEL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- This subject is not an essential requirement for any courses in the CAO system.
- However, it is a core element of many third level options including: Engineering, Construction, Product Design and Architecture.

L.C. EXAM STRUCTURE

- Final exam paper (3-hour exam): 60%
- Student assignment (CAD forms a significant and compulsory element): 40%

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WHAT TYPE OF STUDENT MIGHT SUIT DCG?

- Students who enjoy problem solving and creative thinking.
- Students who have a relatively good knowledge of computers.
- Students who have taken Graphics to Junior Cycle level.
- Students who have a keen interest in further studies in practical areas of engineering and construction, or in apprenticeships which include technical drawing.

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

ENGINEERING

WHAT IS ENGINEERING?

This is a practical, “hands on” subject which involves working with tools or machinery on physical things like wood, metals, and plastics. It involves designing, planning, and building things. Engineering promotes an understanding of the materials and a knowledge of the processes involved in mechanical engineering. There is a good mixture of theory and practice involved in this subject. Many enjoy the practical element but are not too happy when it comes to the theory. Students will have to present a project, so talk to the teacher about the mixture of theory and practical in this exam.

THIRD LEVEL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- This subject is not an essential requirement for any course in the CAO system.
- Engineering is useful for the following careers: mechanic, panel beater, welder, plumber, electronic and mechanical engineering, architecture, aircraft technician, army/air corps and industrial design.

L.C. EXAM STRUCTURE

3 hour written exam in June-300 marks

Student project -150 marks

Practical exam-150 marks

WHAT TYPE OF STUDENT MIGHT SUIT ENGINEERING?

- A student who has an aptitude and interest in design and practical work.
- Students who have taken Junior Cycle Engineering.
- If a student has not taken Junior Cycle Engineering, it is important that he/she has taken another practical subject like Woodwork or DCG (Consult with the subject teacher).

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

FRENCH

What is 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 TYPE OF STUDENT MIGHT SUIT FRENCH?

- 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.

Note: Please refer to page 12 of this Handbook – Languages

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

GEOGRAPHY

What is 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 MIGHT SUIT GEOGRAPHY?

- 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.

Note: Please refer to page 14 of this Handbook – Science

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

HISTORY

What is History?

History aims to record and analyse events 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 complete a Document Based Question which changes every two years and selected from either the Irish or Europe and Wider World Prescribed Topic list. Students examine the DBQ through Comprehension, Comparison, Criticism and Contextualisation.

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.
- History allows students the opportunity to develop research skills that will be required in any pathway they follow after CCA.
- RSR completion entails students selecting an historical event / person of their choice pre-1992/3 and completing comprehensive research on it.

L.C. EXAM STRUCTURE

Assessment consists of two components:

- A written examination paper - 80%
- A research study report (submitted in April of 6th year) -20%

WHAT TYPE OF STUDENT MIGHT SUIT HISTORY?

- Students must have a genuine interest in the subject.
- Students should be self-disciplined as they need to research as they need to research material.
- A good knowledge of English and ability to complete essays is essential for HL students. History is accessible to all students, and both levels are catered for excellently

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

HOME ECONOMICS

What is Home Economics?

Home Economics is an applied subject combining theory with practice. It provides students with the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes necessary for managing their own lives, for further and higher education and work. It is concerned with the management of resources (material and human) to meet the physical, emotional, intellectual, social and economic needs of individuals and their families.

The syllabus consists of Core Areas and Three Electives:

Core Areas

- Food Studies-45%
- Resource Management and Consumer Studies-25%
- Social Studies-10%

Electives include:

- Home Design and Management-20% OR
- Textiles, Fashion and Design-20% OR
- Social Studies-20%

Students choose one elective area

THIRD LEVEL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- This subject is not an essential requirement for any courses in the CAO.
- This subject provides a good foundation in careers including: Health, Education and Tourism, Clothing and Design and the Food industry.

L.C. EXAM STRUCTURE

L.C. Home Economics (Social and Scientific) syllabus is examined as follows:

- Written exam -80%
- Practical Coursework (Journal) -20%

WHAT TYPE OF STUDENT MIGHT SUIT HOME ECONOMICS?

- Students who enjoyed Home Economics at Junior Cycle and obtained good results in their exam as this will offer strong foundations for further learning within Home Economics at Leaving Certificate level.
- It is a wide course, covering many life skills. 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 as there is both Higher and Ordinary level within the subject.
- Much of the course is theory based –the Practical Section has to be written up and presented – because there is no Practical Examination as at Junior Certificate Level.

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

MUSIC

What is 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 TYPE OF STUDENT MIGHT SUIT MUSIC?

- 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)
- If you wish to take up Music as a new subject at LC, talk to the Music Teacher.
- Because of the practical nature of the subject, students should feel comfortable performing in front of others.

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (LCPE)

What is Leaving Certificate PE?

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 MIGHT SUIT LC PE?

- 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.

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

PHYSICS

What is Physics?

There are five strands on the new Leaving Cert Physics course;

- **Nature of Science:** This is a unifying strand that helps students understand the scientific method, the role of science in society, and the ethical and social implications of scientific knowledge.
- **Forces and Motion:** This strand includes the study of kinematics and dynamics, and the application of concepts like energy, work, and Newton's laws to solve problems.
- **Wave Motion and Energy Transfer:** This strand covers topics related to energy transfer and the nature of waves.
- **Electric and Magnetic Fields and their Interactions:** This strand deals with electric circuits and the modelling of electric fields.
- **Modern Physics:** Topics such as the electron, photoelectric emission, X-ray production, radioactivity, and nuclear processes are included.

THIRD LEVEL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Physics is a requirement for a number of third level colleges. (Examples; Technology, Radiography, Physiotherapy). ***Note: Please refer to page 14 of this Handbook - Science***

L. C. EXAM STRUCTURE

Written Paper: 1 paper 60% of Marks (the final exam is now 2 hours 30 mins)

Physics in Practice Investigation: Common Brief 40% of Marks

The written examination paper will include a selection of questions that will assess, appropriate to each level.

WHAT TYPE OF STUDENT MIGHT SUIT PHYSICS?

- 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.

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

SPANISH

What is 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.

At Leaving Cert students continue to develop their language skills to discuss issues relevant to their lives, current affairs and topical global issues. A good knowledge of vocabulary and topics from Junior Cycle is presumed.

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.

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 MIGHT SUIT SPANISH?

- 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.

Note: Please refer to page 12 of this Handbook – Languages

Further info: https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?s_CAO_code=CK408

