**ERSS**

**Carrick-on-Suir**

**Subject Choice Information**

**Booklet**

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**FOREWORD**

Dear Students and Parents,

You will shortly have to make decisions regarding your subjects for the Leaving Certificate. In order to make a good choice it is essential to have correct information. Once you choose your top four choice subjects, you also choose two additional back up subjects that you would like if any of your first preferences were unavailable. Subject bands are then decided based on student preferences.

When choosing subjects you need to fully understand college matriculation (specific subjects and grades required for college entry) and also the content and nature of subjects. Detailed information on college matriculation requirements and subject content is provided in this booklet. I strongly recommend that you:

* Study this booklet
* Access [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie) and [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie)
* Consult subject textbooks and past papers ([www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie), www.studyclix.ie)
* Talk to students who have or who are currently studying the subjects that interest you, but be aware that each students experience is completely individual to them.
* Discuss subject choice with your teachers and parents/guardians.
* Choose your subjects to satisfy your interests and to keep as many career options open as possible.
* Ensure that you have the essential subjects for your job/course/career. Always double check [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie) for matriculation and course requirements.
* Select your remaining subjects to maximise your results.
* A third language and a science subject will keep most options open (see relevant sections of this booklet)

Four of the subject options have had a revised specification for 2025 for the fifth year group. These are Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Business. The new specification is outlined in this booklet. By getting as much accurate and up to date information as possible, you will make a good subject choice decision.

If you require any further assistance, make an appointment to see me, consult me in careers class or on teams, or email me at aileen.okeeffe@erss.ie.

**Aileen O’Keeffe**

**Guidance Counsellor.**

**INTRODUCTION**

The following are the core subjects in our school: Irish, English and Mathematics, i.e. all students study these subjects.

The remaining subjects should be chosen wisely. The ‘Choice’ subjects currently available in the school are:

* Business Group: Accounting, Business, Economics
* Creative Group: Art, Music
* Science Group: Agricultural Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physical Education
* Practical Group: Construction Studies, Design Communication Graphics,
* Humanities/Social Group: French, Geography, History,
* LCVP is an 8th subject that all students complete

Details of the content, exam structure and nature of these subjects are detailed in the final section of this booklet in alphabetical order. Please ensure that you read this information carefully to be fully aware of what is involved in a subject before choosing it. Students need to be aware of the topics covered, the type of learning involved and how the subject is assessed. It is expected that all students will engage in extensive research of each subject that they considered and they are guided and supported throughout this process at home and in school.

Some of these subjects are a continuation of junior cycle study while the nature of these subjects at senior cycle can vary in terms of syllabus and assessment. It is important also to note that careers and courses are not the only consideration in subject choice. Many subjects have value in their own right, e.g. History, languages, Music, etc. (See section ‘Subject Information’).

**Application procedures and entry requirements for 3rd Level Colleges**

Application for most full-time undergraduate courses (Honours Degree - Level 8, Ordinary Degree - Level 7 and Higher Certificate - Level 6) in the Universities and Technological Universities is made through the Central Applications Office (CAO). The CAO provides an applications pack with a handbook that lists all the courses on offer and gives information on how to apply. The closing date for applications from Irish and other European Union nationals is normally 1st February each year. A student must have the particular academic entry requirements needed for the course he/she wants to take.

In addition, there is a wide and varied choice of other courses for which you apply directly to the college. These are known as PLC (Post Leaving Certificate) or FE (Further Education) courses and usually take one or two years to complete. In general, the entrance requirement for these courses is 5 passes in Leaving Cert and a suitability interview. The qualification awarded is FETAC and can lead onto further education in Technological Universities’s (or some universities) or into direct employment. *There are no specific leaving certificate subjects required for entry to further education courses or apprenticeships.*

When choosing your Leaving Cert subjects it is vitally important that you are aware of the fact that you do need certain subjects in order to apply for *particular 3rd level college* courses. Below is a brief description of these Subject Entry Requirements and a brief guide to the Leaving Cert. Points System.

**Full details of the Minimum Entry Requirements and Specific Subject Requirements of any particular courses you are interested in should be researched in www.careersportal.ie and the college’s prospectus or website as requirements are subject to change.**

**College Matriculation Requirements**

Most third level courses are not specific about choice subjects required, eg you do not need business at leaving cert to do it at third level in any college. It is the colleges and courses that have specific requirements that students must be aware of. These requirements are usually a third language or a science subject and these requirements are detailed below. It is important to point out that not all courses and colleges have these restrictions. The information below focuses on the ones that do.

**Third Language Requirement**

In the ERSS, French is the Modern European Language option will satisfy college/course ‘*third language requirements’*. Where colleges specify that a second language is required, Irish is sufficient.

The following colleges DO require a third language for entry with the important exceptions listed.

All NUI’s –NUI Maynooth, NUI Galway, UCC, UCD, RCSI (Royal College of Surgeons) require a third language for entry.

Exception: Engineering, Science degrees & Nursing ie- these courses within the NUI’s do not require a third language.

The following colleges DO NOT specifically require a third language:

* TCD - English & one other language (Irish is accepted)
* DCU, UL and I.T’s – No third language required unless specified

The NUI Courses that DO require a third language

Within the NUI colleges, the remaining courses do require a third language, so all courses outside of Science/Engineering/Nursing. The most popular NUI college for ERSS graduates is UCC. The types of courses that require a third language in UCC are similar to those in other NUI colleges.

The following is an example of **UCC Courses** that require a third language:

* All courses in the college of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences. The arts degree is very broad course with a high intake. Subject options include; Maths, English, French, Irish, History, Sociology, Psychology, Politics, Archaeology, Music, Chinese
* Majority of Arts students go on to do Post Grad and Masters degrees, often in education (Secondary/Primary teaching Masters).
* Other courses in this department include; Anthropology, Social Science, Music, Film and Screen Media, Social Work, PE Teaching, Digital Humanities.
* Business and Law courses (including Business Information Systems).
* Medicine and Health Science Courses –Medicine, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy.
* PE Teaching

PE Teaching and Physiotherapy

If we look at these two course options, they illustrate how the third language requirement can vary between colleges. If you wish to study PE teaching in UL or DCU, you will not require a third language. However, if you wish to study PE teaching in UCC, you will require a third language. The same applies to physiotherapy, if you wish to study this course in UL or Trinity, you will not require a third language, however, UCD and the RCSI require a third language for entry to physiotherapy. (Note: all physiotherapy courses require a science subject also). This illustrates how keeping a third language creates wider options for these careers. The same could be said for Arts degrees, the NUI’s will require a third language while UL and Mary Immaculate College do not.

Other Options that Require a Third Language

Entry to the Cadetships in the Army, Army Equitation, Air Corps and Naval Service require a third Language.

**Science Subject Requirement**

Once science subject is required for many science and engineering degrees, particularly those offered in universities. (Higher level maths is also often a requirement for engineering degrees in universities and in some IT engineering degrees). A science subject is also required for all nursing degrees. Some of the higher medical professional health degrees will require two science subjects and can specifically require chemistry, but this varies between the colleges. The science requirement can be summarised as follows:

* Medicine- Can require TWO science subjects and UCC specifically requires Chemistry
* Nursing / Midwifery / OT / Physiotherapy/Radiography: ONE Science Subject is required.
* Dentistry and Pharmacy require TWO science subjects, can require chemistry
* Most Engineering and Science Degrees in University will require ONE science subject
* Some Level 8 Engineering and Science programmes in the I.T’s will require a Science subject, most will recommend
* The following courses specifically require Chemistry: Dietetics (DIT), Veterinary (UCD), Dentistry (UCC) Pharmacy (UCC), Medical and Health Sciences (UCC) Medicine (UCC)
* Veterinary in SETU will accept H5 in any two science subjects

***Science Requirement Summary***

* Generally the higher medical professional courses can require two science subjects
* Most general science degrees and nursing and engineering courses require one science subject

**Leaving Cert Points System**

Once students meet the minimum entry requirements for the third level course that they wish to apply for, they compete with other students for places within those courses based on their leaving certificate points. The CAO will offer places to the students who have the highest points. An example of how this works is to imagine a course in a particular year. Lets say Commerce in UCC. If there are 100 places available, the CAO will look for 100 qualified candidates for the course. Perhaps 300 students have indicated on their CAO application that they wish to apply for Commerce in UCC. The CAO computer will first check to see which candidate meet the minimum entry requirements (have the necessary subjects) and then will rank them according to their points score. Lets say 295 students have the minimum entry requirements. The CAO computer will place these students in order, with the student with the highest points at the top of the list, the person with the second highest second on the list and so on. As UCC needs one hundred qualified candidates, the CAO will offer places to the first 100 students on the list. The last person or 100th person to be offered a place will determine the points for the course. The first candidate may have had 550 points and the 100th candidate 440. 440 points will be printed as the First Round Cut off points for that course in that year. Please see [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie) for all information relating to CAO

Students may only count their six best subjects to accumulate points in any one sitting of the leaving cert. The points awarded are as follows:



**Subject Information**

Please read this information carefully. Remember that there is a big difference between considering what subjects may be relevant and useful for a particular career versus what subjects are actually *required* for certain courses. The majority of third level courses teach the modules ‘Ab Initio’ or from scratch and please ensure that you have read the previous sections thoroughly relating to the third language and science subject requirements at third level. It is important to consider what subjects students will be most likely to take at higher level as there is a huge difference in points achieved between higher and ordinary papers. Please do refer to www.careersportal.ie and [www.examinations.ie/www.studyclix.ie](http://www.examinations.ie/www.studyclix.ie) for more information on breakdowns of average grades achieved in each subject and for marking schemes. Also students research should extend to speaking with subject teachers.



**Accounting**

Accountancy provides a valuable foundation for all business functions and many top executives have an accountancy background. Accountancy is also a recognised qualification that can be used abroad.

**Third Level Entry Requirements**

Although studying accounting for the leaving cert is not required for studying accountancy at third level (except for Commerce-Accounting in NUI Galway), it is highly recommended if this is the sector you wish to pursue.

**Subject Content**

Accounting is a business studies option within the Leaving Certificate programme. It covers aspects of business and social life which are not dealt with in any other subject in that programme. 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, Farm Accounts, Club Accounts, Company Accounts, Manufacturing Accounts, Financial Statements Analysis and Interpretation, Budgeting, Break-even Analysis, Cost Classification, Accounting Theory and Principles.

**Exam Structure**

The subject is examined at higher and ordinary level. Both levels involve one exam of three hours duration. The exam paper is made up of three sections, the first two are based on the Financial Accounting section of the course and the third covers the Management Accounting section. Questions must be answered from all sections of the exam paper.

**Comments**

The course is numerically based but theory and procedures must be learned also. While the student needs to be comfortable with numbers he or she does not need to be at higher maths level.

This course offers a hard working student the real possibility of high grades because of the unambiguous nature of the questions.

An organised student with a likeness for order will be particularly suited to this course.

**Agricultural Science**

Agricultural science is the study of the science and technology underlying the principles and practices of agriculture. It aims to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes concerning the factors that affect the long-term well-being of agricultural resources, and places emphasis on the managed use of these resources. It is steadily growing in popularity every year. It is recognised as a laboratory science subject for almost all 3rd level courses including nursing.

It can be a good study to subject with Biology and/or Geography due to the overlap in course content. Some experience of farming would be desirable.

**The Programme covers the following topics:**

* The rearing of animals
* The growing of crops
* Soil types
* Genetics
* Ecology
* Animal and plant science

**Career Possibilities**

Careers in this area include: Greenkeeping, Horticulture, Food Science, Agricultural Advisers, Sports Turf Management, Environmental Science, Forestry, Farming, Marine Science, Careers in Renewable Energy and Teaching.

**Third Level Entry Requirements**
This subject is not an essential requirement for any courses in the CAO system but is considered a laboratory science subject and will qualify you to enter a course that requires a laboratory science subject.

**Subject Content**
The course consists of the study of a variety of aspects of agriculture and is divided into four main strands.

 Scientific Practices:

* Hypothesising
* Experimenting
* Evaluating Evidence
* Communicating
* Working Safely

 Soils:

* Classification
* Properties (Chemical, Physical, Biological)
* Management

 Grass and Other Crops:

* Plant Physiology
* Classification/Identification
* Production (Establishment, Management, Harvesting)

Animals:

* Animal Physiology
* Classification/Identification
* Production (System/Enterprise, Management, Animal Husbandry and Health)

**Exam Structure**
The assessment in Agricultural Science consists of:

(a) a terminal examination paper (60%), at both Higher and Ordinary level, lasting 2 and a half hours, examining the following:

* Knowledge and recall of facts related to the principles and practices of Agricultural Science
* Application of knowledge and understanding from different areas of the specification to familiar and unfamiliar situations
* Scientific inquiry, formulation of hypotheses and design of investigations
* Critical thinking, the ability to analyse and evaluate information and to form reasonable and logical argument, based on evidence
* Problem solving based on integration, analysis and evaluation of qualitative and quantitative information and data
* Understanding of the ehtical, historical, environmental and technological aspects of science, and how it contributes to the social and economic development of society.

(b) (i) portfolio of activities and investigations, including laboratory and field investigations, farm visits and other appropriate activities.

     (ii) a student project, through which a topic of agricultural significance is explored in greater depth. This will be based on a theme, which will be set annually by the State Examinations Commission.

Both the portfolio and student project will amount to a combined total of 40% of the student's final grade.

**Art**

Students taking the leaving Certificate examination in 2023 will be following the new revised course. The course requires students to research, create and respond to their own art and the work of other artists.

Exam Structure:

This is demonstrated through a coursework project, an invigilated practical examination, and a written exam paper.

· Practical coursework Project 50%

· Practical invigilated examination 20%

· Visual Studies Written examination 30%

The Art course for Leaving Certificate consists of two parts. The Coursework (practical) and Visual Studies (Art History).

Coursework

Students will complete a coursework project: workbook followed by two finished pieces. They will explore a theme, document their research, produce a range of drawings made from primary sources, produce development (planning) pages for two finished pieces. They will realise one finished piece during this body of time and the second finished piece will be completed during a 5 hour invigilated examination.

Visual Studies

The written examination will have a range and balance of question types suited to Visual Studies and the application of practical knowledge. The questions will focus on a broad understanding of Visual Studies and will require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding, and an ability to apply, analyse, evaluate and respond as appropriate.

There are three main content areas within Visual Studies:

· Europe and the wider world: This broadly covers the canon of Western art from the Romanesque and Gothic periods to the present.

· Ireland and its place in the wider world: This broadly covers a selection of significant periods of art as experienced in Ireland across the centuries. However, it is important that connections to Europe and the wider world are made where relevant.

· Today’s world: This broadly covers critical literacy and contextual inquiry to decode, decipher and make meaning from a range of art-led experiences that students can study locally, nationally, internationally or virtually. Students are encouraged to explore, experience and reflect on art and culture in their everyday lives through four sections of focus;

Sections of focus will be carefully selected by the art teacher.

As part of their Today’s World students must experience some of their Visual Studies work first hand by visiting a gallery, museum or heritage site, reviewing elements of urban/rural design, working with an artist, etc. This will enrich their understanding and perception of art

**Career Possibilities**

Art is useful for careers in animation, art teaching, computer design, fashion design, interior design, photography and art therapy.

**Third Level Entry Requirements**

For most level art and design courses, a portfolio is required as well as the Leaving Cert. **Note:** Each college has its own **date for submission of a portfolio** and you will not be notified by the college or the CAO, you will need to research the deadline yourself. Portfolios take a lot of time to complete and so some students take night classes, summer courses to complete them. There are also a number of portfolio preparation courses offered through PLC colleges.

**Biology**

Biology is defined as the scientific study of life. Nature is remarkable and composed of a wide variety of simple and complex systems. Biology attempts to describe and explain these systems with regards to the organisation of life, its structures and processes and the interactions between living things and their environment. In doing so, biology allows us to understand all of life in the past, present and future.

**Why Study Biology**

* Biology is a popular subject and is the study of life. It requires a lot of memory work so is a good choice for students with good attention to detail.
* Many courses require at least one science subject and some even require two (see third level entry requirements). Therefore, it is a good idea to have at least one science subject to keep your options open.
* Those considering medicine, nursing and related courses will find that this subject will be of huge benefit in their studies.
* In addition, biology incorporates a broad range of skills, including systems thinking, observation, classification, creative design, synthesis, and evaluation of information. It teaches a range of generically useful skills in areas such as communication, time management, organisation, and teamwork. These skills are relevant to all further study, and indeed all learning beyond formal education.

**What kind of student would Biology suit?**

Students who enjoyed science for Junior Cert might wish to consider studying biology at Senior Cycle. The course is a continuation of what was studied at Junior Cycle but in more detail. It is particularly suited to students who have scored highly in the Naturalist and Investigative areas in their interest test.

**Recommendations/Tips**

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

The Leaving Certificate Biology specification being introduced in September 2025 is designed for a minimum of 180 hours of class contact time. It sets out the learning in strands and through the identification of cross-cutting themes.

There are four strands: a unifying strand, Nature of Science, and three contextual strands;

**Nature of Science** - Students develop an understanding that whilst science is powerful, generating knowledge that forms the basis for many advances and innovations in society, it has limitations and that the application of scientific knowledge to problem-solving can be influenced by considerations such as economic, social, sustainability and ethical factors.

**Organisation of Life** - Students gain knowledge and understanding of a number of core concepts to explain the organisation and diversity of life.

**Structures and Processes of Life** - Students learn how the unique and diverse structures within living things allow life to function through a number of processes taking place within cells, organs and systems.

**Interactions of Life** - Students look at the systems of the living world at different scales. As they investigate interactions of individuals and groups in ecosystems, they learn that no organism in nature is independent of the systems in which it lives, functions and dies.

**Third Level Entry Requirements**
This subject is a requirement for entry into a number of third level courses. Examples include: Genetics in UCC and Human Health and Disease in TCD. It is considered a laboratory science subject.

**Subject Content**
The course is divided into three units

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

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

**Exam Structure**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [**Biology**](https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Senior-cycle/Senior-Cycle-Subjects/Biology/) | Higher | Ordinary |
| Written PaperBiology in Practise Investigation  | 1 Paper - 60% of MarksCommon Brief - 40% of Marks | 1 Paper - 60% of MarksCommon Brief - 40% of Marks |

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

• the learning described in the three contextual strands of the specification and the unifying strand

• application of Biology to issues relating to the cross-cutting themes —sustainability, health, and technology.

**Comments**

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

Business

This new Leaving Certificate Business specification will be introduced for fifth year students in September 2025 and will replace the current Leaving Certificate Business syllabus.

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

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

The course sets out to illustrate the process of setting up a business and developing a new product or service. It emphasises the importance of good management and deals with skills and activities necessary for good management practice. It also deals with the impact of technology, foreign trade, global firms and competition. it explores how developments at national, European, and international levels impact on the world of business.

Business requires students to have an interest in current related business media. The course helps students develop the skills and knowledge to help them make informed decisionss in areas that affect their lives beyond school.

The Leaving Certificate Business specification being introduced in September 2025 is designed for a minimum of 180 hours of class contact time. It sets out the learning in strands and through the identification of cross-cutting themes.

There are five strands: a unifying strand, Investigating Business, and four contextual strands;

**Investigating Business** - This learning permeates all four of the contextual strands and brings to life the practices and norms of working with information and data to arrive at informed conclusions, decisions, and recommendations.

**Exploring the Business Environment** - Ireland is a small, open economy which has implications for business, for government policies and decisions and ultimately, for consumers. Students explore how the government makes decisions that impact on business, and how business impacts on society, the environment, and the economy. They explore how developments at national, European, and international levels impact on the world of business and consider how digital developments and international trade can impact on consumers and businesses alike.

**Understanding Enterprise** - This strand supports student engagement with the dynamic world of business through developing an understanding of strategic planning and the significance of business models. In this strand students will develop an understanding of enterprise and entrepreneurship in its broadest sense and will recognise the importance of both entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship in the world of business and its significance for the individual, the community, and the wider economy.

**Leading in Business** - This strand explores both leading and managing in business and students develop an understanding of how leadership and management impact on the successful development of an organisation, while also recognising the significance of ethical and cultural considerations in increasingly diverse workplaces.

**Being Informed & Making Informed Decisions** - As students move into senior cycle they are preparing for life beyond school. In this strand students will develop the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions associated with making informed decisions particularly in areas that affect their own lives.

**Comments**

* The subject is suited to students who are willing to work hard and caters for all abilities.
* The course content is factual and requires a lot of learning, containing only a few mathematical elements.
* Ideally, students would have an interest in business and current affairs and would have an up to date knowledge of economic environment.
* An organized and consistent attitude to homework and study would be essential in this subject.

## **Exam Structure**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [**Business**](https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Senior-cycle/Senior-Cycle-Subjects/Business/) | Higher | Ordinary |
| Written PaperBusiness Alive Investigative Study | 1 Paper - 60% of MarksCommon Brief - 40% of Marks | 1 Paper - 60% of MarksCommon Brief - 40% of Marks |

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

• the learning described in the four contextual strands of the specification and the unifying strand

• application of the cross-cutting themes of ethics and sustainability, business and financial literacy, entrepreneurial thinking, and digital transformation

• students’ capacity to engage with the world of business and business in the media.

The brief for the Business Alive Investigative Study wlll be issued by the State Examinations Commission in Term Two 5th year. Students work on their Investigative Study over a period of up to 20 hours. The Investigative study is submitted in 6th year.

**Chemistry**

The Leaving Certificate Chemistry specification being introduced in September 2025 is designed for a minimum of 180 hours of class contact time. It sets out the learning in strands and through the identification of cross-cutting themes. The design of the strands reflects the aims of Leaving Certificate Chemistry.

There are five strands: a unifying strand, Nature of Science, and four contextual strands;

**Nature of Science** - Students develop an understanding that whilst science is powerful, generating knowledge that forms the basis for many advances and innovations in society, it has limitations and that the application of scientific knowledge to problem-solving can be influenced by considerations such as economic, social, sustainability and ethical factors.

**The Nature of Matter** - Students develop an understanding of the particulate nature of matter. This is emphasised through the kinetic theory of matter explaining the states of solids, liquids and gases. Matter can be quantified using the concept of a mole.

**Behaviour of Matter** - With the particulate nature of matter as a model, students learn that many of the properties and behaviours of matter can be explained by the types of forces between particles and verified through experimental investigations. Behaviour of gases can be modelled through the kinetic theory of matter and the ideal gas equation.

**Interactions of Matter** - Students learn about the models used to explain energy transfer in chemical reactions and how proton and electron transfer are central to understanding interactions. These models are an important component of how scientists understand the natural world and how chemists can control and predict reaction outcomes.

**Matter in Our World** - Students have opportunities to specifically deepen their analytical skills and improve their personal effectiveness through learning practical and inquiry skills. They apply stoichiometric principles and laboratory techniques to prepare standard solutions, determine unknown concentrations, and solve abstract, conceptual problems. As they investigate and analyse authentic contexts, students develop their understanding of the core concepts and fundamental principles of chemistry.

## **Exam Structure**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Chemistry | Higher | Ordinary |
| Written PaperChemisty in Practise Investigation  | 1 Paper - 60% of MarksCommon Brief - 40% of Marks  | 1 Paper - 60% of MarksCommon Brief - 40 % of Marks |

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

• the learning described in the four contextual strands of the specification and the unifying strand

• application of chemistry to issues relating to the cross-cutting themes—sustainability, health, and technology.

**Why do Chemistry?**

Chemistry exists everywhere not just in laboratories but in every living thing on land and sea and in our bodies. It is often described as 'the central science' containing a lot of formulas. So, if you enjoyed Junior Cert Science and you have done well in this and Maths you should be a good candidate for Leaving Cert Chemistry. Chemistry is an essential element in the study of careers including: Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, Physiotherapy, Nursing, Pharmacy and Medical Laboratory Technology. The following video will give you a good overview of what the study of chemistry for Leaving Cert is all about and how it might tie in with your future career.

**What kind of student might Chemistry suit?**

* Students considering a career in any scientific discipline, such as chemistry, biology, environmental science, medicine, pharmacology, or material science.
* Students who were successful in Junior Cert. Science, particularly in the chemistry section.

 **Career Possibilities**

Chemistry is considered most useful for careers in Pharmacy, Ag Science, Medicine, Engineering, General Sciences and Biotechnology.

**Third Level Entry Requirements**
This subject is considered a laboratory science subject and qualifies you to enter any course which requires one. It is specifically required for Human Health and Disease in Trinity, for Veterinary Science in UCD and for Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy in UCC.

**Construction Studies**

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

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

This subject has proven to be very popular with over 8,000 students taking the subject last year.

**Third Level Entry Requirements**
This subject is not an essential requirement for any courses in the CAO system.

**Subject Content**

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

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

The examination at higher and ordinary levels has three separate components.

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

**Section B**   4 hour practical woodwork exam where the student makes a small item out of timber under exam conditions. The exam normally takes place in May. This accounts for 150 marks.
 **Section C**   Building Project where the student makes a building detail, a scale model of a building or a craft piece. The student also produces a portfolio to accompany the project that they make. Ideally this project must be completed by Christmas. This accounts for 150 marks.

**Comment**

* It is recommended that a student taking Leaving Certificate Construction Studies has a general interest in buildings and the built environment.
* Each student should have an aptitude and interest for design and practical work.
* Woodwork and/or Technical Graphics would be desirable subjects to have taken at Junior Certificate though not compulsory.

**Design Communication Graphics (DCG)**

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

Problem solving and creative thinking skills are developed through the analysis and solution of both 2- and 3-dimensional graphics. Graphics and design are communicated using freehand sketching skills, traditional draughting equipment and CAD.

If you are interested in taking this subject to Leaving Certificate level you will have taken Tech Graphics to Junior Certificate level. There is a great emphasis in the Leaving Certificate course on comprehension, analysis and problem solving. In simple terms you must be able to understand what has to be done, analyse how you are going to approach it and then proceed to solve the problem. Although it is not an essential subject for either architecture or engineering it is regarded as a useful asset if you are thinking of a technical course. This course now has a project aspect.

**Career Possibilities**

DCG is a core element of many 3rd level options including Engineering, Construction and Architecture and knowledge of this subject will greatly enhance a student's ability in any 3rd level engineering based programme. All apprenticeships include the study of detailed technical drawings.

**Third Level Entry Requirements**
This subject is not an essential requirement for any courses in the CAO system.

## **Course Content**

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

**Part One – Core Areas of Study**

Plane and Descriptive Geometry

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

Communication of Design and Computer Graphics

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

**Part 2 – Optional Areas of Study**

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

Applied Graphics

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

## Exam Structure

One Terminal Exam Paper: 60%
Student Assignment: 40%

**Terminal Exam**: 3 hours duration.

**Student Assignment** Emphasis on:

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

Different theme for Higher and Ordinary level

May take the form of:

**-**A design investigation and modification
-A concept design

**Comment**

It is an advantage to have studied Graphics at Junior Cert. Level. A basic knowledge of ICT skills is also beneficial.
Students must also appreciate that work completed must conform to a high standard of neatness and draftsman-ship.

**Economics**

Leaving Certificate economics provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary for understanding how the Irish and global economy functions. The learning experiences in economics develop students’ critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making and numeracy skills. Economics provides students with a learning foundation for a wide range of careers in business, economics, finance, enterprise and management.

**Why Study Economics**

Economics deals with the real world business obstacles such as demand and supply, production and consumption, money and banking as well as economic policies, problems and conflicts.  With inflation and international trade and payments constantly making headlines, economics requires its students to keep track of real world situations.

It helps students to develop a clear understanding of the role of economics, to encourage the development of appropriate learning skills, and to generate in students a positive and ethical attitude to economics in personal, business and public life

**What kind of student might Economics suit?**

* Anyone considering a future career in any area of business, journalism or finance.
* Students who enjoyed Junior Cert Business.
* Students who take an interest in politics, current affairs, or psychology.

**Career Possibilities**

All Business courses require an Economics content so having this subject is an advantage and is useful for careers in Banking, Insurance, Finance and Marketing.

**Third Level Entry Requirements**
This subject is not an essential requirement for any courses in the CAO system.

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

**Subject content**

1. Demand, supply, equilibrium, utility and elasticity
2. Costs and market structures
3. Factors of production (including economists)
4. National income and the multiplier
5. Inflation, money, banking and monetary policy
6. International trade, balance of payments and the euro
7. Fiscal policy and taxation
8. The Government in the economy (including economic development and growth, population and emigration)
* Separate questions on elasticity and costs are also possible, and questions on broader topics such as the national income, Government policy - the list above is just a general guide
* A Research Study will also be required (20% of total grade)
* There is a common syllabus covering Higher and Ordinary level, which will fulfil the aims and objectives.

**Exam Structure**

There are two assessment components at each level:

written examination (80%)

research study (20%)

Both components of assessment reflect the relationship between the application of skills and the theoretical content of the specification.

**French**

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

 **What kind of student might French suit?**

* Anyone with an interest in French culture, history, and language.
* Students who are considering working in France, Canada, or international relations in the future.
* Students who can already speak French and want easy points.

**Career Possibilities**

 Specific careers in which French would be of benefit include teaching, translation, interpreting, jounalism and media.

**Third Level Entry Requirements**

This subject is a requirement for entry into a number of third level courses. All four NUI colleges (UCC, UCD, NUI Maynooth and NUI Galway) require a third language for entry to all courses except most science, engineering and nursing courses. Always double check updates on [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie) or [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie). See detailed information in the section at the beginning of this booklet on studying a third language. See earlier section on third language requirement.

**Subject Content**

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

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

    Oral/speaking
    Written
    Aural/listening
    Reading

A wide variety of themes are covered, for example

    Family
    School
    Hobbies
    Sport
    Current affairs

Grammar and Cultural Awareness are essential elements of these courses.

**Exam Structure**

Mark Allocation for L.C. French
Section                          Higher Level      Ordinary Level
Speaking                              25%                   20%
Listening Comprehension    20%                   25%
Reading Comprehension     30%                   40%
Writing                                 25%                   15%

**The Oral Exam**

This takes place in March/April of 6th year.  13 mins - French

French  Interview with examiner; students may prepare a document

**Aural/Listening Exam** (40 mins)
This exam takes place after the written examination in June. It involves listening to a variety of dialogues and news items in the target language and then answering in English.

**Written Exam** (2 ½ hours)

Reading Comprehension is worth 30% of total exam at Higher Level and 40% at Ordinary Level. There are literary and journalistic passages.
For Higher Level the written section involves formal and informal letters, diary entry, message/fax/email, expressing an opinion, and personalised writing.

**Geography**

Geography is the study of people, their environment, and the interaction between the two. The course follows from Junior Cert 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 a large number of optional sections on the course, allowing students to focus on the sections of the course which they like.

**What kind of student might Geography suit?**

* Students considering further study in areas such as geography, economics, environmental science, or politics.
* Students who achieved solid results for Junior Cert Geography can expect much of the same for the Leaving Cert course.

**Career Possibilities**

Geography is a useful subject for careers in town planning, surveying, environmental assessment and weather forecasting.

**Third Level Entry Requirements:**

This subject is not an essential requirement for any courses in the CAO system. However, it is worth noting that TCD accepts geography as a science subject for entry into both science and pharmacy faculty.

 **Subject content:**

Three Core Units:

1.   Patterns and processes in the physical environment
2.   Regional geography
3.   Geographical investigation

Two Elective Units (pick one):

4.  Patterns and processes in economic activities
5.  Patterns and processes in the human environment

Four Optional Units (pick one; higher level only):

6.  Global interdependence
7.  Geoecology
8.  Culture and identity
9.  The Atmosphere-Ocean environment

The teaching of *geographical skills* is an important element of the course; students are encouraged to improve their ability to gather information (from map-reading, statistics, charts), present information (using diagrams, maps, and writing), and evaluate information (separate fact from opinion, make informed judgements, propose sensible solutions to problems). These skills are assessed in the Geographical Investigation.

**Exam Structure:**

Leaving Certificate Geography is assessed at Ordinary and Higher level in ascending order of difficulty. There are two assessment components:

1. Written Examination (80%)
2. Geographical Investigation Report (20%)

Students complete two questions on the core units, one question on an elective unit, and one question on an optional unit.

**History**

**What is 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 deals with human experience and 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.

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

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

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

**Career Possibilities**

History develops an ability to think independently and employers tend to look for people who are open-minded, independent people. History is excellent for careers in journalism, the Arts, tourism, government and teaching.

**Third Level Entry Requirements**
This subject is not an essential requirement for any courses in the CAO system.

**Subject Content:**

The Leaving Cert History course was recently revised and is divided into two distinct *fields of study*; Early Modern (1492-1915) and Late Modern (1815-1993). Each field is further divided into six Irish topics and six European topics.

Students are encouraged to develop research skills and an appreciation for the society in which they live. It can bring students in touch with human experiences that are very different from their own and present an opportunity to improve their critical thinking.

**Recommendation**

* If history is a subject that you like, but is not related to the course you want to pursue at Third Level, you should consider doing it on the basis that it will get you the required points to get the Third Level course that you want. There are a lot of H1s in History.
* The marking scheme is very easy to understand and work will be rewarded.

## **Exam Structure**

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

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

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

The marks are to be weighted as follows:

**Music**

The Leaving Certificate Music syllabus provides continuity and progression from Junior Certificate Music. However, if a student has not studied music to junior cycle, but has a strong musical ability and some knowledge of musical theory, taking music for the leaving certificate can be an option. The syllabus emphasises the integration of the three activity areas introduced at Junior Certificate level i.e. performing, listening and composing.

**Career Possibilities**

Music is useful for media work or studies, primary teaching, sound engineering, public relations, library work, communications, production, performance and music at third level.

Note: Students are required to be able to read music to study this subject. Little knowledge of music theory or history is not a problem but a working knowledge of a musical instrument (piano, guitar, voice etc.) is essential.

**Third Level Entry Requirements**

For most music courses, your Leaving Cert results are not the only factor considered for entry. Different colleges have different requirements.  For example: to study Music in UCD an entrance test is given to all candidates and in NUIM applicants must sit an entrance exam, an interview and an audition.

Make sure to research thoroughly the requirements of your preferred course.

However, this subject is not an essential requirement for any courses in the CAO system.

**Subject Content**

The course consists of three main components:

(1) Composing
(2) Listening
(3) Performance

at **Ordinary level**, students will choose one of the three activities to represent 50 per cent, e.g.

Performing 50% Composing 25% Listening 25%
or..
Performing 25% Composing 50% Listening 25%
or..
Performing 25% Composing 25% Listening 50%

at **Higher level**, students will undertake additional studies (a Higher level elective in one of the three activities, e.g.:

Performing 25% Composing 25% Listening 25% + One Higher level elective 25%.

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

**Exam Structure**

**Listening Paper**
Examined in June of 6th year
90 minutes duration
Four set works, Irish music and general listening skills.

**Composition Paper**
Examined in June of 6th year
90 minutes duration
Melody writing and harmony
 **Performance**
Examined in April of 6th year
Candidates may perform as a soloist or as part of a group or both.

**Higher Level**: 3 pieces on one instrument and one unprepared test OR 2 pieces on each of two instruments and one unprepared test

**Ordinary Level**: 2 pieces on one instrument and one unprepared test.

Electives for extra 25%
(Higher level only) Each candidate must choose one of the above components to study for this extra credit.  The majority tend to opt for a Performance elective.

Listening Elective: The candidate must work on a music project over the course of 5th and 6th year. They must submit some work to the State Examinations Commission and sit an extra written paper in June.

Composition Elective: The candidate must undertake a large scale composition to be submitted to the Examinations Commission in their final year.

Performance Elective: This involves a more substantial performance during the examination period in April of 6th year.

**Comment**

Students need not have studied music at Junior Level; however, they should have attained a competency in their practical musical ability.

Because of the practical nature of this subject, students and/or parents should discuss this with the senior level music teacher before choosing it as a Leaving Certificate subject.

**Physical Education**

Physical Education for the Leaving Cert is a course introduced in 2018 for initial examination in 2020.

The subject is made up of:

* A final written exam worth 50%
* A physical activity project to be completed under the supervision of the class teacher, worth 20% of the marks,
* A performance assessment to be completed under the supervision of the class teacher, worth 30% of the marks available for this subject.

The theoretical section is separated into two strands, students will study 4 topics in each strand for a total of 8 topics studied.

**Strand 1 Towards optimum performance**

In this set of topics students study the factors that influence physical performance, including how they can be applied to their own performance.

1. Learning and improving skill and technique

2. Physical and psychological demands of performance

3. Structures, strategies, roles and conventions

4. Planning for optimum performance

**Strand 2 Contemporary issues in physical activity**

Students learn about the culture of sports, it’s role in society and how people experience physical activity and sport. There are six possible topics, but only four are set for each Leaving Cert cycle.

*These topics are run every year*

5. Promoting physical activity

6. Ethics and fair play

*These topics rotate, with two of the following four appearing in each Leaving Cert cycle*

7. Physical activity and inclusion

8. Technology, media and sport

9. Gender and physical activity

10. Business and enterprise in physical activity and sport

For the physical section students will select three activities. There are 6 categories of physical activity and students must select one from three different categories.

**The six categories of physical activity are:**

* Adventure activities – Orienteering, Kayaking, Rock-climbing, Sailing, Rowing/Sculling
* Artistic and aesthetic activities – Artistic gymnastics, Rhythmic gymnastics, Dance
* Athletics – Running, Throwing, Jumping
* Aquatics – Lifesaving, Survival swimming, Two swimming strokes, Water-polo, Synchronised swimming
* Games – Gaelic football, Hurling/Camogie, Rugby Union, Soccer, Basketball, Hockey, Netball, Olympic handball, Badminton, Tennis, Volleyball, Table tennis, Handball, Squash, Cricket, Softball, Rounders
* Personal exercise and fitness – training, aerobics, spinning, indoor rowing, weight training, core stability, circuit training

Students will focus on three goals in the three selected physical activities.

1.Develop the standard of their performance

2.Be creative in their personal performance as an individual performer and/or as a member of a team/group.

3. Be consistent in the quality of their performance.

The Physical Activity Project enables you to

 • analyse your performance in one activity.

• set four performance goals.

 • plan and implement a programme to improve.

• reflect on progress.

Learners can use video, photographs and text, to tell the story of the project. Physical Activity Project In Performance Assessment you will compile a video of your best performance in one of the three physical activities studied in LCPE. The video will include footage gathered in a variety of contexts, including fully competitive and/or conditioned practices designed to showcase particular aspects of performance, e.g. attacking play.

**Third Level Requirements**

Physical Education is not a requirement for any third level courses.

**Physics**

The new Leaving Certificate Physics specification will be introduced for fifth year students in September 2025 and will replace the current Leaving Certificate Physics syllabus.

The Leaving Cert Physics course follows directly from Junior Cert Science, and covers more topics in greater depth.

Physics is often referred to as the maths side of science, even though only a small proportion of the course is based on maths.

Physics aims to enhance the student’s ability to think logically, observe and understand scientific method.

The Leaving Cert physics course follows directly from Junior Cert Science, and covers more topics in greater depth. Physics is often referred to as the maths side of science and a proportion of the course is based on this.

Physics aims to enhance students ability to think logically, observe and understand scientific method. The course is heavily based around experiments - students are required to complete and write reports of 24 practical experiments throughout the two years, and be fully aware of how to accurately record and analyse results, and how to minimise and accommodate for experimental errors.

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

The Physics course also involves a lot of theory which is tested on the written examination. Students are expected to be able to use various formulae with respect to SI units and significant figures and have a good understanding of the role of physics in modern society and technology. The Leaving Certificate Physics specification being introduced in September 2025 is designed for a minimum of 180 hours of class contact time. It sets out the learning in strands and through the identification of cross-cutting themes.

There are five strands: a unifying strand, Nature of Science, and four contextual strands;

**Nature of Science** - Students develop an understanding that whilst science is powerful, generating knowledge that forms the basis for many advances and innovations in society, it has limitations and that the application of scientific knowledge to problem-solving can be influenced by considerations such as economic, social, sustainability and ethical factors.

**Forces and Motion** - Students learn about Newtonian mechanics as a successful physical theory that explains the motion of objects. They explore how objects move (kinematics) and the reason why objects move in the way they do (dynamics). They use the verbal, mathematical and graphical language of kinematics to discuss and explain motion in one dimension as well as motion in a circle.gain knowledge and understanding of a number of core concepts to explain the organisation and diversity of life.

**Waves and Energy Transfer** - Students are introduced to energy transfer in a number of ways. They categorise different types of waves and explore the distinguishing features of each. They are introduced to the anatomy of a wave and associated vocabulary and mathematical relationships. Students further explore electromagnetism as one of the four fundamental forces of nature.

**Electricity and Magnetism** - Students are introduced to the concept of electric and magnetic fields as examples of vector fields of force and use field lines to represent the relative strength and direction of these fields. They explore evidence for electric charge as responsible for these electric and magnetic forces and fields and establish links with atomic structure, Newton’s Laws of motion, and work and energy.

**Modern Physics** - Students gain a deep appreciation of the evolving nature of physics as they turn their attention to the late 19th and early 20th centuries when unexplainable observations were challenging accepted theories and models. They learn how this period saw major developments in physics as experimental discoveries motivated by the need for explanations revolutionised the accepted understanding of the nature of matter on an atomic scale and led to a new area of study; namely quantum mechanics.

**What type of student might Physics suit?**

* Students considering a career in any mathematical or scientific discipline, such as finance, statistics, engineering, physics, astronomy or computer science.
* Students who were successful in their Junior Cert science examination, particularly in the Physics section of the course.

**Third Level Entry Requirements**
Physics is a requirement for just one course in the CAO system: Theoretical Physics  in Trinity. It is considered a laboratory science subject and fulfils that requirement for related courses.

**Physics and Careers**

Physics is a a good foundation for a broad range of scientific and technical careers. Many careers benefit from the logical and numeracy skills developed by the study of physics. Many technical, electrical and engineering courses involve components of physics.

Exam Structure

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Physics | Higher | Ordinary |
| Written PaperPhysics in Practice Investigation  | 1 Paper - 60% of MarksCommon Brief - 40% of Marks | 1 Paper - 60% of MarksCommon Brief - 40% of Marks |

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

• the learning described in the four contextual strands of the specification and the unifying strand

• application of Physics to issues relating to the cross-cutting themes—sustainability, health, and technology.

**LCVP**

**Why study LCVP?**

Students who take the LCVP will benefit in several ways. Through the Programme’s focus on personal development, they will be able to:

* Communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively.
* Take responsibility for their own learning.
* Work as a member of a team or group.
* Adapt and cope with changing circumstances.

Through the Programme’s focus on the world of work they will have:

* Knowledge of the world of work.
* Skills for job seeking.
* Undertaken work experience or participated in work simulation.

Through the Programmes’ focus on enterprise, business and technology they will:

* Be more innovative and enterprising.
* Be used to working in teams.
* Be familiar with setting up and running enterprising initiatives.
* Have experience of using computers and audio-visual equipment.

Through these benefits, LCVP students will be more employable. They will be in a better position to set up their own business. In addition, they will have skills and aptitudes which will enable them to be more effective learners in the further education they receive at third level.

**What kind of Student would the Link Modules suit**

* This is a practical subject/programme that suits practical students.
* It is a real preparation for the world of work.
* The bulk of marks go for the portfolio which is done over the 2-years
* Links with other option subjects which can enhance performance in those subjects.
* Promotes skills and qualities of self-reliance, innovation and enterprise

Skills learned through LCVP such as planning, researching, writing reports and making presentations are keys to your success at third level. The LCVP may be counted as one of the six subjects when calculating points (see the points system as outlined on page