



Optional Subjects

Art
Biology
Business
Chemistry
Geography
History
Home Economics – Social & Scientific
Music

How to Make a Good Choice

You need to make decisions and plan for your future. The first decision you will be asked to make is to choose subjects that you will study for the Leaving Certificate.

The following subjects are mandatory: Irish, English, Mathematics and a Modern Foreign Language. You then choose three others from the optional subject list.

- Know what you like and are good at (Your strengths and interests)
- Choose subjects that you like and would be good at
- Inform yourself of Leaving Certificate subject requirements for third level colleges or courses. The Careers portal is an excellent resource for this.
- Discuss the options available with your parents
- Discuss the options available with your teachers
- Discuss the options available with the guidance counsellor.

Your career and college choice

- If you already have a definite course or career in mind, you need to find out if there are essential subjects that you must have for Leaving Certificate to be eligible for that course.
- If you are unsure of what you want to do after school – that's **OK** many don't. However you need to make sure that your subject choices are carefully chosen to make sure that you are not ruling out of any course / career that you might be interested in later on. It is your responsibility to make sure that the information you have is up to date and accurate.

Art

Requirements: You must be disciplined, hardworking and have a lot of love of the subject.

Course:

Design or Craftwork
Life Drawing

Still life or imaginative composition

History and Appreciation of Art

Design or Craftwork: Observational and layout skills are necessary. Being able to bring some idea from observational sketches through to *Realisation*, thus producing a *Personal Creative Response* in the finished piece of work.

Design	Craftwork
Poster	Lino cutting
Calligraphy	Calligraphy
Lino Cutting	Poster Making
Bookcraft	Bookcraft
Puppetry	Fabric printing
Embroidery	Screen printing
Batik	Batik
Weaving	Puppetry
Pottery	Embroidery
Carving	Carving
Art Metalwork	Pottery
Screen Painting	Weaving
	Metalwork

Imaginative Composition or Still Life: Marks for this area are given for candidates Personal Creative Response to the question. There is one paper and candidates are given the paper one week before the exam. Students plan out the section they wish to answer well in advance of the examination day as the still life objects must be brought in and set up by the candidate.

Still life: A group of objects

Imaginative Composition: A pictorial Piece, Collage or Abstract Composition

Life Drawing: Two sketches of the model are required

- One quick sketch
- One fully worked up sketch

- Quality drawing is required
- The paper is given to students one week before the examination day.

History & Appreciation of Art

- Irish art: art in Ireland from 2000 BC – 20th Century
- European art: 11th – 20th century European art
- General appreciation: of architecture, design, environmental design and film

This is a written examination paper, and the candidate must answer one question from each section.

Career Opportunities: graphic design, textile design, film making, photography, fashion design, fine art, display design, communications, sculpture, ceramics.

Biology

Strand of study and learning outcomes:

Unifying Strand: Nature of Science

Strand 1: Organization of Life

Strand 2: Structures and Processes of Life

Strand 3: Interactions of Life.

Assessment for certification is based on rationale, aim and learning outcomes of the Leaving Certificate Biology specification. There are two assessment components: a written examination and an additional assessment component comprising a Biology in Practice Investigation. The Written examination will be at higher and ordinary level. The Biology in Practice Investigation will be based on a common brief and will be assessed at the level at which the student sits the final written examination. Each component will be set and examined by the State Examinations

Commission (SEC). Biology in Practice Investigation is 40% .Written examination is 60%.

The Leaving Certificate course is an extension of the Junior Cycle Biology section of the science course in greater detail with extra topics added.

Business

A new Business course was introduced in September 2025 to be first examined in June 2027. The new course incorporates an additional assessment component which is a Business Alive Investigative Study to be submitted in the sixth year and will account for 40% of the overall grade.

Assumption Secondary School Subject Choice for Senior Cycle (Leaving Certificate)
The updated curriculum is structured around four main strands as outlined below.

What do students' study?

Students study about all aspects of the business world.

Exploring the Business Environment	Students explore how the government makes decisions that impact business, and how business impacts on society, the environment, and the economy.
Understanding Enterprise	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
Leading in Business	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.
Making Informed Decisions	Students will develop the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions associated with making informed decisions particularly in areas that affect their own lives.

There are also four cross-cutting themes, which are integrated throughout the course to provide a contemporary lens on the business world.

Ethics & Sustainability:	In the dynamic world of business, it is important for organisations to behave ethically, to be transparent and ethically engage with customers, employees, fellow stakeholders, their local community, and the environment.
Entrepreneurial Thinking	The development of an entrepreneurial mindset helps students to think broadly, to recognise and act on opportunities, to consider risk, diversify and adapt to change, reach informed conclusions, and learn from their experiences.
Business & Financial Literacy	Business and financial literacy are key literacies in lifelong learning that help to empower students as individuals and as citizens to develop knowledge, behaviours, and dispositions that support making appropriate and informed business and financial decisions.
Digital Transformation	Ongoing developments in digital technology have revolutionised the business landscape and disrupted how business operates. This rapidly changing environment challenges businesses and consumers to embrace innovation and to harness the power of digital technology while also addressing challenges that may arise

How do students benefit by studying business?

Students learn to:

- Make informed business decisions
- Understand the structure and management of business
- Use established commercial principles and knowledge
- Understand and appreciate ethics in business
- Practice communication, literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills
- Understand and discuss current affairs as they relate to business.

Career Options:

- Accounting & Finance, Management & Operations, Marketing & Sales, Business Analysis & Consultancy, Public Sector.
- The study of Finance and Management will enhance any career choice.
- Set up your own business.

Chemistry

The revised Chemistry curriculum was introduced in 2025. If you are curious about how the world works, enjoy problem-solving, and are considering a science-related career path, Chemistry could be an excellent choice.

Course Overview

Chemistry is often referred to as *the central science* due to its foundational role in understanding other scientific disciplines. It's also a great starting point for students who plan to study Chemistry or related subjects in college.

Assessment Overview

- A written examination accounts for 60%.
- An Additional Assessment Component (AAC), accounts for 40%.

Course Content

The syllabus is divided into -

- Pure chemistry, 70%
- Applications of chemistry, 22.5%
- Chemistry for citizens, 7.5%

Who Should Consider Chemistry?

This subject is well-suited to students who -

- Enjoyed Junior Cycle Science and performed well, particularly in the areas of Chemistry and Mathematics (Higher or Ordinary Level).
- Have a good grasp of scientific vocabulary and can follow experimental procedures with attention to detail.
- Considering careers in scientific fields such as -Medicine, Pharmacy, Veterinary Science, Dentistry, Agricultural Science, Food Science, Biotechnology, Engineering, Physiotherapy, Nursing, and Medical Laboratory Technician.

Why study 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 number of optional sections on the course.

What kind of student might Geography suit?

- Students considering further study in areas such as geography, economics, environmental science, or politics.

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.

What will I study in Geography?

Geography is a study of the forces that create and change our landscape. It also involves study of the location and distribution of the inhabitants of the earth's landscape.

The syllabus is divided into three new parts.

Core units:

All three core units must be taken by both ordinary and higher level students.

Unit 1: Patterns and Processes in the Physical Environment. Physical Geography: This section involves detail study of the process, which shapes the physical landscape and involves topics like, Rivers, Glaciation and the Sea.

Unit 2: Regional Geography: A number of Western European countries will be studied in this section. Primary, Secondary and Tertiary activities will be examined in each country.

Unit 3: The Geographical and Investigation Unit: This section focuses on developing geographical and investigative skills. This involves the study of Ordnance Survey maps and photographs the completion of a fieldwork project. Fieldwork will now be a compulsory part of the core syllabus and must be submitted to the Department of Education and Science before the Leaving Certificate Examinations.

Elective Units: One of following must be taken by both ordinary and higher level students.

Elective Unit 4: Patterns and Processes in Economic Activities: This involves a study of topics like Agriculture, Industry and Service Industries.

Elective Unit 5: Patterns and processes in the Human Environment: Patterns and processes in the Human Environment This section deals with how humans interact with their human environment and involves topics like pollution

One topic must be chosen from either A or B.

Optional Units: Higher Level Only Students Take One of the Following Units **Optional**

Unit 6: Global Interdependence

Optional Unit 7: Geoecology

Optional Unit 8: Culture and Identity

Optional Unit 9: The Atmosphere - Ocean Environment

History

There are TWO parts to the Leaving Certificate History exam:

Part 1: A pre- submitted Research topic. This must be completed by April of Sixth Year. It accounts for 20 % of the total marks.

- The research topic can be on any topic and may be selected from any period in History, prior to 1992.
- It consists of an extended essay of 1,500 words.
- At least 3 sources must be consulted.
- As well as the extended essay it must have an outline plan, stating what you hope to achieve in your research.
- The three sources used must be evaluated.

Part 2: A written exam of 2hrs 50 minutes. The written exam is based on 4 fields of study selected from the syllabus. One question is document based.

Home Economics Social and Scientific

Core Studies

Food Studies — 45%

Topics: (I) Nutrients (ii) Special Diets (iii) Food Industry and New methods of Food Processing (iv) Legislation in Relation to Food

Resource Management and Consumers Studies 25%

Topics: (i) Money Management (ii) Housing (iii) Electrical Appliances (iv) Consumer Studies

Social Studies - 10% Topics: (i) The family (ii) Marriage (iii) Family Law

Choose one from electives

Home Design and Management - 20%

Topics: (I) Housing and provision of House (ii) Interior Design (iii) Energy Efficiency in the Home (iv) Insulation (v) Ventilation (vi) Lighting Textiles

Fashion and Design — 20%

Topics: (i) Current Fashion Trends (ii) Textile Science (iii) Evaluation of Garment Design (iv) Textile Industry

Social Studies — 20%

Topics: (i) The Family and Social Change (ii) Education (iii) Work (iv) Reconciling Work and Family (v) Leisure (vi) Unemployment (vii) Poverty (vii) Government response to Social Problems

Practical Work: practical work is assessed in the form of a written journal, which will be examined by external examiner.

Music

There are 3 sections on the Leaving Certificate Course

1. Listening 100 marks
2. Written 100 marks
3. Performing 100 marks

Students must also take an 'elective' for a further 100 marks. This elective is chosen from one of the above categories. Most students take the performing elective. Written and aural examinations take place in June. Performing sections take place in March/April.

New senior Cycle Curriculum

The first set of revised subjects will be introduced in schools in the 2025/26 school year. In our school the curriculum will change in Biology, Chemistry and Business. There will be changes to the Geography curriculum in the 2026-2027 school year.

For information on individual subjects available at the Senior Cycle, please visit curriculumonline.ie

Leaving Certificate Grades and Points System.

Higher Level	Ordinary Level	Foundation Level* Maths ONLY	CAO Points	Higher Level Maths CAO Points ONLY
1			100	125
2			88	113
3			77	102
4			66	91
5	1		56	81
6	2		46	71
7	3		37	37
	4		28	
	5	1	20	
	6	2	12	
8	<7	<3	0	0